

Birthstone Information

Birthstones tend to be a very personal choice, even to the point that people who don't like the colour of their true birthstone will find any excuse to claim another. You may notice that the colours of the modern and traditional birthstones tend to be the same, implying that (historically speaking) the traditional colour is the important consideration and blue topaz would not be an acceptable birthstone choice for November, only golden topaz. Also, blue sapphire is the traditional colour for September. Note that sapphires come in every colour of the rainbow (except hues of red, given the name ruby), as do tourmalines and even diamonds. Garnet, usually thought of as a red birthstone, actually is available in a variety of colours including orange, green, and even the lovely deep purple colour of grapes. Remember, however here at **Crystal Connection** we believe that there are no wrong birthstone choices. And we can take any stone and turn it into a unique, personal gift for you or any member of your family.

It would seem that the custom of wearing birthstones first became popular in Poland during the fifteenth or sixteenth century. And it is thought that each birthstone is worn in turn during its month, as the power of the stone is heightened at that time. This would seem to be an excuse for buying all twelve stones and rotating them.

Most scholars believe that the original tradition of birthstones arose from the breastplate of Aaron, a ceremonial garment set with gemstones to represent the twelve tribes of Israel. These were set in gold filigree and each stone was engraved with the name of the tribe. People of Jewish heritage may wish to select their birthstones based on tribal names. Paul E Desautels (1920-1991) the curator of minerals at the US National Museum of Natural History, author of the Gem Kingdom offered the following list which uses modern gemstone names.

RUEBEN	CARNELIAN
SIMEON	PERIDOT
LEVI	EMERALD
JUDAH	GARNET
ISSACHER	LAPIS LAZULI
ZEBULUN	ROCK CRYSTAL
JOSEPH	ZIRCON
BENJAMIN	AGATE
DAN	AMETHYST
NAPHTALI	CITRINE
GAD	ONYX
ASSHER	JASPER

The choice as always is with the customer. For a wide selection of tumbled gemstones, collector's minerals and birthstone jewellery visit www.crystalconnection.co.uk

DECEMBER

MODERN BIRTHSTONE TURQUOISE, BLUE TOPAZ OR TANZANITE
ZODIAC FOR SAGITTARIUS TOPAZ

ANCIENT TRADITIONAL BIRTHSTONES

HEBREW	RUBY
ROMAN	RUBY
ARABIC	RUBY
HINDU	TOPAZ
POLISH	TURQUOISE

Tanzanite is relatively new on the gemstone market, but has left its mark. Its blue-lavender colour is rather unique and a wonderful addition to the gemstone palette. Found in Tanzania (hence the name) in 1967, it has since become a well known and widely distributed gemstone. It has become so popular that in October of 2002 the American Gem Trade Association (AGTA) announced that tanzanite had joined zircon and turquoise in the traditional list of birthstones for the month of December.

Nearly all tanzanite has been heat treated to generate the beautiful violet-blue colour this stone is known for. When first mined, most stones are a muted green colour. The only known source of Tanzanite is a five square mile hilltop at Merelani, ten miles south of the Kilimanjaro International Airport in Tanzania.

For centuries turquoise has been treated as a holy gemstone and as a good luck charm. Ancient Egyptian tombs from about 3,000 B.C. contain the oldest proof of human kind's attention in turquoise. There were lovely artifacts adorned with this popular gemstone that were hidden with the royal dead.

Topaz is an aluminum fluorite silicate containing fluorine and has a chemical formula of $Al_2F_2SiO_4$. It is one of the few gem minerals which, under suitable conditions, grow into enormous crystals. Topaz typically occurs in cavities in rhyolites and granite, in pegmatite dikes, and in high-temperature veins with cassiterite and tourmaline. The stone is transparent with a vitreous luster. A light yellow, brown and pink variety of topaz are valued as a gemstone. The pure crystals of topaz used a great deal in jewelry. All three of these birthstones can be made into wonderful pieces of jewellery.

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