

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO PEARLS



Your Complete Resource
To These Luminous Gems

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME

This guide was created for those curious about pearls or those who have been avid lovers of these ocean treasures.

Go on a journey with me as we walk through the illustrious history of pearls, the process of cultivation, smart standards for evaluating pearls, how to care for your pearl jewelry, savvy styling tips, and much more.



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The background of the image is a close-up, shallow depth-of-field shot of numerous pearls. The pearls are in various shades of white, cream, and light pink, with some showing iridescent colors. They are scattered across the frame, with some in sharp focus and others blurred. A large, white, rectangular text box is centered over the image, containing the title and subtitle.

SECTION 01.

HISTORY OF PEARLS

The World's Oldest
Discovered Gem

EARLY BEGINNINGS

ANCIENT APPEAL

These ocean treasures have a long history before we successfully intervened in Mother Nature's perfect process to create the world's oldest discovered gem.

Ancient tribes living near the coast merely looking for food came across a much different kind of resource whose earthy glow made its value undeniable.

These shimmering anomalies would soon be revered for their rare beauty by significant historical figures throughout the next millennia.

Pearls discovery was before the written history of civilizations; its significance passed through tales of mythology until its recorded glory.

All that is autobiographical.
The pearl is the oyster's
autobiography.

- Federico Fellini

FIRST RECORDS

You can trace back clues to its prized nature back to 420 BC when pearl jewelry fragments were discovered in a sarcophagus of a Persian princess. By the time written records appeared on the scene, there were already notable mentions of these lustrous beauties.

The first to appear was among China's long recorded history in a 23rd-century book, the Shu King. Its association to the upper classes of royalty hinted at the rarity of discovering these luminous jewels.

THE WEALTH OF A NATION CONSUMED

IN ONE MEAL



The Egyptians' reverence for pearls' value was made apparent with Cleopatra's grand gesture to prove her nation's wealth during a banquet with Marc Antony. The queen wagered that she could host him the world's most expensive meal. She did so with only two large pearls on the menu, one of which she dissolved one into a glass of wine and drank it down.

Verifying that she could consume a nation's wealth in one meal, Marc Antony conceded, and Cleopatra won the bet. The value of the pearls by today's standards is estimated to be \$9,375,000.

MOST EXPENSIVE MEAL



MADE FAMOUS



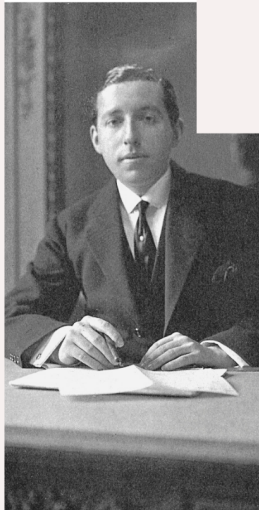
WORLDLY APPEAL FROM EAST TO WEST

The abundance of natural pearl beds in the Persian Gulf made the surrounding Arab nations the pearl trade center. These valuable resources became the source of their wealth long before oil. These trade commodities continued to flourish in Roman times.



Records of the first explorers to travel with the native tribes describe an abundance of pearls worn decoratively in headdresses, necklaces, bracelets, anklets, and even sewn into clothing. Their ancestors and their ancestors before them had long cherished these gems, dating back to prehistoric times.

PIERRE CARTIER 1910



A JEWELRY
DYNASTY BOUGHT



MAISIE PLANT WITH HER
CARTIER PEARLS



WITH
PEARLS

The legendary Cartier mansion, which still operates as Cartier's flagship store, was previously owned by Morton F. Plant, a railroad tycoon. Plant had a beautiful wife, Maisie, who had fallen in love with a double-stranded pearl necklace she saw at the Cartier salon located on the fourth floor of 712 Fifth Street.

It took years for Cartier to match the two strands of 128 natural graduated pearls perfectly. Lucky for Maisie, the million-dollar price tag was equivalent to the property's price at the time in 1916, and so, a deal was made for a trade. The French house of high jewellery had finally found its roots on American soil.



Cartier necklace created in 2016 in tribute to Pierre Cartier and his 1917 purchase of the New York mansion.

SECTION 02.

PEARL CULTIVATION

Bringing Pearls
Back From the
Edge of Extinction

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NATURE VS NURTURE

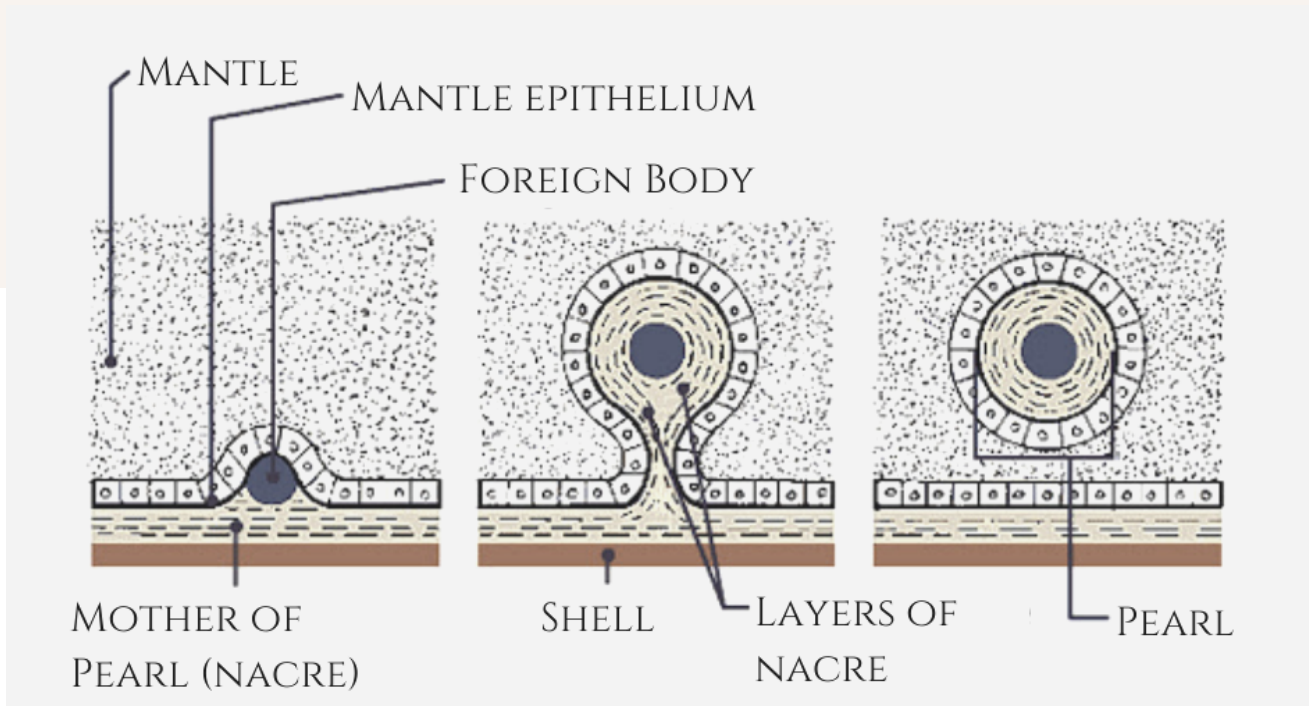
CULTIVATION

If nature perfected the process of how pearls are made, then humanity's touch perfected the production of them.

