



TURQUOISE MOOSE

real vs. fake

HOW TO SPOT GENUINE
TURQUOISE BEADS



Did you know that
turquoise was used in
the construction of
King Tut's death mask?

The stone is beloved in
many cultures around
the world. Turquoise
continues to be a
beautiful gemstone
used in jewelry making.
Even today, turquoise
is in high demand.



Have you ever wondered how to spot genuine turquoise beads? We've put together this guide so you can shop for the real thing and look for telltale signs of authenticity.

What is Turquoise Anyway?

Known for its robin's egg color, turquoise is a semi-precious stone. The stone has significance in many cultures dating back thousands of years. Turquoise is predominantly comprised of copper, phosphate, and aluminum.

The stone has been known by many names as it's found in dry climates all over the world. However, the name turquoise which comes from the French word for Turkish stood the test of time.

As previously mentioned, turquoise is found all over the world. Closer to home, it's found in desert states. States like Nevada, New Mexico, and Arizona are known for their turquoise.

Turquoise also holds a lot of value in Native American cultures. In Navajo culture specifically, the stone is linked to luck, happiness, and health. In fact, the Navajo tribe was one of the first to bring the stone into vogue in the current day.

It is also a rare stone, given that it only forms in arid climates. This leads to the price tag for turquoise to be on the higher side. Of course, this leads to counterfeit turquoise.

What are Real Turquoise Beads?

If you're new to making turquoise jewelry, you may not know what we mean by real and fake turquoise.

Real turquoise occurs naturally with the breathtaking colors we all know and love. Turquoise can come in a variety of blues and greens, but most commonly will be, well, turquoise!



The stone gets its color from copper, and the hues will change based on the copper content within the stone.

Another hallmark of turquoise is are the veins of brown that run throughout.

This is what makes the spiderweb-like appearance. In smaller pieces, like beads, the spiderweb veins won't be as prevalent. These beads can still be genuine though!

There is also stabilized turquoise. Stabilization is a process in which turquoise is strengthened to withstand more abuse.

On its own, turquoise is relatively fragile. In order to withstand being turned into jewelry, it needs to be hardened. This is done by using pressure and a few different epoxy compounds.

What are Fakes Made Of?

Commonly, fake turquoise beads will be made from howlite or magnesite that has been dyed. Both of them have naturally occurring veins and are easily dyed.

Magnesite has been known in the past as "buffalo turquoise" or white turquoise. In the present day, however, this fake white turquoise has been proven to be magnesite.

Reconstituted turquoise is another way to fake turquoise. This is a process in which small bits of turquoise are crushed into powder and bound together with resin. These pieces will also contain dye.

Along a similar vein of reconstituted turquoise, there is block turquoise. This falsified turquoise is entirely made out of resin. It gets its name from the way it is sold in blocks.

How Do You Spot the Fakes?

Since turquoise is decently rare, it does fall into the more pricey side of things. Fake turquoise is one way to get around the price tag, and for some, they're happy with the fakes. However, the fakes can be hard to recognize!

Spotting fake turquoise may seem challenging, but the tests are quick and easy. We'll give you some tips on how to spot the fakes in both brick and mortar stores and online.

Look at The Cost

When you're looking to buy turquoise beads, you might try to look for the most affordable options. Unfortunately turquoise is something of a rarity. This will lead to likely purchasing fraudulent beads.

The turquoise cost will be your first tip as to the legitimacy of the pieces. Legitimate turquoise beads will be in the \$40-\$200 price range. For larger statement pieces you'll be in the ballpark of closer to 200 dollars.

Block turquoise especially may have you looking at a piece of "turquoise" jewelry in a department store for under 20 dollars. That's definitely not the real deal!

Take a Closer Look

When you're buying turquoise, always have a closer look. As mentioned, there are quite a few ways to make fake turquoise, so there isn't one consistent test to perform.

The way to tell block turquoise is by weight. The resin will be light when you pick it up, much lighter than other stones. This is the easiest faux turquoise to spot in a crowd.

The other fakes will take a bit more effort than just picking them up. Dyed howlite and magnesite especially will weigh about the same as real turquoise.

Make sure to bring the piece you're looking to buy up to your eyes. You'll be able to see the dye piling up in the cracks on fakes.

The Scratch Test

Whenever you're buying turquoise in person, always make sure to do a scratch test! This test only involves taking a penny and scratching lightly.

Even though turquoise is naturally a soft stone, howlite is softer yet. This means that when you run a penny on the stone, howlite will scratch.

This all comes down to the Mohs hardness scale. A penny has a hardness of about six on the scale, as does howlite. Turquoise on the other hand is somewhere between five and six.

Acetone Test

If you have a piece of turquoise at home and you're not sure if it's legit, you can try some other tests. These tests will compromise the quality of the stone, so it's important that you own the stone first!

For the first one, you will only need acetone and a q-tip. Gently rub the acetone on the stone in a circular motion. If the stone is actually dyed howlite/magnesite, you will be left with a white circle where you put the acetone.

Genuine turquoise beads will not be affected by this test. If you don't end up with a white circle, congratulations! You have real turquoise.

Again, this test should only be performed on rocks you already own! Carrying acetone around in your purse is not a good idea for many reasons.

Spotting Fakes Online

While the above tests are great, online retailers are more tricky for spotting fakes. Fake turquoise beads run rampant on a lot of online retailers. Here are our tips to know what you're buying.

Seller Transparency

Make sure that the seller is transparent when shopping online. This means that they are offering more details about their products and quality.

If you find a listing that doesn't have much of a description, it's usually best to pass it by.

Read Descriptions Carefully

When looking to buy turquoise online, make sure you read the description thoroughly. While the title might say "turquoise", if you read the description, it might go on to say "howlite turquoise".

Remember, fake turquoise goes by many names. Keep on the lookout for words tied to fake turquoise. Words like buffalo turquoise and howlite turquoise should immediately tip you off.

Look at Reviews

When shopping for beads online, looking at reviews from other customers will be key. If you find a listing that doesn't have any signifier words to say it's not legitimate, look at the reviews.

Chances are, if it's fake turquoise, someone will have put a review. A review saying they've tested the product is something to look for. Especially in instances where the price seems like it might be too good to be true!

Scrutinize the Pictures

Fake turquoise has a very polished look to it. The veining will be more intentional on the fake turquoise beads. The color will also be more consistent on faux turquoise.

Real turquoise will often have a less refined look to it. It will have more variation in color and the webbing won't be near as "perfect" looking.

It will be pretty hard to tell based on pictures alone, so make sure this isn't your only test. Reviews and transparency of the seller should be your first line of defense.

Get Real Turquoise Beads

Turquoise beads add a stunning flash of color to jewelry. Though fakes are out there, keep your wits about you. Using our tips you're guaranteed to find genuine turquoise beads in no time!



If you're ready to get your hands on turquoise beads, check out [our collection here!](#)

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