

# AMBER

Amber is nature's time capsule.  
This fossilized tree resin contains remnants  
of life on earth millions of years ago.



## ABOUT AMBER



The Greeks called amber elektron, or "made by the sun." Homer praised its bright glow. The Egyptians buried it in tombs for the afterlife.

Today's scientists value amber too: it provides a three-dimensional window into prehistoric ecosystems through the myriad animal and plant inclusions it contains.

## BIRTHSTONES & ANNIVERSARIES

While amber isn't a birthstone, it is associated with the astrological sign of Taurus.

## TREATMENTS

There are a number of processes used to alter the color, apparent clarity, or improve the durability of gems.

## SYNTHETICS

Some gemstones have synthetic counterparts that have essentially the same chemical, physical, and optical properties, but are grown by man in a laboratory.

## IMITATIONS

Any gem can be imitated—sometimes by manmade materials or by natural materials chosen by man to impersonate a particular gem.

## 320 MILLION

The oldest amber dates to the Upper Carboniferous Period.

## 6 TONS

The Amber Room, a 1716 gift presented to Russia's Peter the Great, was made from six tons of amber.

## TIME CAPSULE

1,000 extinct animal species as well as various types of plant matter have been identified in amber.

## FACTS

**ORGANIC, NOT MINERAL:** Fossilized resin

**CHEMISTRY:**  $C_{10}H_{16}O$

**Color:** Yellow, orange, and brown

**REFRACTIVE INDEX:** 1.540

**BIREFRINGENCE:** 0.008 to 0.010

**SPECIFIC GRAVITY:** 1.08

**Mohs Hardness:** 2.0 to 2.5



## WHY WE LOVE THIS GEMSTONE

### INTERESTING INCLUSIONS

With inclusions like insects, lizards, leaves, flowers, and feathers, amber helps scientists study ancient ecosystems.

### JURASSIC GEM

Although the movie Jurassic Park is fiction, scientists extracted DNA from insects enclosed in 120-million year old amber.

### FRAGRANT

Amber smells good when you rub it. Although an oil made from burned amber was used in scents in ancient times, it isn't used in perfume today.