It all started when the son of a Japanese noodle maker, Kokichi Mikimoto, cultivated the first pearl in 1893.

Thanks to his dedication and twelve years of trial and error, he produced a tiny treasure that would change the course of pearl's history forever.

THE MIRACLE OF HOW A PEARL IS FORMED



Pearls result from an oyster's natural ability to protect itself from irritants that breach its outer shell.

This defensive system works similar to the way a callous would form on your body.

It does this by secreting a silky, crystalline substance called 'nacre' around the irritant, creating a protective layer

The longer the irritant stays inside the oyster, the more layers of nacre it will produce and the larger the pearl will become.

The properties of nacre are what give a pearl its unique luminosity. Perfectly aligned microscopic crystals of aragonite, consisting of calcium carbonate, pass light that produces the rainbow iridescence along the pearl's surface.

REAL OR FAKE?

Thanks to Mikimoto, humanity discovered how to intervene in nature's perfect process. The simplicity of manually placing an irritant inside an oyster to eradicate chance and tilt the odds favorably turned the pearl trade on its head.

This discovery came on the tails of the coveted scarcity of natural pearls and caused their value to plummet. Over three hundred farms were producing ten million cultured pearls a year in Japan by 1935. Eliminating the shortage of pearls brought a ton of scrutiny to Mikimoto's revelation.

Up until then, natural pearls were so rare that only the wealthy or royalty could afford to own them. Gathering them was often a dangerous practice. Divers would have to swim to depths up to 65 feet to comb the ocean floor looking for mollusks.

Not only was the act of diving for pearls a treacherous method for collecting pearls, but the rarity of finding one was astronomical. Many times it took over 2000 oyster shells for one to reveal a single treasure of the ocean.

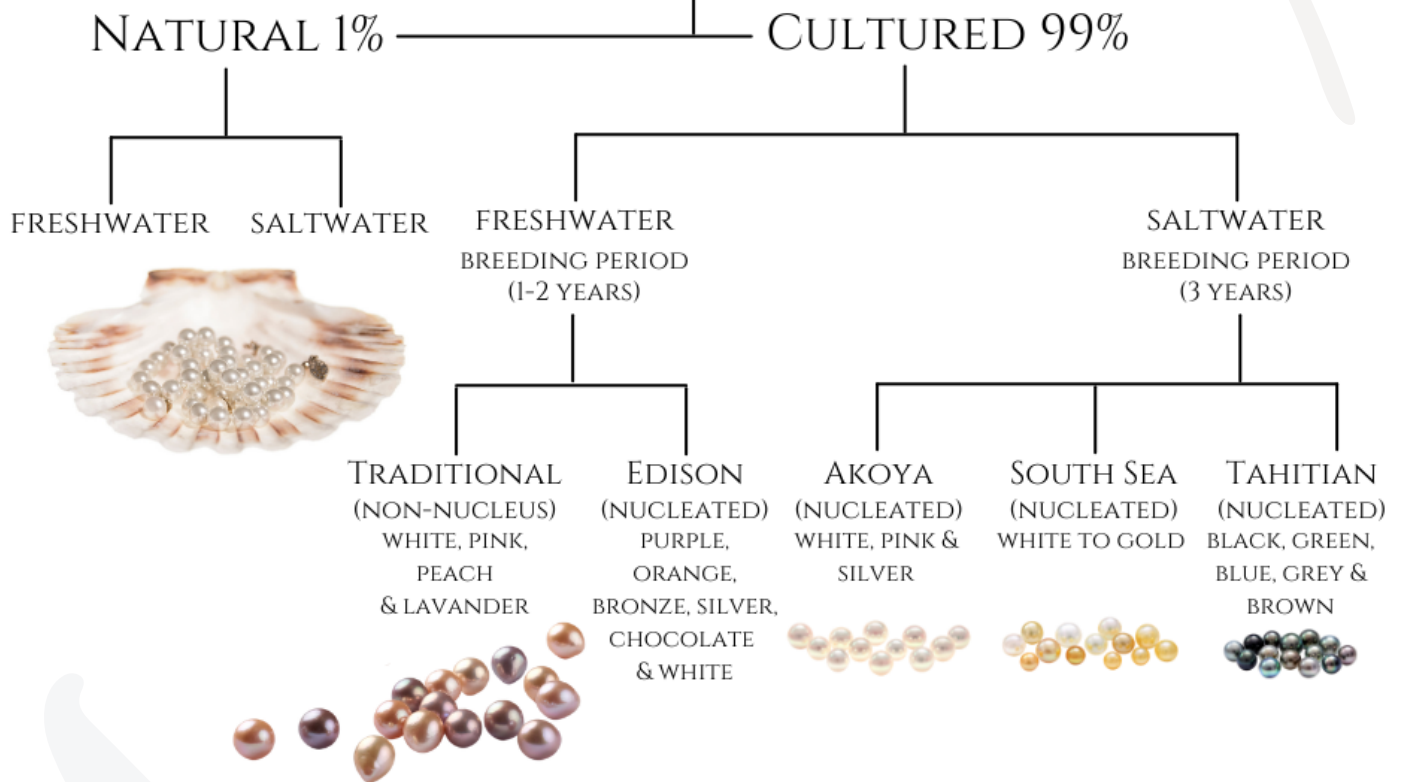


Mikimoto initially had great difficulty selling his cultured pearls due to public confusion and scientific scrutiny. He spent a great deal of time, in the beginning, defending his creations.

But a cultivated pearl is still a pearl because it retains all of the properties of a naturally occurring one. Whatever Mother nature created with whimsy, we perfected with intention by experimenting with different oysters species down to the kind of irritant to place inside them.



