How to Choose Gemstone Color, Shape & Size for Custom Jewelry

Gemstone Names & Buying Guide · https://imiyoo.com/FAQ/how-to-choose-gemstone-color-shape-size-for-custom-jewelry/

Choosing a gemstone can be the most enjoyable part of designing a piece of jewelry. You might already know the color you want but feel less sure about the shape, cut or size.

Here's a simple way to narrow it down: **start with the color you love, choose the shape that fits your style, and then look at how the stone will sit in the finished piece.**

You don't have to make every decision at once.

Start with color, not just the gemstone name

With colored gemstones, the shade you see usually matters more than how much the stone sparkles.

A **royal blue** might feel bold and classic. A lighter **cornflower blue** can look softer. One green may lean yellow, while another leans blue. Two stones described as “pink” can look very different when placed side by side.

When comparing colors, pay attention to:

- **Hue:** the basic color family, such as red, blue, green or pink.
- **Tone:** how light or dark the color looks.
- **Saturation:** how strong or muted the color appears.

Photos are helpful, but lighting and screen settings can change how colors look. If you're trying to match a specific shade, share a reference photo and describe what you like about it. We'll discuss the closest material and color options.

Shape and cut aren't quite the same thing

A gemstone's **shape** is its outline when viewed from above: oval, round, pear, cushion, heart and so on.

Its **cut** also describes the arrangement of the facets—the surfaces that control how the stone handles light.

For example, an oval stone may have brilliant-style or mixed faceting. A rectangular gemstone may be cut with broad step facets or with a more sparkly radiant-style pattern.

That's why two stones with the same outline can look surprisingly different.

Which gemstone shape fits your style?

There isn't one “best” shape. Here are a few looks to consider.

Shape	The look	Useful to know
Round	Balanced, classic and symmetrical	A versatile choice for many settings
Oval	Elongated and graceful	Can create a larger-looking face-up impression depending on proportions
Cushion	Soft corners and a vintage feel	Works beautifully with many rich gemstone colors
Pear	Rounded on one end, pointed on the other	Lovely for pendants or an elongated ring look; protect the point
Marquise	Long, tapered and dramatic	Can visually lengthen the finger; both tips need protection
Emerald-style rectangle	Clean, architectural lines	Often paired with step facets; reveals color and inclusions clearly
Square	Modern and geometric	Ask about the facet pattern and corner protection
Heart	Romantic and personal	Symmetry matters; its outline can be less obvious in very small stones
Triangle / trillion	Distinctive and angular	Corners are worth protecting in the setting

Shape	The look	Useful to know
Cabochon	Smooth, rounded surface without traditional facets	Emphasizes color or certain optical effects rather than sparkle

These are design ideas, not guarantees that every shape is available in every gemstone material and color.

What about radiant, princess and emerald cuts?

These names are easy to mix up because they tell you something about the outline **and** the facet design.

Emerald cut: Usually a rectangle with cut corners and long, step-like facets. The appeal is its clean geometry and open view of the stone's color. Because its broad facets show the interior more clearly, clarity and cutting are important.

Radiant cut: Often square or rectangular with trimmed corners, but with a more brilliant-style facet pattern. It can give you a lively look while keeping a structured outline.

Princess cut: Usually square with pointed corners and a brilliant-style facet arrangement. It has a crisp, modern feel. Those sharp corners need careful protection, especially in a ring.

For colored gems, don't judge a cut only by how many flashes of light you see. You also want the cut to make the color look appealing, rather than too dark or washed out.

Brilliant, step and mixed cuts: what's the difference?

A **brilliant-style cut** uses facets arranged to create lively reflections and sparkle.

A **step cut** uses rows of more open, parallel facets, often highlighting color, transparency and clean lines.

A **mixed cut** combines different facet styles. It can help balance brightness, color and other cutting priorities.

You might also encounter **rose cuts**, **checkerboard cuts**, **freeform designs** or **carved stones**. These can create a more distinctive look, but they're not necessary to get a beautiful result.

How big should your gemstone be?

It's tempting to choose by **carat weight**, but carats measure weight—not how big a gemstone looks on your hand.

Two stones of the same carat weight may have different face-up dimensions because of their shape, depth and material. An oval may look larger from above than a deeper stone of similar weight, although the actual proportions matter.

For custom jewelry, it helps to think in **millimeters**, too:

- The **length and width** tell you how much space the stone may take up in the design.
- The **depth** affects how the stone fits into its setting and can influence its appearance.
- The **carat weight** is still useful, but it shouldn't be your only size reference.

If you already have a ring design in mind, the stone's measurements may matter as much as its carat weight.

Does a larger gemstone always look better?

Not necessarily. A larger stone can be a striking centerpiece, but the right balance depends on the jewelry design, the metal setting, your hand or neckline and your personal style.

A deep, dark stone may look even darker at a larger size. A cut that's too shallow can appear washed out or let light escape through the center. Sometimes a slightly smaller stone with attractive color and proportions gives a better overall look.

Lab-grown options may let you explore larger sizes or different colors at a more comfortable price than comparable high-quality natural gems. What matters most is choosing a stone that looks right **in your piece**, not just on a specification sheet.

What should you send us for a custom gemstone request?

You can start with just a few details: the color you love, a favorite shape, an approximate size and the piece you're making.

If you have a photo, that helps. If you don't know the exact dimensions or cut, that's fine too. We can discuss the look you're aiming for and check the material, size and cutting options before moving forward.

Frequently asked questions

Is an oval gemstone always larger-looking than a round one?
Not always. Ovals can create an elongated face-up look, but the actual dimensions and depth make the difference.

Does an emerald cut have to be an emerald gemstone?
No. “Emerald cut” describes a cutting style. Sapphire, spinel and other materials can also be cut that way.

Is a princess cut the same as a radiant cut?
No. Princess cuts usually have pointed corners; radiant cuts generally have trimmed corners. Their facet patterns and appearance can differ too.

Should I choose by carats or millimeters?
Look at both. Carats measure weight; millimeters tell you the stone's actual dimensions.

Can I request an unusual shape or exact size?
Yes, you can ask. We'll check whether that combination of color, material, shape and dimensions is practical for your custom jewelry.