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GEMSTONE WORKSHOPS

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OPAL

# Introduction to Opal

## Key Points :

- **Discovery:** New South Wales in the late 1880s
- **Origin:** Australia, Ethiopia
- **Gemstone Family:** Opal
- **Fun fact:** Opal is now considered the national stone of Australia with 95% of the world market being supplied by them.





# History of Opal

Name evolved from the Roman word “Opalus”

- Opalus means “change of color”
- Queen Victoria was a fan of opals
- There are two broad classes of opal: precious and common. Precious opal displays play-of-color, common opal does not
- With an eternal kaleidoscope of fiery color, the opal is one of the most appealing and fascinating gems in the world



# Unique Properties and Characteristics



- Opals are primarily composed of hydrated silicon dioxide ( $\text{SiO}_2 \cdot n\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ), commonly known as silica.
- They exhibit a play of color or opalescence due to the diffraction and interference of light with microscopic silica spheres.
- It falls in the category of Phenomenal Gemstones, which is only 1% of all available gemstones.
- Notable opal discoveries have been made in Lightning Ridge and Coober Pedy, Australia, as well as in Ethiopia and the United States.
- Opals have adorned famous jewelry pieces, including tiaras and brooches, and have historical and royal significance.





### **Pleasant to the Eyes**

The opal is celebrated for its spectacle of rainbow-like hues, which vary with lighting or angle of observation. This gem displays the liveliest play of color and fire.



### **Not Easy to Find**

Premium grade opal is rare, perhaps found only 6 ounces a year, having spectacular colors; bright and vivid patterns, and free of matrix.



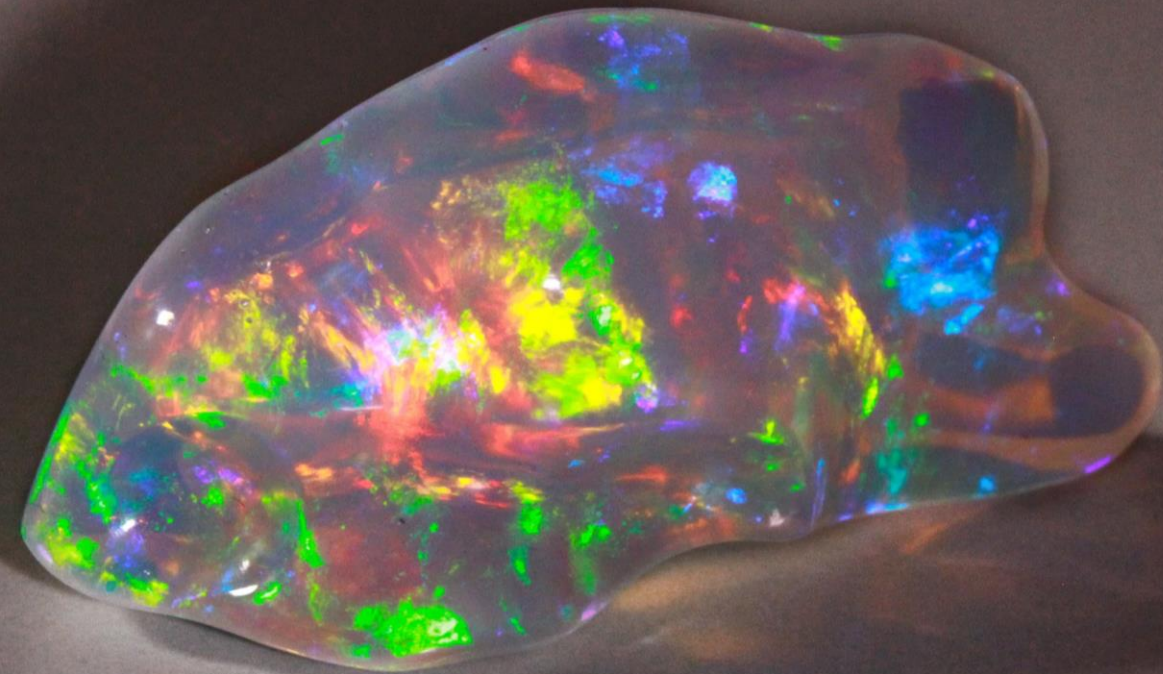
### **Fun Fact**

The development of this gem started millions of years ago when a mixture of silica & water flowed into cracks and holes in the ground. Over time it hardened and solidified to turn into opal.



