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## DIAMOND SHAPES:

The Top 10  
Shapes for the  
Perfect Ring



The wrong diamond is not forever. And if you're considering buying a diamond for the woman you love, you must know whether she's more impressed by fire and brilliance or a lover of clean lines and a minimalist look. An engagement ring must represent the woman who wears it, and cut is one of the most important considerations.

**Round:** A round-cut diamond is symmetrical and brilliant. It's the most popular cut of all and garners a higher price tag, accordingly. The Gemological Institute of America uses three determining factors to rate the brilliance of a round-cut diamond -- brightness, fire and scintillation. Brightness refers to the amount of white light reflected by the stone. Fire refers to how well the white light scatters into the rainbow colors, and scintillation equals the amount of sparkle produced by the stone.



**Princess:** Another brilliant cut, the princess diamond is typically square -- represented by two sets of parallel lines and four corners. Princess cuts are usually larger on top, making them appear bigger, hence the popularity.



**Oval:** The oval-cut diamond is also a brilliant cut, but it's less common than a round-cut diamond, making it the perfect choice for the woman with unique tastes. An oval-cut diamond also tends to be top-heavy. This factor, combined with the slightly elongated shape, adds the illusion of size. Oval-cut diamonds are also complimentary to the bride who has long, slender fingers.



**Cushion:** The cushion-cut diamond is similar in appearance to the princess cut, with the exception of rounded corners. Also a brilliant-cut diamond, the cushion is usually square, but may be slightly rectangular in shape, as well.



**Marquise:** The marquise-cut diamond has two pointed tips with curved sides -- reminiscent of an actual diamond shape but without the points on the sides. Modern variations on the marquise-cut place the diamond on its side in the setting, resembling the shape of an eye. Because of the cut, this diamond often appears larger than it really is.



**Pear:** The pear-cut diamond, obviously, resembles the shape of the fruit. Sometimes called a tear drop or drop cut, the pear-cut diamond mimics a drop of falling water in shape. The pear cut is brilliant and pairs well with side stones. It can be cut long and narrow or shorter and wider, depending upon the preference of the woman who wears it.



**Asscher:** Named for famed diamond cutter, Joseph Asscher, the Asscher-cut diamond features cropped corners and many angles. It's a step-cut diamond, as opposed to brilliant. Featuring a square shape, the Asscher-cut has a tendency to reveal flaws and imperfections in a diamond, hence, stones of better quality do well with this particular cut.



**Emerald:** Also using a step-cut technique, the emerald diamond is similar to the Asscher, except it tends to be more rectangular in shape. One major benefit of the emerald-cut diamond is that it tends to be more economical than similarly weighted diamonds of round or princess cut.



**Radiant:** Relatively new to the diamond trade, the radiant cut has only been around since the 1970s. It was derived as a good alternative to the emerald-cut diamond. Radiant diamonds reflect a large amount of light, making for an amazingly sparkly appearance.



**Heart:** Perhaps the most romantic of all the diamond cuts, the heart-shaped diamond takes a precision hand and keen attention to detail, which makes it one of the more expensive options. A happy mix of both the marquise and pear-shaped cuts, the heart-cut diamond looks best when the stone weighs at least .5 carat.



The cut of the diamond has a huge bearing on the appearance of your ring, and the smart groom-to-be will play it safe by knowing which cut his intended prefers. If you're shopping for the perfect engagement ring, and you're unsure which cut is right, it's best to bring your bride-to-be along.

After all, if all goes according to plan, this is the first and last opportunity you'll have to buy an engagement ring for the woman you love. You'll want to ensure that the cut is as perfect as the proposal.

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