PEARL TYPES

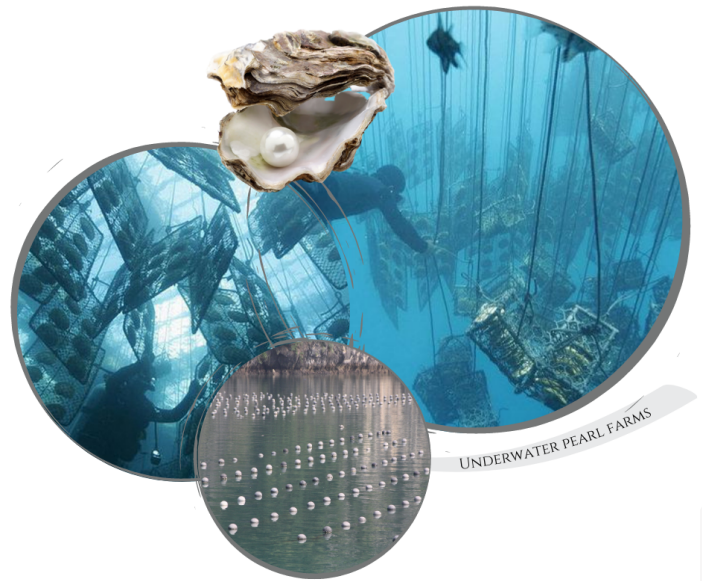


This chart illustrates what the pearl market looks like today. Natural pearls make up for less than 1% of available pearls in the world.

MODERN CULTIVATION

Modern cultivation is a product of a highly researched selection of the best strains of pearl-producing oysters. Additionally, the sea beds' temperatures, feeding conditions, and nutrients are scientifically dialed by hundreds of years of data.

Regardless of such careful measures, oyster farms are often at the whims of Mother Nature which can greatly affect the pearls produced. Underwater hatcheries are subject to unpredictable weather conditions.



THE UNPREDICTABILITY OF MOTHER NATURE'S WHIMS

Some of these can bring in heavy rains to the bays where the oysters are suspended, reducing the water's salinity and killing entire crops.

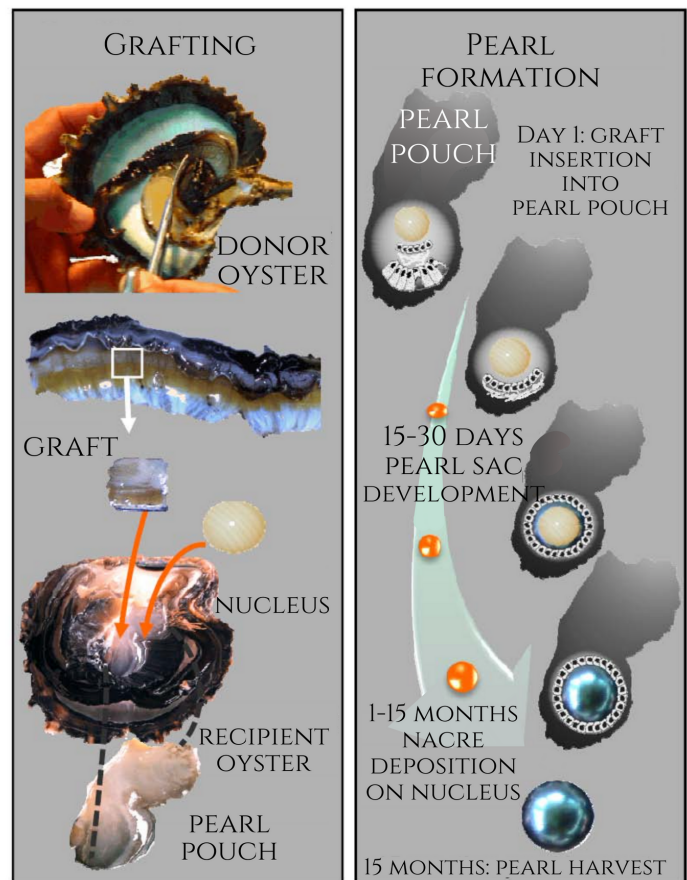
Other organisms that share occupancy in the ocean can also be dangerous, such as various phytoplankton species whose explosive growth can create the 'red tide,' which depletes the water's oxygen, suffocating the oysters.

THE ERA OF MODERN CULTIVATION BEGINS

Several factors affect the outcome of pearl production, But perhaps the most notable factor in creating the most superior pearls is the oysters' nucleation.

The perfection of nucleating oysters impacts the quality of cultivated pearls in the most significant way. This process's introduction began with two notable names that Mikimoto himself later eclipsed, whose contributions remain at the heart of cultivation today.

Government biologist Tokichi Nishikawa and carpenter Tatsuhei Mise observed that by surgically inserting a piece of mantle tissue from another oyster along with an irritant such as a piece of shell into a living oyster, it would form a pearl sac. The sac would then begin to produce nacre, resulting in a pearl.



Up until now, Mikimoto was merely inserting an irritant to coax an oyster to produce a pearl.

Mise's patent in 1907 for his grafting needle was made obtuse by Mikimoto, who altered his own patent with a similar technique to make round pearls as the differentiator. Mikimoto may be the Godfather of cultivating pearls, but Mise and Nishikawa deserve their much-deserved place in history as essential contributors to an industry worth billions of dollars today.



A WESTERN GEM

MARGARITIFERA MARGARITIFERA



Much of pearl's history has its origins in the Old World, but the Western contribution is equally significant. Expansion into new territories led to discoveries of untapped resources. One of them was an abundance of freshwater pearls in the Ohio, Mississippi, and Tennessee River basins.

This valuable unearthing was immediately primed to fill the insatiable demand for pearls in Western Europe and introduced a burgeoning export industry. The sheer volume of pearls that were traded put the New World on the map, and the region became known as the 'Land of Pearls.'

This new resource provided the highest quality of freshwater pearls ever discovered. Many went on to be included in Royal Collections and later mistaken for being a saltwater variety. But perhaps the most notable addition to pearl's incredible history is the type of freshwater mussel that produced these New World beauties - the *Margaritifera margaritifera*.

This particular mussel species has an unusually thick layer of nacre inside its shell called mother of pearl. This characteristic popularized another pearl-related trade industry of exporting mother of pearl buttons. But even more significant than that is the discovery of its shell to nucleate an oyster to produce the highest quality pearls.

To this day, U.S. mussels are the foundation of virtually all cultured saltwater pearls. It's strange to think that almost all pearls used in jewelry today had their origins in the West regardless of being cultivated in the East.



SECTION 03.

PEARL GRADING

Get Insight On the Industry
Standards the Pros Use to
Evaluate Pearls



GRADING GUIDELINES

Navigating the waters of pearl grading can be tricky. The reason for this is a little surprising. Pearl grading is not standardized, which means that anyone in the supply chain from farmers, to sellers or auction houses, can all have different standards of grading the pearls' quality.

The good news is that regardless of the grading system, the factors that determine a pearl's quality are consistently the same. Knowing what these industry 'standards' are will help you smartly assess a piece of jewelry with pearls the next time you shop for one.

NACRE QUALITY

Nacre is the silky, crystalline coating of a pearl made of aragonite. These crystals refract light as it passes along the pearl's surface, creating a shimmering iridescence—the more layers of nacre increase a pearls' brilliance and durability.

