

TANZANITE

Tanzanite is the blue to violet to bluish purple variety of the mineral zoisite. It is found in only one place on earth – in the hills of Merelani in Tanzania.



The discovery of tanzanite is as enchanting as its colour. In 1967, a Masai tribesman stumbled upon a cluster of transparent, intense violet-to-blue crystals weathering out of the earth. He alerted a local fortune hunter, who hoped the gem might be sapphire. Instead, the deposit contained a stunning new gem. Tiffany & Co. believed that tanzanite had international appeal and became its main distributor. In 1968, the company launched a major advertising campaign to promote it. Tanzanite quickly became a sensation.

Colour

The most prized colour in tanzanite is a pure blue, similar to fine sapphire, or an intense violet-blue. Tanzanite with a bluish purple body colour is also popular, but less valuable. In any hue, pale colours are less prized than saturated ones.



Clarity

Tanzanite is usually free of eye-visible inclusions. If any inclusions are present – especially those that could pose a durability problem, such as fractures – they typically lower the value.

Cut

Tanzanite is available in a wide range of shapes, but cushion and oval cuts are more common. Because tanzanite is pleochroic (shows two or more distinct bodycolours when viewed in different directions), its cutting direction determines the gem's overall face-up colour.

Treatments

Untreated, tanzanite is typically brown. It is routinely heat treated to modify its colour to a predominantly blue to bluish purple. The treatment is stable with no additional durability concerns.

To learn more about tanzanite and other popular gemstones visit GIA.edu/gem-encyclopedia



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