

# Purchasing or inheriting gemstones and precious metals

*How can you find out if they were ethically sourced?*

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In today's marketplace, finding and purchasing ethically sourced jewelry is more valued than ever. What exactly is ethical sourcing?

Ethical sourcing for jewelry is a consideration throughout the supply chain. Are the products being sourced in a sustainable, responsible way? Are the workers that mine/make the products safe and fairly treated? What about social and environmental impacts? All of this criterion is factored in during ethical sourcing.

## Ethically Sourcing Colored Gemstones

Sad to say, not every jewelry component is responsibly sourced. How can you tell? Let's take a colored gemstone as an example.

Most colored gemstones come out of a mine. Much of the mining is done by hand. So how can you tell which colored gemstones are ethically sourced? In many cases, these colored gemstones are bought by dealers who regularly travel and are familiar with the areas. They know both the mine and miners where gemstones come out of the ground, as well as the jeweler who is selling it to you. These dealers take into account the social and environmental considerations throughout the supply chain, as they process an uncut piece of rough into a sparkling gemstone.

One such non-profit foundation is Gem Legacy. Their mission is to support education, vocational training, and local economies in East African colored gemstone mining communities. They are on the ground,

working with local mining communities to ensure all the colored gemstones they are involved with are ethically sourced.

## Other Ethically Sourced Jewelry

Ethically sourced jewelry does not stop at colored gemstones. Consider these additional categories:

### Diamonds

There are a number of diamond producers that know everything about how their stones were sourced. They advertise these facts and can offer you corresponding paperwork.

There is also the Kimberley Process that helps to regulate diamonds and ensure they are conflict-free. From their website: "The Kimberley Process (KP) is a multilateral trade regime established in 2003 with the goal of preventing the flow of conflict diamonds. The core of this regime is the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) under which States implement safeguards on shipments of rough diamonds and certify them as 'conflict free.'"

### Recycled Precious Metals

Precious metals such as platinum, silver and gold are classified as non-ferrous. This means that these metals keep their chemical and physical properties during the recycling process. They can be recycled an infinite number of times. These facts matter because it takes a lot of earth and effort to mine precious metals. This also reduces landfill waste.



## Estate/Pre-Owned Jewelry

While it's likely you won't know much about the history of the piece and how it was sourced, it is a piece that is already produced and won't use natural or human resources to create today.

## Buying Ethically Sourced Jewelry

Visiting your local jewelry store offers you in-person, one-on-one service as well as the chance to support your community. Your community's experts are those in independent businesses that have full control over their own inventory and buying policies. They know where their jewelry comes from and how they arrived in their showcases — one more vital facet of ethics and responsible sourcing.

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