Tahitian pearls have strict standards for measuring the quality of nacre for export. Pearls with little to no luster due to lack of nacre won't make the cut. Instead, their nuclei are recycled.

The pearls also need to meet the requirements of 0.8mm nacre depth (the average depth is 1.0mm) per side to qualify for export. This is measured at random by the Periculture Department of the Pearl Ministry for nacre thickness.



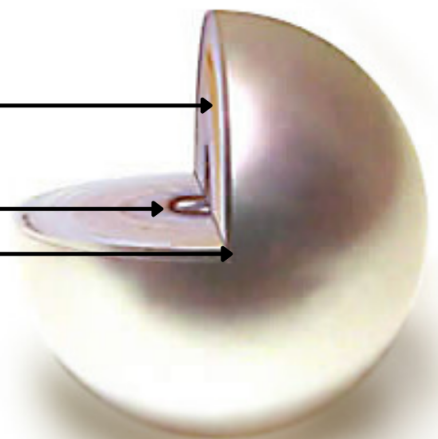
LAYERS OF A PEARL

CONCHIOLLIN - PROTEIN LAYERS

BEAD NUCLEUS - SALTWATER PEARLS

TISSUE NUCLEUS - FRESHWATER PEARLS

NACRE - MADE OF ARAGONITE CRYSTALS





PEARL LUSTER QUALITY GUIDE

HANADAMA

Reflections are mirror-like. Reserved for the world's rarest pearls which are selected from AAA Akoya pearl harvests

GEM QUALITY
LESS THAN 1% OF ANNUAL YIELD



A PEARL'S INNER GLOW

Luster refers to a pearls' inner-glow produced by the light passing through the multiple layers of nacre. A pearl with well-layered nacre will appear bright and shiny. This can be visually measured by how sharp the reflections are along the pearl's surface.

EXCELLENT
1-3% OF ANNUAL YIELD

AAA/A

Reflections appear bright and sharp



It's important to note here that although pearl cultivation directly influences Mother Nature's process, high-quality pearls are still rare. Only fifty percent of nucleated pearls survive to bear pearls. Out of that fifty percent, twenty percent produce pearls worthy of selling.

AA+/B

Reflections appear bright and near sharp

VERY GOOD
3-10% OF ANNUAL YIELD



The pearls that make their way into fine jewelry collections make up 3% of annual yields. High jewelry collections include less than 1% of all pearls harvested.

GOOD
20% OF ANNUAL YIELD

AA/C

Reflections are bright but not sharp, and slightly hazy around the edges



The pearl luster quality chart goes further to illustrate just how special and occasional it is for an oyster to produce a gem-quality pearl. In the rare instance that they do, the results are quite spectacular and valuable. The pearls that have what it takes to be gem-quality are selected from the world's top-graded pearls.

A/D

Reflections are weak and blurred

FAIR
50% OF ANNUAL YIELD



These rarities contain qualities that are so exceptional that they are separated from the best AAA graded pearls and sent to the Pearl Science Laboratory in Tokyo. This organization is responsible for testing and assigning Hanadama certifications to pearls who qualify.

SURFACE QUALITY



Anything with organic origins will inherently have imperfections. Even pearls with thick nacre can have surface characteristics such as wrinkles, tiny bubbles, spots, or other small blemishes.

Most of these do nothing more than affecting the cosmetic appearance to lower the grade of a pearl. However, some irregularities such as chips or gaps can significantly compromise a pearl's durability causing it to peel or crack.

Some surface blemishes are not considered inclusions, which can lower the grade of a pearl. Unique characteristics such as an irregular shape like baroque or circling are actually desirable traits.



FROM CLEAN TO BLEMISHED

COMMON BLEMISHES

DENTS



MOTTLING



WRINKLING



CIRCLES



KNOBS



Blemishes or inclusions to look for -

- Wrinkles - Some pearl varieties are nucleated without the intent for them to be round. These pearls' odd shapes cause the nacre to form unevenly to become a typical, even desirable attribute. But for round pearls, surfaces that aren't smooth will be graded lower.
- Spots - These are slight color variations of the pearl.
- Abrasions - These are scratches or scuffs that impact the luster of the pearl.
- Dents/Divots - Indentations in nacre that vary in size.
- Mottling/Bulleting - A light plating pattern that can form on the surface of the pearl while it's created inside the oyster. This particular blemish is not considered an inclusion, but instead, it indicates a thick nacre layer and does not count towards a lower grade.
- Kobs/Tips - These are growth characteristics and are also not necessarily counted as inclusions unless they are chipped, which can affect the durability of the pearl.
- Circles - Circling is another growth characteristic that imparts a unique look and is not considered an inclusion.

PEARL SIZE

It takes at least a year and a half for an oyster to produce a pearl. If a pearl is allowed more time, it can produce an even larger pearl.

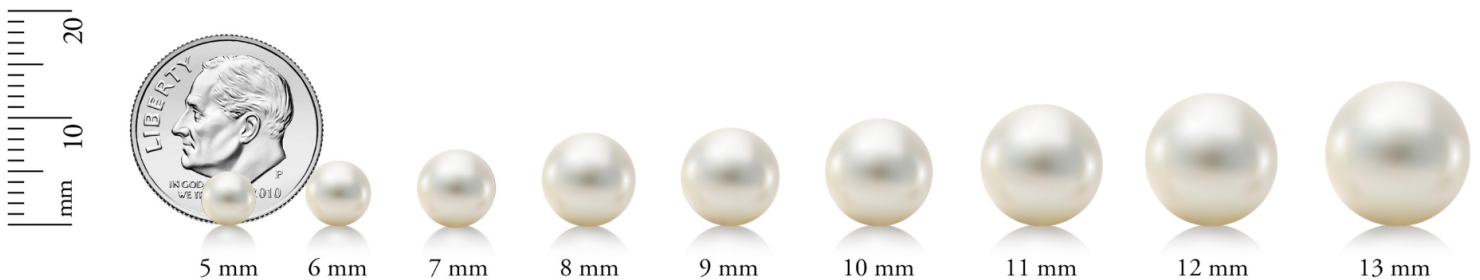
The problem is that the unpredictable whims of Mother Nature make it difficult for an oyster to survive, let alone create a pearl in the minimum timeframe.

The difficulty of cultivating large pearls makes them rarer and more valuable. Prices can go up rapidly with each millimeter in size. The largest cultured pearl on record is a 29.65mm South Sea Baroque, roughly the size of a golf ball.

To get a little context of the different sizes, you can refer to the sizing chart below.



PEARL SIZING CHART



UNIQUE PEARL SHAPES



Most of the time, when you think of pearls, iconic images of Audrey Hepburn are conjured up in your mind. You wouldn't be wrong; most people would think of a classic strand of pearls when it comes to pearl jewelry. That's why round pearls are the gold standard in pearl grading.

