

Zircon or Zirconia?

Zircon - brilliant, but misunderstood gemstone!

Hindu poets tell of the Kalpa Tree, the ultimate gift to the gods, a glowing tree covered in gemstone fruit with leaves of zircon. Zircon has long played a supporting role to more well-known gemstones, often stepping in as an understudy when they were unavailable. In the middle ages, zircon was said to aid sleep, bring prosperity, and promote honour and wisdom in its owner.

Zircon has appeared in literature under a variety of names including jargon (yellow zircon), jacinth (red zircon), matara diamond (white zircon), starlite (blue zircon), hyacinth (blue zircon) and ligure. The Roman historian, Pliny the Elder, compared blue zircon's color to hyacinth flowers. In Greek mythology, a discus thrown by Apollo accidentally killed a young boy named Hyacinth. Wherever his blood spilled gorgeous blue hyacinths grew.

Natural zircon today suffers on account of the similarity of its name to cubic zirconia, the laboratory-grown diamond imitation. Many people are unaware that there is a beautiful natural gemstone called zircon.

Zircon occurs in a wide range of colors, but for many years the most popular was the colorless variety, which looks more like diamond than any other natural stone because of its brilliance and dispersion. Today the most popular color is blue zircon, which is considered an alternative birthstone for December. Most blue zircon is a pastel blue, but some exceptional gems have a bright blue color. The blue color occurs when heating brown-

ish colored zircons from certain locations.

Zircon is mined in Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Australia, and other countries.

Cambodia is arguably the world's premiere source for gorgeous zircon. Sixty-three miles north of Angkor Wat, close to the Cambodian-Thai border, lay the mines of Preah Vihear, the source of some of the world's finest blue zircon. Remote, primitive and stunningly beautiful, Ratanakiri is another major center for Cambodian Zircon. Ratanakiri literally means "Gemstone Mountain". South of the city a mining camp has been carved from the forest, where workers toil to extract blue zircon from narrow mine shafts that tap into an alluvial layer about 15 feet below the surface

Zircon is one of the heaviest gemstones, which means that it will look smaller than other varieties of the same weight. Zircon jewelry should be stored carefully because although it is relatively hard, zircon can suffer from abrasion and the facets can be chipped. Zircons make ideal earrings and pendants and can be used for special occasion rings.

We are the top supplier of blue zircon in the Twin Cities!



Blue Zircon Earrings set in 14KT gold

