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The Diamond Buying Guide

For many people, buying a diamond is a big decision. With that consideration, TADragon recognizes the importance of understanding exactly what you are buying. Below is a guide that educates you on the 4 Cs-cut, color, clarity, and carat weight, as well as diamond shapes and grading report (certifications). After reading this guide, you will be better equipped with the knowledge to choose the diamond that is right for you.

The Shapes of Diamonds



Round The round brilliant cut diamond is by far the most popular diamond shape available today. A round diamond will typically give you more flexibility in terms of balancing cut, color, and clarity grades while still getting the fire and brilliance you want.

Princess This is the most popular non-round diamond. Its beautiful brilliance and unique cut makes it a favorite for engagement rings. The princess has pointed corners and is traditionally square in shape.

Emerald What makes this shape different is its pavilion, which is cut with rectangular facets to create a unique optical appearance. Due to its larger, open table, this shape highlights the clarity of a diamond. Also, emerald-cut diamonds can vary greatly in how rectangular they are. To find the shape of emerald you want, look for the length-to-width ratio, which will determine the diamond's outline, or what it will look like when viewed from the top.

Marquise The shape of a marquise diamond can maximize carat weight, giving you a much larger-looking diamond. This brilliant-cut diamond looks beautiful set with round or pear-shaped side stones, and the length of the marquise

Oval	An oval diamond has beautiful brilliance that's similar to a round diamond. Oval diamonds are also very popular as their length can accentuate long, slender fingers.
Pear	This brilliant-cut diamond is also called a teardrop for its single point and rounded end. The unique look of the pear shape helps make it a popular choice for a variety of diamond jewelry. If you choose an elongated pear shape, the length of the diamond creates a subtle slimming effect on the fingers.
Radiant	Trimmed corners are the signature of this diamond, and they help make the radiant-cut a popular and versatile choice for jewelry. A radiant-cut looks equally beautiful set with either baguette or round side-diamonds. Radiant-cut diamonds can vary in their degree of rectangularity.
Heart	The heart is the ultimate symbol of love. The unique look of the heart-shaped diamond helps make it a distinctive choice for a variety of diamond jewelry.
Cushion	This unique shape has been popular for more than a century. Cushion-cut diamonds (also known as "pillow-cut" diamonds) have rounded corners and larger facets to increase their brilliance. These larger facets highlight the diamond's clarity.
Other	Other shapes include asscher, triangle, baguette, straight baguette, trapezoid, etc.

The Cut of Diamonds

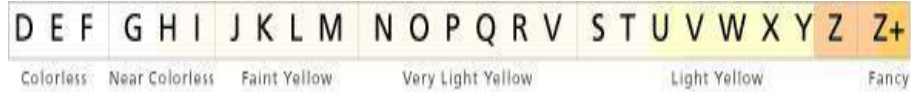
When you think of the cut, you probably think of the shape of the diamond. You are partially correct. While cut does refer to shape, it also refers to the proportions of how the diamond is actually cut.

Diamonds are cut into many different shapes, reflecting not only popular taste but the proportions and quality of the rough diamond. The most popular shapes include Round, Oval, Square, Princess, Emerald, Baguette, and Marquise cuts. Many specialty shapes are also available.

A diamond's overall proportions, as well as the size and placement of its many reflective surfaces or facets, also play a large part in "cut." The consistency and balance of these can greatly affect how the stone captures light and reflects it back to the eye.

The Colors of Diamonds

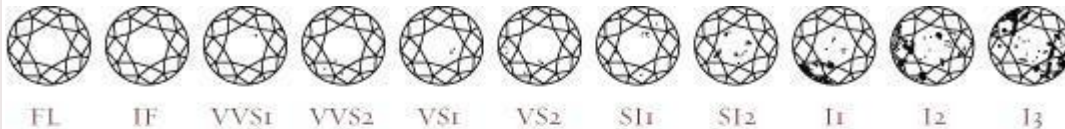
With the exception of some fancy colored diamonds, the most valuable diamonds are those with the least color. The color scale for transparent diamonds runs from D-F (colorless), G-J (near colorless), K-L (faint yellow), to Z (light yellow). Completely colorless diamonds are rare.



D	Absolutely colorless. The highest color grade, which is extremely rare.
E-F	Colorless. Only minute traces of color can be detected by an expert gemologist. A rare diamond.
G-H	Near-colorless. Color noticeable when compared to diamonds of better grades, but these grades offer excellent value
I-J	Near-colorless. Color slightly detectable. An excellent value.
K-Z	Noticeable color.

The Clarity of Diamonds

A diamond's clarity is measured by the existence, or absence, of visible flaws. Tiny surface blemishes or internal inclusions -- even those seen only under magnification with a jeweler's loupe -- can alter the brilliance of the diamond and, thus, effect its value. Clarity levels begin with Flawless (F & IF) and move down to Very Very Slight (VVS1 & 2), Very Slight (VS1 & 2), Slightly Included (SI1 & 2), and Included (I1, 2 & 3).



FL, IF Diamonds	Flawless: No internal or external flaws Internally Flawless: No internal flaws
VVS1, VVS2 Diamonds	Very, Very Slightly Included: Very difficult to see inclusions with 10x magnification.
VS1, VS2 Diamonds	Very slightly included: Inclusions are not typically visible to the unaided eye
SI1, SI2 Diamonds	Slightly Included: Inclusions are visible under 10x magnification and may be visible with the unaided eye
I1, I2, I3 Diamonds	Included: Inclusions are visible with the unaided eye

The Carat Weight of Diamonds

The size of a diamond is measured, not by its dimensions, but by weight. One carat, the traditional unit of measure for diamonds, is equal to approximately 0.2 grams. You may also hear the weight of a diamond referred to in points. A point is equal to 1/100 of a carat; therefore, a 75-point diamonds equals 0.75 carat. Diamonds of equal weight may appear slightly different in size, depending on their depth and proportions. Because they are quite rare, larger diamonds of gem quality are much more valuable.



The Diamond Certificates (Grading Reports)

It is very important to obtain a diamond certificate, or so called grading report before you spend a lot of money on a high quality diamond. Please refer to the details of "Facts About Diamond Certificates" in our store to learn the important facts about:

- What is a Diamond Certificate?
- What are the major diamond grading institutions?
- Why are GIA certified diamonds more expensive given the same characteristics of the diamond?
- What is the difference between a Diamond Grading Report and an Appraisal?
- How to buy a diamond on Ebay or online in general?

If you have any questions regarding diamonds, you can call TADragon at 805-277-7232 or email us at sales@tadragon.com.