Aside from perfectly round pearls, jewelers have many desirable shapes to include in their designs. These shapes tend to have more modern appeal due to their more unusual qualities. The most popular of these pearls is the baroque shape among consumers causing them to be in high demand.

Chinese perliculture has experimented using a variety of carved mussel shell shapes in the production of freshwater pearls. Coin-shaped pearls started the trend of different flat-shaped pearls that included an extensive range of popular forms.



PEARL FARMING REGIONS

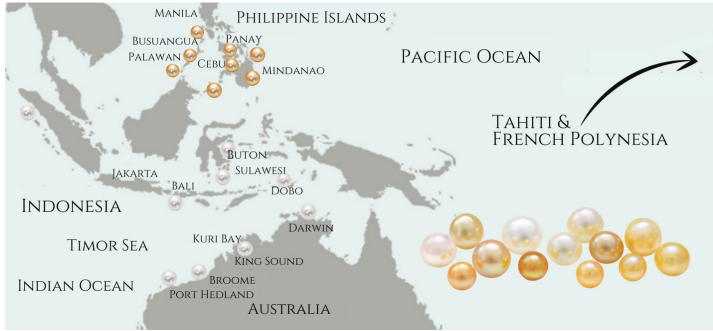
The different types of saltwater pearls are aptly named after the areas where they are farmed - making it easier for the rest of us who aren't pearl experts, thank goodness. Meanwhile, all freshwater pearls come from China.

Below are maps of the world's various regions where these tiny treasures are cultivated, sorted, processed, and exported. Once this happens, they will be making their way to jewelers across the world like me and eventually into your jewelry box.



PEARL FARMING

REGIONS

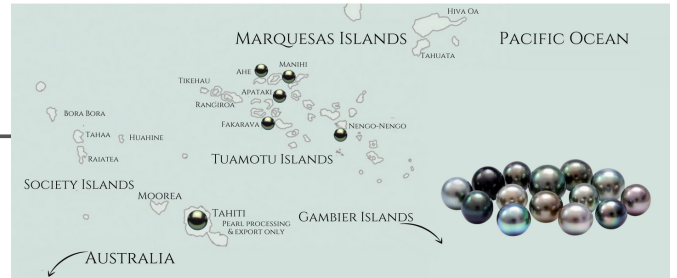


SOUTH SEA

01

02

TAHITIAN



AKOYA

03



FRESHWATER

04



PEARL COLOR

Classic pearl color is often thought of as white or cream, but the rich palettes in Mother Nature are far too whimsical to end there.

Besides, if you haven't noticed, she likes to show off her beauty in spectacular fashion. This is especially true for the gorgeous shades of many saltwater varieties and some freshwater as well.

Different regions which dictate the type of pearl are known for producing pearls of a particular color.

Specific species of oysters used to cultivate in these areas are what influence a pearl's color. More specifically, the color of the oyster's lip, a portion of the outer shell, and the microscopic pigments in the protein layers of conchiolin.

How color plays into pearl grading depends on two things. The body color should be even throughout and absent of discoloration or mottling. The overtones should be distinct, giving the pearl a glowing luminescence of pinks, greens, and silvers.

OYSTER TYPES & PEARL COLOR

SPECIES	NACRE COLOR	PEARL COLOR
PINCTADA FUCATA MARTENSIL		
PINCTADA MAXIMA		
PINCTADA MARARITIFERA		
HYRIOPSIS CUMINGII		

REGIONAL COLORS FOR PEARLS

01 SOUTH SEA

South Sea - Pearls from this region are produced by the oyster *Pinctada maxima* and are known for their size and exceptional quality of golden-colored pearls. A strand of South Sea pearls can range from \$1,000 to over \$100,000.

SOUTH SEA PEARLS - GOLDEN COLORS



02 AKOYA

Akoya - These pearls were the first ever to be cultivated and are smaller in size. They are more traditional in color, producing pearls that are classically round in white and metallic shades. A strand of Akoya pearls can cost from \$300 to more than \$10,000.

AKOYA PEARLS - WHITE & METALLIC COLORS



03 FRESHWATER

Freshwater - These pearls come in a vast range of shapes and sizes, and colors. Round freshwater pearls look almost identical to Akoya pearls but are less expensive, with a strand ranging from \$50 to \$2,000.

FRESHWATER - WHITE, PINK, LAVENDER & PEACH



04 TAHITIAN

Tahitian - These pearls are exotic, with dark colors, and known for their baroque shapes. Depending on their size and quality, a strand of Tahitian pearls can cost from \$500 to more than \$25,000.

TAHITIAN PEARLS - DARK & EXOTIC COLORS



The rarest things in the world, next to the spirit of discernment,
are diamonds and pearls.

- Jean de la Bruyere





SECTION 04.

PEARL BUYING GUIDE

Know the special considerations
to look for when buying pearls

BECOME A
SAVVY SHOPPER

QUICK REFERENCE PEARL
GRADING GUIDE



AAA/A
GRADE

- Excellent – Reflections appear bright and sharp
- Surface Quality is 95% Clean or better
- Extremely thick nacre. For Tahitian pearls, nacre depth is a minimum of 0.8mm. White and Golden South Sea pearls average 2-4mm nacre thickness



AA+/B
GRADE

- Very Good – Reflections appear bright and near sharp
- Surface Quality is 90-95% Clean or better
- Akoya pearls feature thick nacre measuring 0.4mm or more. Freshwater pearls are solid with nacre that differs from saltwater pearls



AA/C
GRADE

- Good – Reflections are bright but not sharp, and slightly hazy around the edges
- Surface Quality is 75-80% Clean or better
- Nacre is solid for Freshwater pearls whose composition is different from saltwater pearls. It may be thin in places for Akoya pearls



A/D
GRADE

- Fair – Reflections are weak and blurred
- Surface Quality is blemish-free 60% of all pearl surfaces
- Nacre is visibly thin for Akoya pearls and the nucleus will be visible under certain lighting conditions

PEARL BUYING CHECKLIST

HOW TO TELL REAL PEARLS FROM IMITATION

No pearl is perfect due to being organic, spotting a fake pearl should be fairly easy. You can test this further by rubbing it against another pearl. The layers of nacre should feel gritty unlike imitation pearls, which will glide smoothly.

NOTES:

Lighting & Background

Try to assess pearls in natural daylight, avoiding artificial light on a neutral grey surface instead of white or black.

Size & Shape

If your buying a strand of pearls, check for consistency of size and shape. Keep in mind that off-round pearls can appear round.

Luster

This is an important visual aspect and pearls with more brilliance indicate a thicker nacre which gives more durability to the pearl.

Surface Quality

Common blemishes that are natural to pearls' organic nature are normal. Avoid inclusions that may affect its integrity & wear.