# Gemological Properties

- **Amorphous Structure:** This lack of crystallinity is responsible for their unique optical properties.
- **Hardness:** 5.5-6, on the Moh's Scale.
- **Toughness:** Moderate
- **Transparency:** Semi Translucent to Opaque
- **Luster:** Vitreous (glass-like) luster
- **Phenomena:** Play of colour
- **Treatment:** Dyed, Smoke and Sugar Treatment.

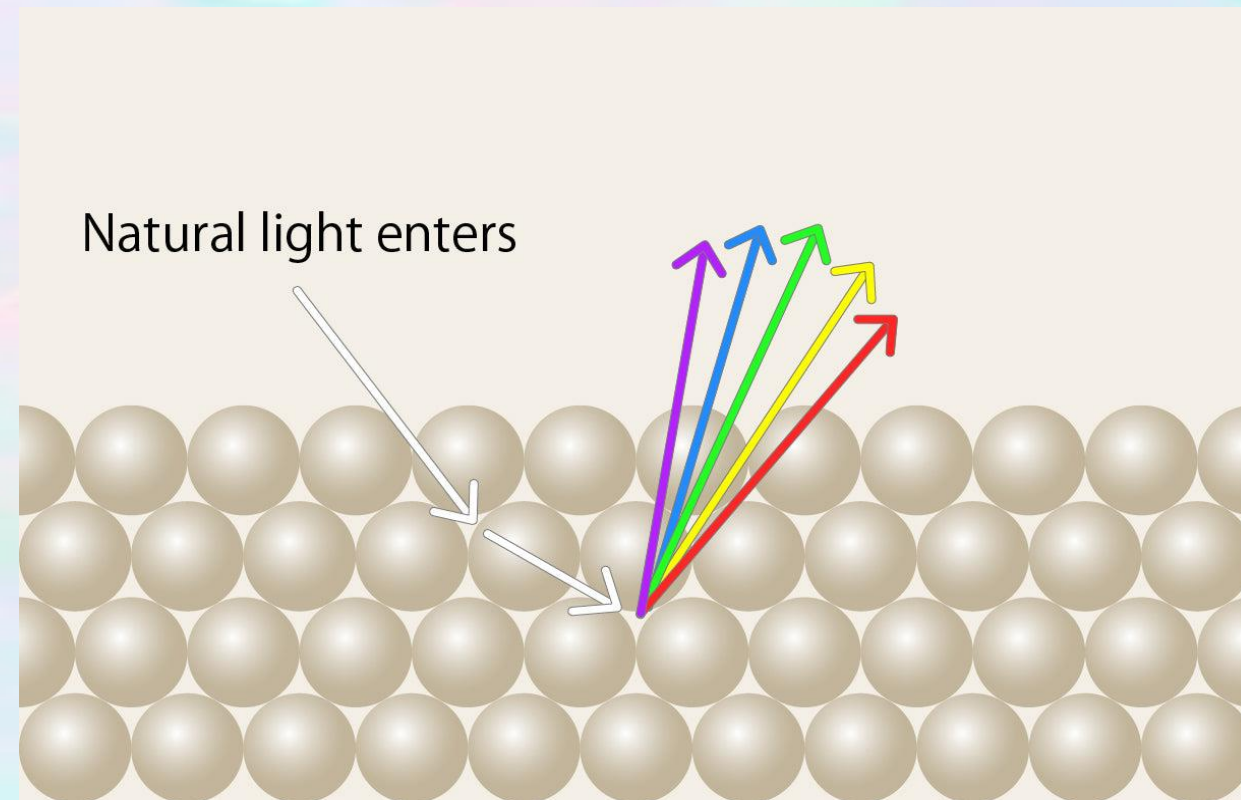


# Play of Color

**Phenomenon:** The "Play of Color" is a captivating effect where opals display a shifting array of colors as they move or as the light hits them from different angles.

**Cause:** This effect is caused by the internal structure of opals, which consists of tiny silica spheres arranged in a regular pattern.

**Light Diffraction:** When light enters the opal, it diffracts through these silica spheres, splitting into different colors.



