

How to Spot Areas to Pan for Gold

Gold maintains its value, making the search for raw gold well worth the effort for hobby gold-seekers. The general rule in finding gold is this: Where it was found before it will be found again. Hobby prospectors generally pan for gold while people intent on finding gold in large quantities utilize sluice boxes and rockers to move more stream material. Whatever the method used, the gold-seeker first needs to understand where gold can be found in a stream.

Things You'll Need

- Gold pan
- Topographical maps
- Study topographical maps of an area to learn the country and the terrain through which potential gold streams run.
- Walk along the stream bank and search out pools of water below rapids and eddies behind rocks.



- Seek out quiet water below rapids. Gold tumbles along with the swift current and then sinks to the stream bottom when it reaches quiet water.
- Dig into cracks in submerged bedrock. Gold falls into the cracks as the current pushes it along with other stream material.
- Pan for gold in pools of still water where dirt has been washed off the hillsides and into the stream.

Tips & Warnings

- Gold has, throughout history, been sought in many streams, rivers and creeks in the United States. Concentrate gold-hunting efforts on streams that have a history of having gold in them.
- Gold is heavy, therefore it settles deep into the sand and sediment on the stream bottom. Dig deep into the sand in the places where gold settles.
- Most public lands allow hobby gold panning, but it's still a good idea to check the regulations for the area you plan to work.

- Permission must be obtained to go onto private property. Often, private land borders public land.
- Many mining claims exist along streams; do not pan an area that is claimed.

Source: "How to Spot Areas to Pan for Gold" by Dave P. Fisher (originally published on ehow.com). © Demand Media, Inc. All rights reserved.

How to Separate Gold From Dirt

One of the easiest and most inexpensive ways to separate gold from dirt is through panning. This age-old technique has been around since the Gold Rush, and makes a great outdoor hobby that can pay for itself. With a minimum of equipment, the beginner gold prospector can separate gold flakes and nuggets from the surrounding strata in a nearby stream. The supply of gold is virtually endless, as erosion constantly causes hidden gold to be brought to the surface where it is free for the taking. All you have to do is find it.

Things You'll Need

- Plastic, grooved gold pan
- Classifier
- Tweezers
- Small, lidded container
- Select an appropriate stream. Either choose a stream on publicly owned land, or ask the private owner's permission before doing any panning. Quickly moving streams are best, because the clear water prevents sediment from obstructing your view of the gold. The stream should be at least 6 inches deep so you can keep your pan submerged for the majority of the process.



- Find a promising spot within the stream itself. Sandbars or plant growth on the inside bends are possible places for gold to have washed up with other sediments. You can also determine a promising location by tying small lead weights to inflated balloons with 2 to 3 feet of fishing line, then releasing them into the stream. The place where they settle is where gold is likely to be found.
- Place the classifier, which looks like a large sieve, on top of your pan. This will keep larger pieces of rock from cluttering up the inside of your pan and make gold nuggets easier to identify.

- Fill your classifier with loose gravel and dirt using a shovel. Once it is almost full, place the pan and classifier together under water, and move them in a circular motion to allow light sediment to float away and the heavier material to sink to the bottom of the pan.
- Break up any chunks of dirt or clay with your fingers, being careful not to let any material escape.
- Leave the pan under running water. When the rocks on top are washed clean, pick up the classifier and sift through it with your fingers for gold nuggets. Gold is easily recognizable by its bright yellow color that glistens in the sun. If there are no nuggets, toss the material in the classifier aside.
- Stratify the material in your pan by shaking it gently back and forth under running water. The gold will sink to the bottom.
- Lift your pan so it is partially above the water. Tilt it away from you, being careful to keep the bottom lower than the tilted edge. Water should be able to flow freely in and out of the pan. Using a circular movement from the shoulders down, wash sediment out of the pan, always keeping it submerged except for the side closest to you.
- Tap the sides of the pan occasionally to help the gold settle on the bottom as you continue with step 8. When there is only a small amount of sediment remaining, rub a magnet inside the bottom of the pan in a circular motion to remove the heavy, iron-laden black sand from the gold, which is not magnetic.
- Lift the pan further up out of the water for more precision as you shake the pan back and forth to remove the rest of the fine sand. Once the gold has reached the first groove in the pan, remove the pan from the water completely, leaving about 1 inch of water in the bottom of the pan.
- Tilt the pan repeatedly in a gentle, circular motion to draw the remaining sand away from the gold, which will be concentrated at one edge of the pan.
- Remove the larger pieces of gold by hand and pick out the flakes with tweezers. Put them in your container.

Tips & Warnings

- Don't look for gold in a privately owned area without first obtaining permission. You could get jailed for trespassing, or even shot if gold claim owners take the law into their own hands.

Source: "How to Separate Gold From Dirt" by Robin Elisabeth Black (originally published on ehow.com).
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Some Places You Can Go for Gold

Alabama

Gold has been found throughout Talladega, Tallapoosa, Chambers, Coosa, Clay, Chilton, Elmore, Cleburne, and Randolph Counties.

Alabama Gold Camp
1398 County Road 5
Lineville, AL 36266
256-396-1389
alabamagoldcamp.com/home

Georgia

Gold has been found throughout Lumpkin, White, Cherokee, Dawkins, Pickens, Forsythe and Paulding counties

Crisson Gold Mine
2736 Morrison Moore Parkway East
Dahlonega, GA 30533
706-864-6363.
crissongoldmine.com

North Carolina

Gold has been found throughout Granville, Person, Caswell, Union, Meckenburg, Gaston, Randolph, Davidson, Stanly, Cabarrus and Union counties.

Reed Gold Mine
9621 Reed Mine Road
Midland, NC 28107
704-721-4653
reedmine.com

Note: Other than designated commercial/tourist site, the vast majority of the gold bearing areas are on private property. Always seek out permission from landowners before doing any prospecting.