Color

The body color should be even & free of discoloration. It should have distinct iridescent overtones.

PEARL TREATMENTS

& IMITATIONS

Appearance enhancing treatments can be done to pearls but their organic properties keep them from being widely used & should be disclosed by a reputable seller

Silver Nitrate
Pearls soaked in silver nitrate to give them a black appearance that can weaken them & make them easier to damage.

Dyeing
Check the inside of drill holes or in the pits of a pearl for traces of dye that can cause it to be dull with poor luster.

Bleaching
Chinese freshwater & low-grade pearls are often bleached for a more even lighter color. This can weaken the nacre.

Coating
Plastic coatings applied to a pearl to darken the color that can wear away leaving behind blot patches.

Buffing
Chemical polishes & beeswax used to artificially improve the luster but can wear off or eat away at the nacre of the pearl.

Irradiation
Gamma rays used to blacken the nucleus, in order to darken the nacre giving pearls an iridescent blue-gray color.

NOTES:

SECTION 05.

FRESHWATER VS SALTWATER

Know the Key Differences Between
Each Type of Pearl

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PEARL NUCLEUS

Nucleation is the inception of how a pearl is formed, essentially replicating the process that nature created by manually triggering the production of a pearl.

Mikimoto was the first to discover this in 1893.

The two distinct differences between the process for freshwater versus saltwater pearls give each type its distinctive characteristics.

Because freshwater pearls are nucleated without an irritant, the mussels produce pearls made entirely of nacre. Without a base to add layers of nacre to, the pearls created are usually irregular in shape.

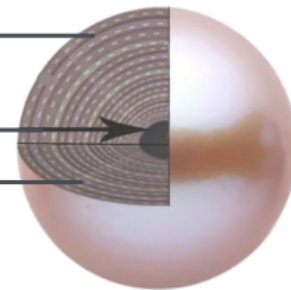
Saltwater pearls are known for their perfectly round shape because the layers of nacre secreted have a foundation to build on. Since perfectly matched round pearls are in high demand, this contributes to their overall more increased value.

FRESHWATER PEARL LAYERS

PROTEIN LAYERS CALLED CONCHIOLIN - THESE BIND THE LAYERS OF NACRE TOGETHER

TISSUE NUCLEUS

NACRE LAYERS - THESE SIT BETWEEN THE LAYERS OF CONCHIOLIN THAT BIND THEM TOGETHER

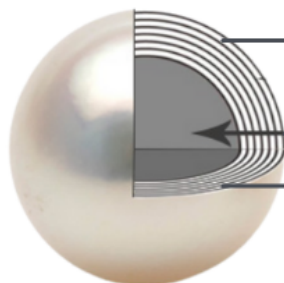


SALTWATER PEARL LAYERS

PROTEIN LAYERS CALLED CONCHIOLIN - THESE BIND THE LAYERS OF NACRE TOGETHER

BEAD NUCLEUS

NACRE LAYERS - THESE SIT BETWEEN THE LAYERS OF CONCHIOLIN THAT BIND THEM TOGETHER



TYPES OF FRESHWATER PEARLS

BIWA



CHINESE



MABE



POTATO



BLISTER



SEED



- Potato and rice pearls - These Chinese freshwater pearls tend to have a more wrinkled surface with other blemishes such as pits and circling. They are grown the fastest, and much of their characteristics directly result from their short cultivation period, such as low luster.
- Biwa pearls - The largest lake in Japan, Lake Biwa, was the first freshwater culturing site. These pearls are known for their high luster, good quality, and smooth surfaces. Their namesake is often used widely in labeling freshwater pearls cultivated in China to increase value perception.
- Chinese freshwater pearls are a product of early experimentation of nucleating them with an irritant and mantle tissue. Chinese perliculture has experimented using various carved mussel shell shapes in the production of freshwater pearls. Coin-shaped pearls started the trend of different flat-shaped pearls that included an extensive range of popular forms.
- Seed pearls - These are the freshwater version of Keshi pearls. They are tiny naturally occurring pearls that resulted from the mollusk expelling the nucleus, leaving behind an empty pearl sac.
- Blister pearls - These pearls grow attached to the inside shell of a mussel rather than loose in the mantle. This causes them to have a flat side without nacre.
- Mabe pearls - These unique creations are what could be considered as the negative of a pearl. A form of blister pearl that grows attached to the mollusk's inside surface and around half bead nucleus glued on the shell's inside. Nacre accumulates for around two to three years and is then cut out. This leaves a hollow pearl impression behind, which is filled with resin to reinforce the integrity and then backed with mother of pearl.

TYPES OF SALTWATER PEARLS

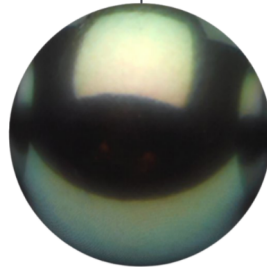
AKOYA



SOUTH SEA



TAHITIAN



KESHI



- Akoya - These are considered to be some of the loveliest pearls grown today. Most Akoya pearls are farmed in Japan, with its southern half having the world's largest habitat for Akoya oysters. Cultivation practices based on Mikimoto's original discoveries have been carefully refined over the last century to produce the classic white pearl. China and Vietnam also produce these perfectly round pearls, known for their metallic luster.
- South Sea - These pearls are referred to as the Queen of Pearls and are considered to be the most expensive type of pearl. Their rarity relates to the oyster species used in cultivation that have strict quotas in efforts to preserve them. With longer cultivation periods lasting 2-3 years, they are the largest saltwater pearls on the market. They are known for their silky luster and golden color range.
- Tahitian - These pearls have gained a considerable amount of popularity among jewelry designers and consumers alike. Their signature baroque shape and dark exotic colors lend a more modern touch over their classic white strand necklace predecessor. Tahitian harvests are much smaller due to the reduced survival rates and scarcity of pearl-producing oysters.
- Keshi - These little anomalies are the closest thing to a naturally occurring pearl and are the by-product of the cultivation process. They are known for their small size and irregular shape due to their lack of nuclei.

PEARL DIFFERENCES

MOLLUSK FAMILY & WATER TYPES

MOLLUSK & PRIMARY SOURCE

TYPE OF NUCLEUS

SALTWATER OYSTERS



AKOYA PEARLS
(PINCTADA FUCATO)
JAPAN



SOUTH SEA PEARLS
(PINCTADA MAXIMA)
AUSTRALIA, THE PHILIPPINES,
INDONESIA & MYANMAR



TAHITIAN PEARLS
(PINCTADA MARGARITIFERA)
FRENCH POLYNESIA



FRESHWATER MUSSELS



MULTIPLE SPECIES
CHINA



BEAD NUCLEATED CULTURED PEARLS

KESHI PEARLS
NON-BEADED PEARLS
FORMED BY ACCIDENT AS
A BY-PRODUCT OF
THE CULTURING PROCESS



TISSUE NUCLEATED CULTURED PEARLS

This chart illustrates the three main differences between freshwater and saltwater pearls and how they relate to one another.