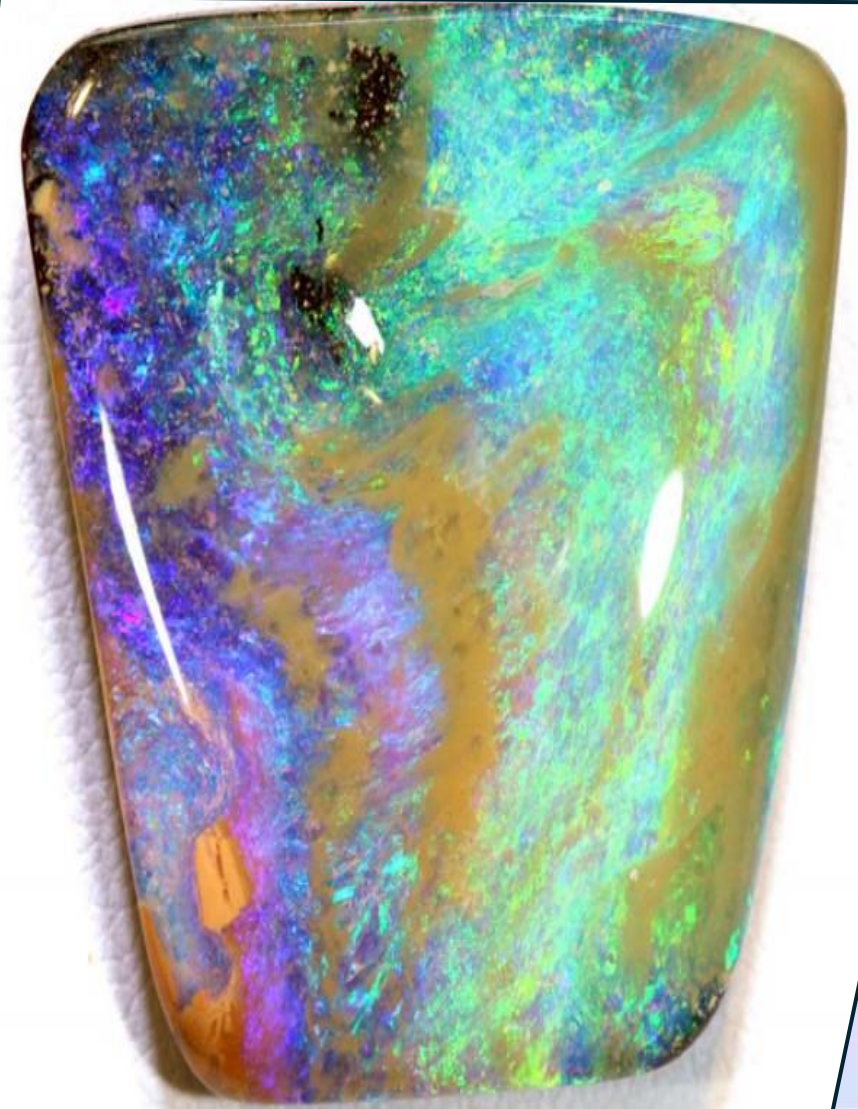


# Play of Color

**Color Range:** The colors can range from reds, oranges, and yellows to greens, blues, and purples, depending on the size and arrangement of the spheres.

**Value Factor:** Opals with a more intense, broad, and vivid play of color are considered more valuable and highly prized in jewelry.

**Unique Quality:** This play of color effect is unique to opals, setting them apart from other gemstones and making them a popular choice for collectors and jewelry enthusiasts.





# Interesting Facts

- Australia produces over 90% of the world's opals since the late 1800s.
- Other opal-producing countries include Zambia, Ethiopia, USA, Brazil, and Mexico.
- Throughout most of history, opal has been regarded as the luckiest and most magical of all gems because it can show all colors.
- The Olympic Australis, the world's largest and most valuable gem opal, found in Coober Pedy.



