

How To Choose Your Diamond

The Four C's: Cut, Color, Clarity, and Carat Weight

BLACK, STARR & FROST
FINE JEWELERS SINCE 1810

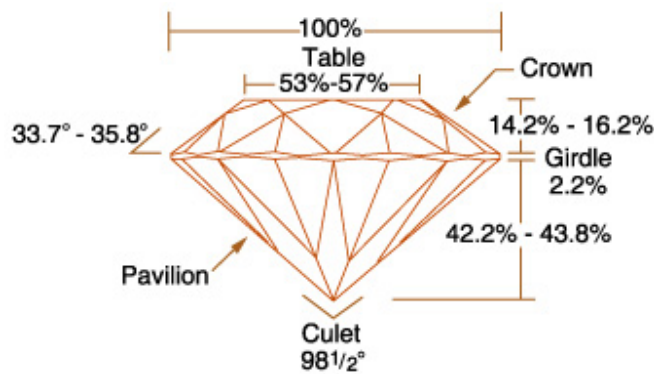
Cut

The Ideal Cut

When a round brilliant diamond has been cut to “Ideal” proportions by a master cutter, it is a splendor to behold.

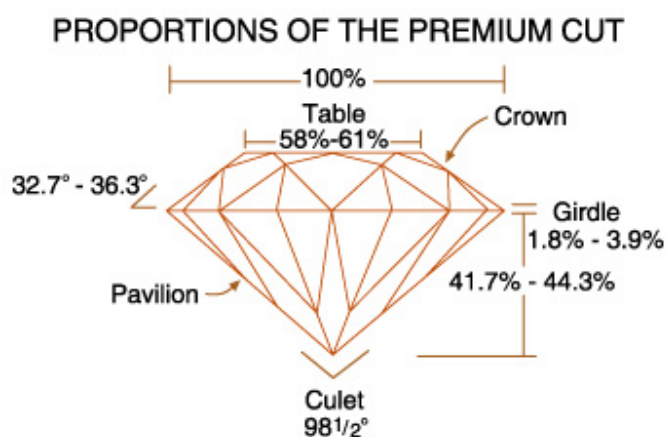
The Ideal Cut Diamond describes a round brilliant diamond that has been cut to exact and mathematically proven proportions. Its symmetry, with 58 exactly placed facets, produces the ultimate in lustre and beauty.

When a diamond is cut to the ideal proportions, all of the light entering from any direction is totally reflected through the top and is dispersed into a display of sparkling flashes and rainbow colors.



The Premium Cut

A Premium Cut diamond demonstrates subtle variations from the Ideal Cut. Although dimensional differences affect a diamond’s reflection of light, a Premium Cut still achieves a harmonious balance between its proportions and the display of brilliance.



The Inferior Cut

Most diamonds are “spread” in their cutting to retain maximum weight from the original rough. A heavier diamond will result, but at a dramatic sacrifice of potential fire and brilliance.

Too Deep

When a diamond is cut too deep, light leaks out of the bottom of the diamond, brilliance is lost and the center of the diamond will appear to be dark.

Too Shallow

When a diamond is cut too shallow, light leaks out of the bottom of the diamond, brilliance is lost and the diamond appears watery, glassy and dark.

Color

Most diamonds, although appearing colorless, actually have slight tones of yellow or brown. As these tones become more easily apparent, the rarity and the cost decrease.

Ideal cutting dramatizes the rare splendor of a diamond because it produces such dazzling brilliance.

Color Grading Scale

	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
GIA	Colorless			Near Colorless				Faint Yellow			Very Light Yellow				Light Yellow								
AGS	0.0	0.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.5	8.0	8.5	9.0	9.5	10.0		

Clarity

Practically all diamonds contain naturally occurring internal characteristics called inclusions. The size, nature, location and amount of inclusions determine a diamond's clarity and affect its cost.

One unique advantage of the Ideal Cut is that its sparkle can mask otherwise noticeable inclusions.

FL – IF (FL = Flawless, IF = Internally Flawless)

No inclusions visible (by an expert) under 10x magnification.

VVS₁-VVS₂ (VVS = very, very slight inclusions)

Minute, extremely difficult to find under 10x magnification.

VS₁-VS₂ (VS = very slight inclusions)

Minor, difficult to find under 10x magnification.

SI₁-SI₂ (SI = small inclusions)

Noticeable, relatively easy to find under 10x magnification.

I₁-I₂ (I = imperfect)

Obvious under 10x magnification. Visible to the naked eye.

Clarity Grading Scale

	Flawless	VVS₁	VVS₂	VS₁	VS₂	SI₁	SI₂	I₁	I₂	I₃	
GIA	Internally Flawless							Imperfect			
AGS	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Carat Weight

The weight of a diamond is measured in carats. One carat is divided into 100 parts called “points.” 1 ct. = 1.00; $\frac{1}{2}$ ct. = 0.50. The value of two diamonds of the same weight can vary greatly depending on the color, clarity, and especially the cut. For example, if a diamond’s table is too large, the girdle too thick, and the proportions uneven, the value of that diamond when compared to another that is more perfect in all three areas, can vary up to 40%.