

Diamond Buying Guide

We have created a tutorial to provide you with the guidance you need when purchasing diamond jewelry. By developing your knowledge of diamonds, you will find shopping for and making your selection less daunting simply by knowing the 4C's: cut, color, clarity and carat.

Whether you're learning about the characteristics of diamonds for the first time or need a "4C refresher", the more you know, the more likely you are to purchase that perfect dazzler. Here are a few things to keep in mind.

- When you say diamond cut, most people consider the term "cut" is referring to the actual shape and appearance. However, a diamond cut is actually the style or design guide used when the stone is being shaped
- When looking for a diamond, keep in mind that if a diamond is cut poorly, it affects the brilliance; the number of facets a stone has
- The more facets a diamond has, the more brilliance you will see
- When a stone is cut to a precise mathematically determined proportion, it allows as much light as possible to reflect out of the top of the diamond giving you sparkle and shine.

For all intents and purposes, we are going to discuss a diamond's cut strictly as the diamonds shape. The term "cut" is most often used interchangeably, including on BJ's.com. The 58-facet round brilliant cut is the most popular because of intensity of the color and the brightness of light you see in a diamond.

Although most diamonds on the market today are round brilliants, there are many different shapes to choose from. The following chart shows some of the most popular shapes.

Cut

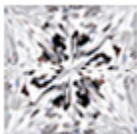
Diamonds are polished to come in various different shapes such as round, princess, heart, oval, marquise etc. Deciding which shape is right for you is based on your personal preference.

Brilliant Round



More than 75% of diamonds sold today are round. They radiate kaleidoscope of the facets and is the most brilliant cut. Many consider this a classic shape and it has been set as the standard over other fancy shapes.

Princess



Princess is a square or rectangular diamond that can radiate as much brilliance as a round diamond. They have pointed un-cut corners, which would have been polished off for round diamonds. This is the second most popular shape after the brilliant round.

Oval



Oval is an elongated fancy shape, which has similar sparkle and brilliance to that of a round diamond. This is sometimes preferred over the traditional round shape as the choice for an engagement ring, as it can make shorter fingers appear slender.

Marquise



The shape of a marquise diamond resembles that of a boat. It has an elongated shape with pointed ends. Just like the oval shape, this can make shorter fingers appear slender which makes it a popular choice for engagement rings.

Pear



The shape of a pear diamond resembles that of a sparkling teardrop. As a cross between round and marquise, the pear shape has a pointed end with an opposite rounded end. Depending on the length to width ratio of a pear diamond, they can be used for various types of jewelry. Longer pear diamonds are preferred for earrings and pendants, while wider pear shaped diamonds are typically chosen for rings.

Heart



As the name suggest, heart shaped diamonds are polished into the shape of a heart. It resembles a pear shape diamond, which is 'split' at the top. Diamonds with flatter arches will appear bigger in size, but can be less brilliant, while overly deep ones might appear more brilliant, but look smaller. Being the universal symbol of romance, the demand for heart shaped diamond is higher around Valentine's Day.

Emerald



Emerald cut diamonds are sometimes referred to as step cut diamonds, as they have long rows of parallel facets that resemble a stair case. This causes it to radiate less brilliance, although the long angles give these stones an elegant and classic look. Most emeralds are rectangular, although some can be more square shaped. As emerald shapes have simpler structures in the way they are cut compared to other shapes, inclusions are generally more noticeable in these shapes.

Radiant



Radiant diamonds are a combination of the emerald and round cut shapes. A more square shaped radiant diamond can resemble a princess cut shape. A radiant diamond has 70 facets on both the crown and pavilion, which maximizes brilliance.

Cushion



A cushion cut diamond can be square or more rectangular. It gets its name from its soft rounded corners that resemble a pillow shape. Many consider this an antique style and it is often preferred for vintage jewelry pieces. They have larger facets to increase their brilliance, although they are less brilliant than round shapes. Similar to emerald cuts, inclusions can be more evident in cushion cut diamonds because of their larger and open facets.

Asscher



The Asscher cut is a variation to the classic emerald cut but has a more squared shape. Similar to the emerald, the pavilion of a cushion cut diamond has step cut facets that continues down to the squared culet and offers more sparkle than the emerald cut. It also has similar cropped corners. Inclusions can be more evident in this cut due to the open structure.