# Interesting Facts

- The Andamooka Opal, presented to Queen Elizabeth II, also known as the Queen's Opal
- The Galaxy Opal, listed as the "World's Largest Polished Opal" in the 1992 *Guinness Book of Records*
- The Rainbow Virgin, "the finest crystal opal specimen ever unearthed"





# Mining

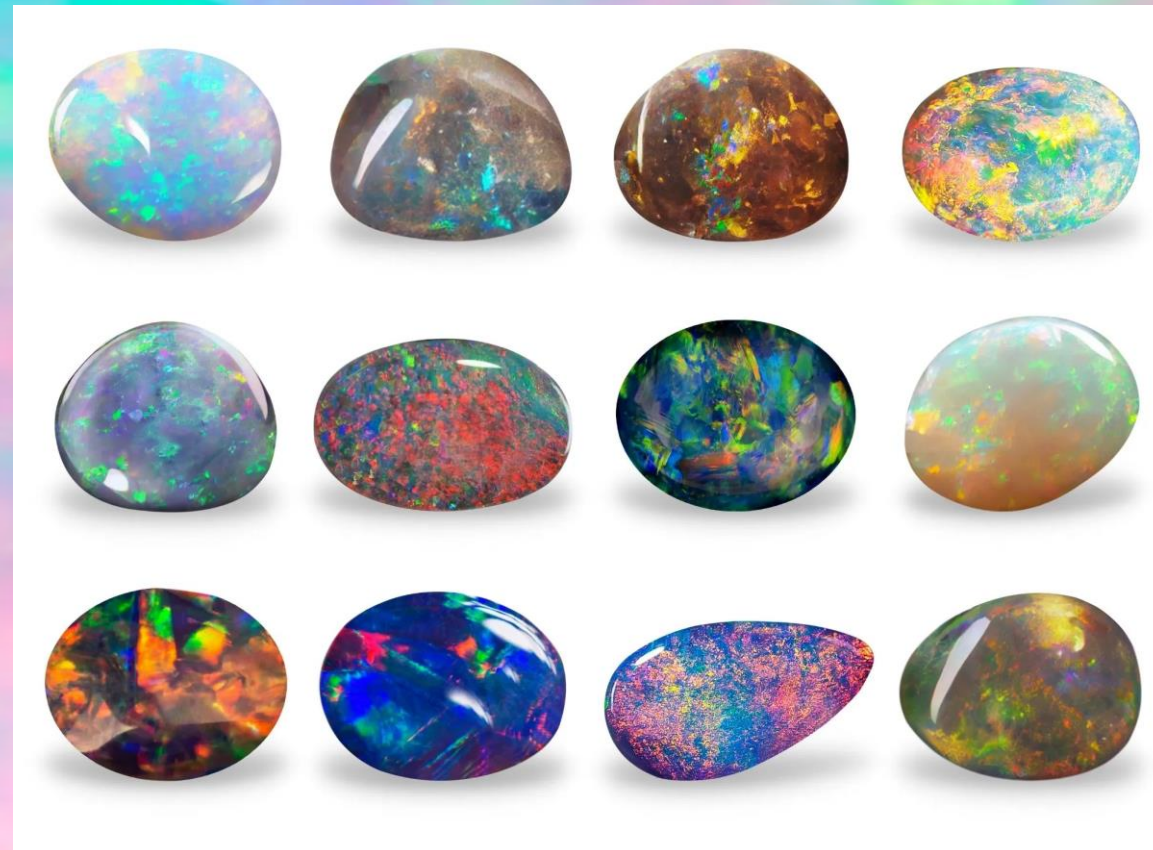


**Major Locations:** Australia is the largest producer of opals in the world, accounting for about 95% of global opal production. Major mining areas include Coober Pedy, Lightning Ridge, and Andamooka. Other countries with notable opal deposits include Ethiopia, Mexico, and Brazil.

**Types of Opal Mines:** There are two primary types of opal mines—open-cut and underground. Open-cut mining involves removing large amounts of soil to expose the opal-bearing rock, while underground mining involves digging tunnels and shafts to access deeper opal deposits.



# TYPES OF OPAL





# ETHIOPIAN — WELO — OPAL

- 1. Vivid Play of Color:** Displays a broad range of colors that shift with movement and light.
- 2. Hydrophane Nature:** Absorbs water, enhancing transparency and color, and returns to its original state when dry.
- 3. Durability:** More resistant to cracking than some opals but requires careful handling due to water sensitivity.
- 4. Origin:** Found in Ethiopia's Welo region; valued for its beauty and affordability.



