



GIA[®]
Diamond
Origin

BOTSWANA



Billion Years

More than a billion years ago, 100 miles (161 km) or more beneath the earth's surface, in a cauldron of extreme temperatures and high pressure, carbon atoms bonded tightly together. At temperatures higher than 2100°F (1150°C) and pressures 45,000 times greater than at sea level, crystals formed, resulting in the hardest natural mineral on Earth: diamond.

Diamonds remained hidden deep within the earth for hundreds of millions of years, until volcanic activity violently transported them upwards towards the earth's surface in magma. Vertical rock formations, called "kimberlite pipes," are remnants of these ancient volcanoes. Erosion subsequently frees rough diamonds from their host rock to be transported by rivers and deposited sometimes at great distances, from their original source. Miners in places like India and Brazil would uncover them in alluvial deposits. Today, most diamonds are found in kimberlite pipes, which are the primary source of mined diamonds.

The discovery of a kimberlite pipe in South Africa in 1869 marks the beginning of the modern diamond industry. With it came the development of mining operations that produce tens of millions of carats of rough diamonds each year – that includes a major discovery in Botswana in 1967, as well as other areas of Africa, Australia, Siberia and the Northwest Territories of Canada.

Incredible Birth

At the time Botswana gained its independence from Britain in 1966, it also had the distinction of being one of the world's poorest countries. With the majority of the country located in the Kalahari Desert there was little arable land on which to grow crops and few indigenous industries to support its people.

Botswana's newly formed government headed by Sir Seretse Khama was committed to the rule of law and enacted policies that ensured income from the country's bountiful natural resources for the benefit of the country's citizens. Botswana is now Africa's oldest democracy and one of its most prosperous countries.

While diamond prospecting had occurred for nearly a decade prior, it was the discovery of a large kimberlite pipe at Orapa in 1967 that set the country on a steady growth path. In the 40 years following, there have been additional discoveries, and today some 20% of Botswana's population is employed in the diamond industry. The country continues to see strong economic growth.

Famous diamonds from Botswana abound. In 2015, a 1,109 carat diamond – the second largest ever – was found at the Lucara mine in Botswana. Named Lesedi La Rona ("Our Light" in the local Setswana language), it sold for \$53 million USD at auction in 2018. When Prince Harry proposed in 2017 to Meghan Markle, now Duchess of Sussex, he chose to proclaim his love with an engagement ring holding a cushion cut center diamond sourced in Botswana where the couple reportedly fell in love.





Transformation Journey

The transformation of diamond rough into polished stones requires a blend of old-world craftsmanship and high-tech tools. Today, Surat, India is the primary diamond cutting and polishing center. Other cutting centers historically have included New York, Antwerp and Tel Aviv.

The hardness of the material requires highly trained artisans who use specialized saws, laser equipment and polishing tools to complete the task in stages. Traditionally, cutters fashioned the rough into a finished stone by hand. Today, computer imaging and lasers aid the cutter in revealing the stone's beauty. First, the diamond cutter must assess the rough to determine how to cut the most beautiful diamond – or diamonds, as one piece of rough can yield multiple finished diamonds. To achieve the greatest yield, each cutter must decide whether a round, rectangular, pear, marquise or square gem can best be fashioned from the rough. The gem's sparkle is unleashed through a series of processes including shaping, faceting and polishing.

GIA and other diamond grading laboratories evaluate the quality of polished diamonds using the 4Cs of Diamond Quality (Color, Clarity, Cut and Carat Weight), the international standard created by GIA, and issue grading reports documenting their assessment. The GIA Diamond Origin Report for your diamond includes this independent and objective analysis in addition to confirming the country of its origin.

Doing Good

Botswana is a success built by diamonds. From the first diamond mine, opened in Orapa in 1972, fast forward to the present. Botswana is a country dramatically transformed.

Through socially responsible leadership, diamond mining has built hospitals, schools and roads, transforming Botswana into one of Africa's most prosperous countries. Literacy rates have reached above 80%, and healthcare and compulsory primary education are free. Well over 90% of the population has access to clean drinking water and electricity, and the country has more than 6,000 miles (9656 km) of paved road today, compared to fewer than 10 miles (16 km) at its independence in 1966.

The country is also actively building employment in diamond manufacturing and processing in addition to diamond mining. With approximately 20% of its population employed by the diamond industry, Botswana and the diamond industry have created a middle class and produced a stable economy.



Doing Good

The country's diamond mining revenue has grown and diversified, raising living standards and enabling creation of jobs outside the industry. Food and beverage processing, textiles and light engineering are other growth areas for the country and its people. The government is investing in national parks that provide safe haven for wildlife including lions, zebras and elephants. Tourism is supporting new hotels, restaurants and entertainment venues across the country.

“For our people, every diamond purchase represents food on the table, better living conditions, better healthcare, potable and safe drinking water, more roads to connect our remote communities, and much more.”

— Festus Mogae, past president of Botswana



Every diamond has a story. Now make this story part of your own.

About GIA

The Gemological Institute of America® is internationally recognized as the leader in gem research, education and laboratory services. Committed to protecting all purchasers of gemstones and jewelry, the Institute developed the International Diamond Grading System™ and the 4Cs of Diamond Quality, and continues to set the standard for grading and identification practices used all over the world.



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