

## Aquamarine - March



The gemstone aquamarine is the blue, or perhaps more correctly, blue-green or aqua variety of the mineral beryl.

The hardness and durability of aquamarine make it a fine gemstone, and its light blue or aqua color makes it a fine choice when the harsher colors of some other gemstones would overwhelm or distract from an outfit. Its typical delicate color allows it to be used in a larger stone where its beauty can be impressive.

Aquamarine is colored by trace amounts of iron, and most gem aquamarines have been heat treated to produce the popular blue-green colors from less desirable yellow or pale stones. The leading producer of aquamarines is the country of Brazil, which has many mines. Pakistan, as well as many U.S. localities, produce wonderful specimens as well. Recently, a new mine in China has produced large numbers of excellent flat (stubby) hexagonal crystals, for a fraction of the price of those beautiful Pakistan specimens.

Aquamarine is sometimes found in huge crystals (unlike emerald). It is also known in a glassy form, often without showing crystal form, and sometimes with many holes or other odd shapes. Other times a large cluster of prismatic crystals can be seen to all have the same alignment - a sign that it is really a single crystal with many faces.