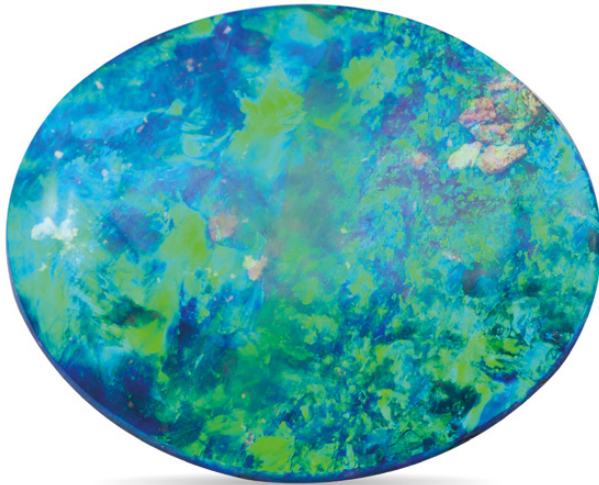


## OPAL FACT SHEET



BIRTHSTONE: October

COLOURS: Various colours, mainly green

MINERAL: Silica

HARDNESS: 5.0-6.5 Mohrs, soft

## ABOUT OPALS

Opal is derived from the Greek 'opallios' which describes the flashing rainbow colours called 'play-of-colour'. It's these unique characteristics that make opals many people's favourite. It is the birthstone for October and gifted to celebrate 14 years of marriage.

Opal is the product of seasonal rains that drenched dry ground in regions such as Australia's semi-desert outback. The showers soaked deep into ancient underground rock, carrying dissolved silica downward.

Be aware that there are many opal 'triplets' and 'doublets' on the market: these are a thin layer of opal backed by a black stone to make the opal look bigger and more vivid.

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## YOUR CARE GUIDE

Opal is generally stable, but heat from intense light can cause fracture lines called 'crazing'. High heat or sudden temperature changes can also cause opal to fracture. Opal is attacked by hydrofluoric acid and caustic alkaline solutions.

The only safe way to clean opal is with warm, soapy water. Certain types of opals such as Ethiopian Opals must not be immersed in water. They will retain the water and turn a milky colour. It's generally advised not to wear any opals in the shower or swimming.

