



MICHELLIA



SPECIAL CARE INFO
ABOUT OPAL JEWELRY

All opals used in my jewelry are natural solid opal stones (not doublets or triplets) from the Wollo province of Ethiopia.

As magical and mesmerizing as opals are, they are considered a delicate gemstone and require some special care to maintain their beauty. With some knowledge and understanding of the nature of the stone, you can keep your opal jewelry in beautiful condition for many years to come.



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1) OPAL'S HYDROPHANE NATURE

Ethiopian opals are hydrophane in nature, which means that they are absorbent of water and other liquids. The term hydrophane comes from the Greek words meaning “water-loving”, and this characteristic makes Ethiopian opals much more durable and crack-resistant than Australian opals. Australian opals need to be kept in a humid environment and regularly soaked or even oiled to prevent crazing or cracking. Ethiopian opals do NOT need such care because of their natural ability to absorb moisture from the environment.

If the Ethiopian opals are left in water or a humid environment, they may turn translucent and lose their play of color temporarily. However, the fire and color will come back once the opal has fully dried, which can take anywhere between minutes to weeks, depending on how much water they managed to absorb. If your opal gets wet from rain or washing hands, simply dry off the surface with a clean microfiber cloth and let the stone naturally air dry to restore its play of color. Do not try to speed up the drying process by placing the opal under a hot light or hair dryer.

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2) AVOID LIQUID CHEMICALS ON OPAL

Short-term contact with plain water and moisture does not cause damage to Ethiopian opals. However, contact with oils or other chemical liquids may result in permanent stain and damage to your opal jewelry. Please keep your opal jewelry away from cleaning agents, perfumes, oils, and any chemical liquids. Do not wear opal jewelry while washing hands, showering, washing dishes, swimming, or any other activity that would risk prolonged exposure to impurities in the water.

In general, it is recommended that you keep your Ethiopian opal jewelry naturally dry to reduce internal stress on the opal.

3) AVOID PHYSICAL STRESS ON OPAL

Opal rates 5.5 to 6.5 on Moh's scale of hardness, which is comparable to the hardness of glass. As a general rule for all fine gemstone jewelry, it is important to remove your opal jewelry if there is a chance for it to be under physical stress. Avoid wearing your opal jewelry during sleep, housekeeping, gardening, or other rigorous physical activities.

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4) CLEANING TIPS FOR OPAL JEWELRY

After every wear, the best cleaning method for Ethiopian opal jewelry is to use a clean, soft, dry microfiber cloth to gently remove dirt, residue, and oils. If it is heavily soiled, rinse in plain, lukewarm water without any soap or detergent.

Ethiopian opals should NOT be cleaned with soapy water because of its hydrophane nature – cleaning an Ethiopian opal with soapy water or other liquids could cause contamination of the gem if any residue remains in the opal after drying. NEVER use a steamer or ultrasonic cleaner on any opal jewelry.

5) Checklist of Do's and Don'ts

- After immersing opal in water, allow it to air dry to restore play of color.
- Clean opal with dry, soft cloth to gently remove dirt and buildups.
- Do NOT clean opal jewelry with soap or other cleaning agent.
- Do NOT expose opal jewelry to chemical liquids, including soap, oil, cosmetics, pool water etc.
- Do NOT wear opal jewelry during sleep, manual labor, and physical activities.