

Why Does Money Smell? aa

Reading Time: 3 minutes

The iconic US Dollar bill is instantly recognizable- for more than just good old George Washington smack bang in the middle. One of the other things a dollar is famous for is the instantly recognizable smell.

Money, in general, has a certain whiff about it. Some say it is the smell of success- others say it is the stench of greed.

What I want to know is what science says. Scientifically speaking, why does money smell the way it does?

Every currency has its own blend, but today I am focused on the US Dollar. If you, like me, have ever wondered what exactly that smell is, you have come to the right place to find out.

What Money is Made of Contributes to its Smell

It seems that the number one reason for the unique smell of US banknotes is what they are made of. Dollar notes are made of 75% cotton and 25% linen according to the [US Department of the Treasury](#).

More precisely, they are printed on special paper made of those materials. To give a quick comparison: Euro notes are 100% cotton paper, and Canadian Dollars are polymer.

Both cotton and linen are highly absorbent. Because of this, every scent they come into close contact with clings to the surface and seep into the bill itself.

How Money Gets Smells from the Journey

Now that we know that the material of a US Dollar bill soaks in smells from wherever it goes, it makes sense that they are fairly pungent. Think about how far a dollar bill travels in its lifetime.

On [average](#), a one-dollar bill stays in circulation for six or seven years- some even as long as 14 years! It is estimated that each bill passes between 110 people per year.

Imagine almost 800 people's smells combined in one piece of paper. This sounds really gross, right?

Before the note makes it into somebody's wallet, it absorbs the unique ink used to print money. The metallic fumes from the factory they are pressed in also become part of the story.

Money is already marked with a unique smell before it even makes it out into the world. Then, they get stuffed in pockets (and other places), dropped on Subway station floors, thrown into purses with an untold mixture of personal items, and run through the washing machine more than once.

Some of the surprisingly common scents detected on single dollar bills in the US include hand soap, narcotics, soil, and even ?!

You are currently looking at the second page of the article. To see the full article, click here.

