

Fast Facts

Mineral

Corundum

Color

Every color except red

Mohs Hardness

9

Toughness

Excellent

Major Sources

Australia, Cambodia, China, Ethiopia, Kashmir, Kenya, Madagascar, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, United States, Vietnam

Birthstone

September

Wedding Anniversary

5th and 45th

Care and Cleaning

Warm, soapy water is always safe. Ultrasonic and steam cleaners are usually safe for untreated, heat-treated and lattice diffusion treated stones. Fracture-filled, cavity-filled or dyed material should only be cleaned with a damp cloth.



About GIA

Established in 1931, GIA (Gemological Institute of America®) is the world's foremost authority on diamonds, colored stones and pearls. A public benefit, nonprofit institute, GIA is the leading source of knowledge, standards and education in gems and jewelry.

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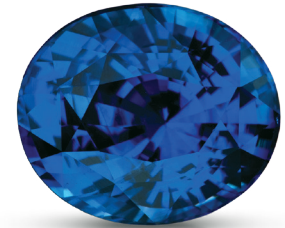
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Sapphire

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Sapphire

Sapphire comes from the Greek word "sappheiros," which means "blue" in Greek and has been cherished for thousands of years for its color, durability, hardness and luster. Ancient Mediterranean culture honored sapphire above all other gems, and early Buddhists believed in its power for spiritual awareness. One of the world's most famous blue sapphire engagement rings is the one worn by Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge which previously belonged to the late Diana, Princess of Wales.

Color

Sapphire and ruby are both members of the mineral species corundum. Corundum is a naturally colorless material, but can have different colors when trace elements are present. The rich hues of blue sapphire are universally known but fancy sapphires come in many colors including pink, yellow, purple, colorless, black, green and the rare pinkish orange to orangy pink sapphire called Padparadscha. Nevertheless, the most preferred and most valuable sapphires are a vivid color saturation known as "Royal Blue."

Sapphire comes in many colors, including the rare pinkish orange sapphire called Padparadscha, meaning "lotus blossom" in Sinhalese.



Clarity

Sapphires normally have inclusions, so the lack of visible inclusions can have a positive impact on value. However, in some cases inclusions can increase the value of a sapphire when extremely fine particle clouds scatter the light, giving the stone a velvety appearance without affecting the transparency. This effect can be observed in some Kashmir sapphires, making them highly desirable.



Long needle-like mineral inclusions that intersect can create a star effect across the curved surface when stones are cut as cabochons.

Sources

Historically, Kashmir has produced some of the most spectacular and most precious blue sapphires that have set records at prestigious auction houses. Very little is mined there today. The velvety blue hue and minute inclusions observed in Kashmir sapphire make them the most sought after. Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) is also a highly-sought after source of blue sapphire. In the United States, the state of Montana has emerged as a leading producer of sapphire.

Treatments

High temperature treatments are used to improve color or to enhance the clarity of sapphire. Diffusing titanium, beryllium or both into sapphires at high temperatures can achieve a desirable color. Treated sapphire may employ temporary treatments like oiling and dyeing to hide fractures along with using lead glass to fill fractures and cavities for more transparency.