DISTINCTION CHEATSHEET

The Key Differences Between the Two Types of Pearls

VS

FRESHWATER

Tissue Nucleation

01. A small piece of mantle tissue inserted creating pearls with an irregular shape.

Freshwater Mussel

02. A variety of different mussels used to create a wide range of fashion-forward pearls.

Ponds & Lakes

03. Most freshwater pearls are farmed in the ponds and lakes of China mainly.

Short Breeding Period

04. Freshwater pearls are typically ready around 6 months to harvest.

Pearls Per Mussel

05. Freshwater mussels can grow to be quite large & can produce upwards of 25 per mollusk.

SALTWATER

Bead Nucleation

01. A piece of mantle tissue & bead inserted creating pearls that are perfectly round.

Saltwater Oyster

02. Three main types of ocean oysters specific to each region where they are farmed.

Ocean Hatcheries

03. Remote pearl farms away from commercial industries to replicate their habitat.

Long Breeding Period

04. Saltwater pearls can take up to 2-3 years before they are ready to harvest.

Pearls Per Oyster

05. Saltwater oysters are protected with strict quotas & can only produce 1-3 at a time.

SECTION 06.

PEARL JEWELRY STYLING

Famous Pearl Fashion Icons & How
to Style Pearl Jewelry Now



COCO CHANEL

Chanel's fierce independence redefined not just the perception of conventional femininity but introduced a modern mix of wearing pearls.

Instead of the traditional formality of donning only genuine pearls, she favored whimsically combining them with fake costume strands. This wonderfully modern and fresh take on styling pearl jewelry is still appropriate today.

In 2014, Chanel's house launched a high jewelry line in honor of its founder and her love for pearls called The Perles Swing Set.



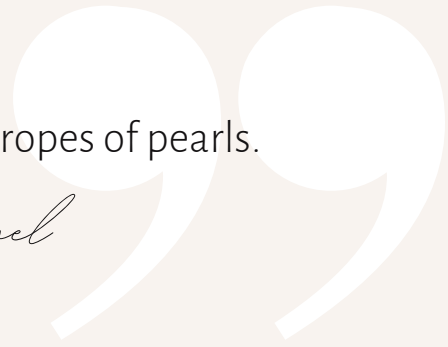
A stunning collection devoted to the luminous gem using a combination of South Sea, Tahitian and freshwater pearls. The legend continues.

LEGEND



A woman needs ropes and ropes of pearls.

- Coco Chanel



JEANNE TOUSSAINT

Arriving in Paris, Jeanne Toussaint quickly went from charismatic ingénue to become Louis Cartier's muse who lovingly nicknamed her la Panthère. Perfectly fitting for a woman about town, known for wearing a full-length coat made of panther fur.

Combined with the commissioned illustration by George Barbier depicting a woman with strands of draping pearls and a panther, it's clear how the luxury house became associated with its iconic animal - the panther.

Toussaint's passion for pearls, often wearing a cascade of multiple long strands at a time, seemed to be a direct reflection of Barbier's drawing and secured her place as a pearl fashion icon.



MUSE



LA PANTHÈRE



PRINCESS DIANA

Unassuming and relatable, Diana was indeed the people's princess. As the world's most photographed person, the evolution into her style unfolded before our very eyes.

But before she was introduced to us, in her early days, she developed a love of pearls. It started with the first single strand gifted to her by her parents, which she wore almost every day.

Perhaps the most famous pearl necklace she wore was a stunning seven-strand choker with a sapphire and diamond centerpiece.



The sapphire came from a brooch gifted to her by the Queen Mother on her wedding day. The reimagined piece spurred an industry of copies of the infamous design. Inspiring women all over the world to feel like a princess for a day.



MONARCH



PRINCESS DIANA

GRACE KELLY

The silver screen was no match for the starlets' favorite gem's luminous luster, the pearl. Grace Kelly's affinity for pearls was well-known early on and made legend with her famous quote, "I favor pearls on screen and in my private life." Pearls' classic quality was a perfect fit for her understated style.

Even after she left Hollywood to become royalty, Grace favored pearls, wearing a two-strand choker in her engagement photos to Prince Rainier III and again on her wedding day.

In addition to the single strand she wore to compliment her intricate lace gown, the Prince gifted her with a parure of pearl jewelry custom made by Van Cleef & Arpels.



PRINCESS



I favor pearls on screen and in my private life.

- *Grace Kelly*



JACKIE O

For the first time, America had a cultured role model whose refined sense of style represented women's dreams and aspirations worldwide.

Her signature style's focal point that influenced millions was her triple strand of faux pearls, designed by Kenneth Jay Lane.

Jacqueline was once quoted as saying, "Pearls are always appropriate," advice that defined her approach to fashion, wearing them with everything—elegantly donning them with day suits or featuring them with glamorous evening gowns.



Her quintessential accessory of choice took many forms, including all types and strand lengths of pearls. The result was undeniably always appropriate.



DYNASTY



Pearls are always appropriate.

- Jacqueline Kennedy



ELIZABETH TAYLOR

Her legendary collection of jewelry well documents Elizabeth Taylor's love affair with jewelry. A selection of pieces that reflect her real-life love affairs, including one of the more notable, Richard Burton. Each of his extravagant gifts making history but none more so than the world's most famous natural pearl, the 'La Peregrina.'

This 55.6-carat pear-shaped pearl was brought at auction for \$37,000 by Burton for her 37th birthday. The historical pearl had traveled the world for over 400 years with an illustrious provenance of queens and Tudors.

Taylor later had Cartier design a custom choker to feature the famous gem based on a portrait she had seen of Mary Tudor, Queen of England, one of the previous owners of the prominent pearl.