# Ethiopian Welo Opal Jewelry at Shop LC



**Item:** 3365126

**Premium Ethiopian Welo Opal and White Zircon 4.50 ctw Ring in Platinum Over Sterling Silver, Opal Ring, Natural Zircon Ring, Trilogy Ring**

**Price: \$299.99**



**Item:** 4272856

**Premium Ethiopian Welo Opal Elongated Pendant Necklace 20 Inches in Vermeil YG and Platinum Over Sterling Silver 1.75 ctw**

**Price: \$69.99**



**Item:** 7717705

**Luxoro Premium Ethiopian Welo Opal 5.00 ctw Solitaire Ring in 14K White Gold (Size 7.5) 4 Grams**

**Price: \$1,099.99**



# Fire Opal



**1.Vibrant Colors:** Known for its fiery hues of red, orange, and yellow, often without a play of color.

**2.Transparency:** Can range from transparent to translucent, adding to its visual appeal.

**3.Source:** Primarily found in Mexico, making it a popular gem in Mexican jewelry.

**4.Symbolism:** Represents passion and energy, often associated with love and creativity.



# Fire Opal Jewelry at Shop LC



**Item:** 7885529

**Mexican Cherry Fire Opal and Moissanite 0.55 ctw Leaf Halo Ring in 18K Vermeil Yellow Gold Over Sterling Silver**

**Price: \$49.99**



**Item:** 7517554

**Mexican Fire Opal and Moissanite 3.50 ctw Hoop Earrings in Vermeil Yellow Gold Over Sterling Silver**

**Price: \$194.99**



**Item:** 7730817

**Luxoro 10K Yellow Gold AAA Crimson Fire Opal, 12 Natural Yellow and White Diamond Ring 4 Grams 4.00 ctw**

**Price: \$1,739.99**



# Boulder Opal

- 1.Unique Patterns:** Features vibrant opal veins interwoven with the natural ironstone matrix, creating distinctive designs.
- 2.Durability:** More durable than other opals due to its ironstone backing, which provides added strength.
- 3.Color Play:** Exhibits a brilliant play of color, often enhanced by the contrast with the dark host rock.
- 4.Origin:** Primarily sourced from Queensland, Australia, and highly prized for its natural, earthy appearance.



# Boulder Opal Jewelry at Shop LC



**Item:** 4291447

**Boulder Opal Triplet 1.00 ctw  
Pendant Necklace 20 Inches in  
Stainless Steel**

**Price: \$19.99**



**Item:** 7675367

**Luxoro 14K Yellow Gold Premium  
Boulder Opal Doublet and G-H I2  
Diamond Halo Ring 3.60 ctw**

**Price: \$1,039.99**



**Item:** 8732561

**Boulder Opal Triplet 0.80 ctw  
Solitaire Stud Earrings in Platinum  
Over Sterling Silver**

**Price: \$24.99**



# Pink Opal

- 1.Soft, Romantic Hue:** Known for its delicate shades of pink, ranging from light blush to deeper rose tones.
- 2.Opaque Appearance:** Typically has a smooth, opaque finish, giving it a calming and soothing look.
- 3.Non-Play-of-Color:** Unlike other opals, Pink Opal does not exhibit a play of color, valued mainly for its pure pink shade.
- 4.Source:** Mainly found in Peru, with additional deposits in Australia and the USA.



# Pink Opal Jewelry at Shop LC



**Item:** 7855181

**Pink Opal 103.75 ctw Beaded  
Necklace in Stainless Steel 20  
Inches**

**Price: \$14.99**



**Item:** 7845648

**Premium Peruvian Pink Opal and  
Madagascar Pink Sapphire Ring in  
Vermeil YG and Platinum Over  
Sterling Silver 5.90 ctw**

**Price: \$359.99**



**Item:** 7523125

**Peruvian Pink Opal 16.50 ctw  
Necklace, Sterling Silver Necklace, 18  
Inch Necklace, Filigree Necklace**

**Price: \$119.99**



# Care and Maintenance

- **Cleaning:** Use mild soap and warm water with a soft brush; avoid harsh chemicals and ultrasonic cleaners.
- **Handling:** Handle carefully to prevent scratches and impacts; store separately in a soft pouch or cloth-lined box.
- **Regular Checks:** Inspect for loose settings or damage periodically



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THANK YOU