Color

All diamonds are graded using a scale created by one of the leading gemological industry organizations. An ideal stone is colorless and is the rarest, however, most stones possesses some form of color in the form of pale yellow tints. This reduces sparkle and brilliance. The presence of color is more obvious in bigger stones and in fancy cuts/shapes including pear, hearts and marquises. Sometimes the color of the metal the stone is set in can help mask or enhance the color of a diamond.

Color Grading

Diamond cuts are graded on a scale ranging from D – Z:



D-F
Colorless



G-I
Near Colorless



J-L
Faint Yellow



L-Z
Light Yellow

D, E, F: Colorless
G, H, I, J: Near Colorless
K, L, M: Faint Yellow or Faint Brown
N, O, P, Q, R: Very Light Yellow or Very Light Brown
S to Z: Light Yellow or Light Brown

Clarity

When purchasing a diamond, the presence of imperfections, or a stone's clarity, is a large component of assessing the value of diamonds. With a device called a loupe, professionals are able to see imperfections that appear as small cracks or miniscule flecks of black carbon. These blemishes often can't be seen with the naked eye.

Internal inclusions may form as tiny spots, fractures, feathers or other types, while external inclusions can appear as scratches or fissures. They do not necessarily impact the brilliance of the diamond and some inclusions can easily be concealed with the jewelry setting.

Clarity Grading

Diamonds are given a clarity grading based on its purity. These are described below:

FL, IF (Flawless)

These diamonds have no internal or external imperfections and are very rare.

VVS1, VVS2 (Very, Very Slightly Included)

These diamonds are of excellent quality and it is very difficult to see visible inclusions under 10x magnification.

VS1, VS2 (Very Slightly Included)

These diamonds have very slight inclusions that are clearly visible under 10x magnification which makes them more affordable.

S11, S12 (Slightly Included)

These diamonds have slight inclusions that are visible under 10x magnification.

I1, I2 and I3* (Included)

These diamonds have obvious inclusions that are visible under 10x magnification and may affect its transparency and brilliance. BJ's offers a fine selection of diamond jewelry with an I1-I2 clarity; providing members with a wide variety of beautiful choices at affordable prices.

**BJ's does not carry I3 diamonds. The clarity and overall characteristics of I3 diamonds are below BJ's quality standards and are not used as the main stone or accents in any of BJ's jewelry.*










Carat

Carat refers to the weight of a diamond. The value and price increases with the carat weight as well as the quality of the other 3C's: color, clarity and cut.

Measurement of a Diamond

Diamonds are weighted in metric carats where 1 carat = 0.2 grams. A fraction of a carat can make a big difference to its value which is why they are weighted in thousandth of a carat and then rounded to the nearest hundredth point. Diamond sizes can range from a small point to more than 100 carats, although in the regular diamond market, consumers typically purchase diamonds ranging from 5 points to 3 carat.

Diamond Relative Carat / Size Comparison

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| CT. | 0.25 | 0.50 | 0.75 | 1.0 | 1.25 | 1.50 | 2.0 | 2.5 | 3.0 |
| MM. | 4.0 | 5.0 | 6.0 | 6.5 | 7.0 | 7.5 | 8.0 | 8.5 | 9.0 |

As carat is a measurement of weight rather than size, the diameter (mm) may differ slightly. Image is not to scale. The diamonds are shown for the purpose of comparing carat weights. Actual size can vary depending on your screen resolution and monitor size.

Care

Everyday products such as lotions, styling gels, cosmetics or other substances can cause accumulation of dirt and make a diamond lose its brilliance and shine. Chlorine is particularly damaging. It is important to clean your diamond jewelry regularly and keep it away from items that contain chlorine.

Gentle and Effective Cleaning Tips for All Diamonds

- Add some mild liquid detergent in warm water and soak your diamond jewelry in it. We recommend using Ivory dishwashing liquid although you can use any mild detergent.
- Brush off any dirt using a soft tooth brush. Make sure to use a soft brush only as hard bristles can damage and scratch the metal jewelry setting.
- Rinse the jewelry in the soap water, and then rinse it thoroughly under running warm water. Be careful if you have an open drain; make sure it is closed before rinsing your jewelry.
- Dry your jewelry with a lint-free cloth.

If you still need to remove excess dirt, take it to your jeweler for a professional cleaning.

Things to avoid

- Chlorine, bleach and other like products can discolor the setting of diamond, pit and dissolve gold alloys, and damage the mounting. It is advisable to avoid these substances while wearing your jewelry.
- Avoid placing two or more diamonds together in a box, as they can scratch each other.

Get your diamond jewelry checked regularly with a jeweler. This will ensure settings are tightened if needed, and the polishing will help to maintain the shine.