STAR



PEARL NECKLACE LENGTHS



CHOKER 16"

Sits just above the collar bone. It will graze the top of an open neckline of a basic tee or perfectly sit on top of a high collared shirt

PRINCESS 18"

The most versatile and popular. The mid-length that rests just over the collar bone makes it a flawless fit for just about everyone

MATINEE 24"

Adds just a bit more drama than the shorter styles. Traditionally considered more formal, but the new rules of modern styling would have you think more about the vibe you're going for instead

OPERA 36"

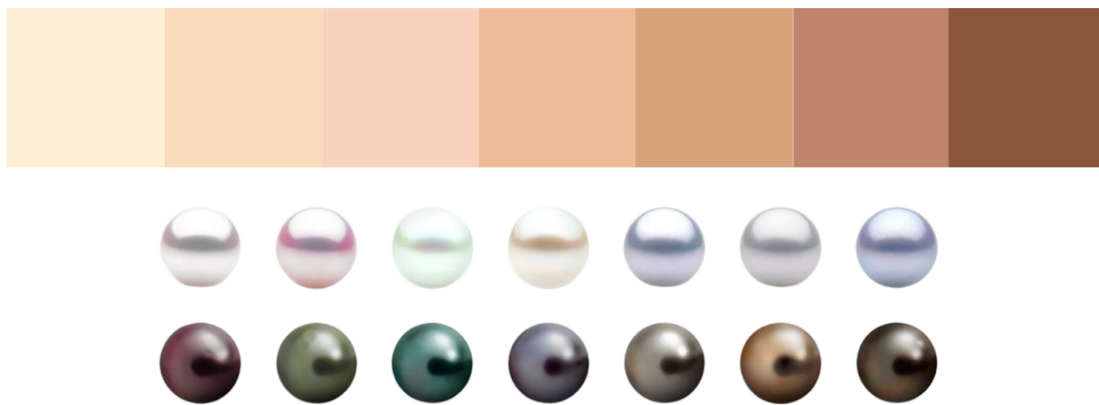
This length can be worn in multiple ways by doubling it up, knotting it, layering it, or simply wearing it on its own. Whichever way you decide to style it creatively will ensure a polished look every time

PEARL COLORS & SKIN TONE

01 COOL

Classically white and metallic colors typical to Akoya pearls work beautifully with cooler skin tones. The dark and exotic colors of Tahitian are universally flattering.

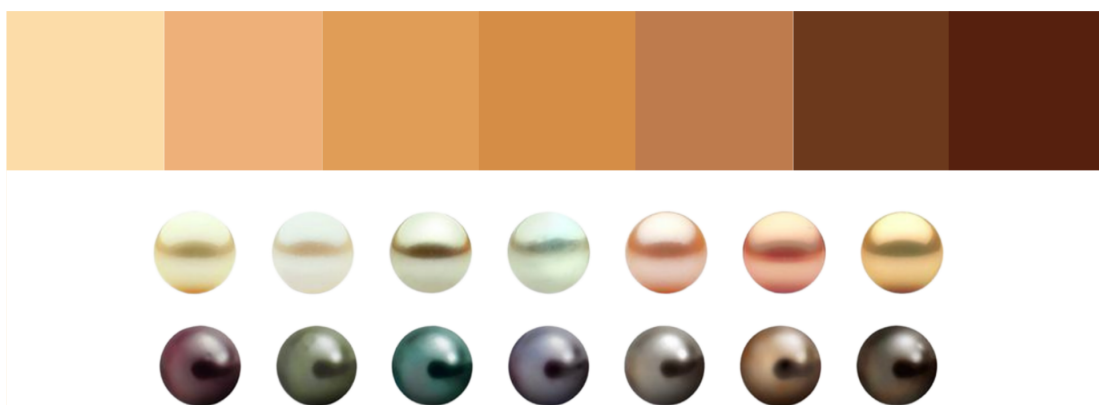
COOL SKIN TONES



02 WARM

The rich golden colors typical to South Sea pearls are stunning against warmer skin tones. As with cooler tones, Tahitian pearls are also exquisitely complimentary.

WARM SKIN TONES





SECTION 07.

PEARL CARE GUIDE

Tips to Ensure Your Pearls'
Legacy

CARE CHECKLIST

The preciousness of pearls needs to be preserved with a bit more care because they're organic. Their surface is porous as a result making them more delicate than their gemstone counterparts.

- ❑ The chemicals in your personal care products can be highly damaging to a pearl's nacre, which is responsible for its luster. Make sure to avoid contact with makeup or other products.
- ❑ Avoid ultrasonic cleaners which have high-heat, strong chemicals, and vibrating movement which damage pearls.
- ❑ Wear your pearls often. Their organic qualities can cause them to dry out, and wearing them usually allows them to absorb some of the oils from your skin.
- ❑ Pearls need moisture, blame it on their oceanic origins. Do not store in a plastic bag or any other airtight container. If the environment is too dry, it can cause your pearls to crack.
- ❑ Do not submerge your pearls in water. Take off your pearl jewelry before doing dishes, showering, or swimming. Chlorine in the water will eat away at the epoxy secured mountings.

- Store your pearls away from other jewelry or objects that could potentially scratch their surfaces. Place them in a soft pouch or wrap them in a cloth before storing them.
- Get in the habit of wiping your pearl jewelry with a soft cloth to remove any dirt, perfume, sweat, or excess oils after wearing it.
- Keep pearls away from chlorine bleach, hydrogen peroxide, vinegar, ammonia, hairspray, perfume, and cosmetics, as these substances will damage the pearl surface.
- Always put your pearl jewelry on last when you're getting ready. Finishing touches like hairspray and perfume contain chemical substances that will eat holes in pearls' nacre.
- Keep your pearl jewelry for life's adventures outside the gym. Removing them before exercising will keep them away from perspiration.
- Avoid hanging any pearl jewelry that is strung on silk cords for storage. This will create unnecessary strain on the silk, causing the strand to stretch.
- If you wear it almost daily, take it to get restrung by a professional. For less frequent wearing, every three years should do the trick.

shop



SECTION 08.

SHOP PEARL JEWELRY

Aglow Fine Jewelry Collection
Coming soon

SHOP

COMING SOON



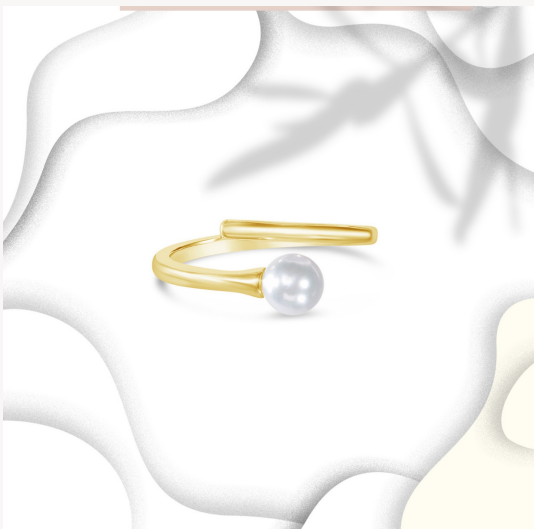
SHOP

COMING SOON



SHOP

COMING SOON



SHOP

COMING SOON





THANK YOU!

I hope you enjoyed joining me on this journey as we explored these remarkable gems!

Creating this guide has been something I've wanted to do for a long time. These ocean treasures have long been essential in almost every design I create and deserve to be properly celebrated. Stayed tuned for my very first fine jewelry collection that will exclusively feature these luminous rarities with 14K gold.

COMING SOON

Fall 2021

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