


karats



14K and 18K Gold

Since the beginning of civilization as we know it, gold has been the most sought-after of precious metals. Society has used gold as the standard of value, placing gold objects in the tombs of Egyptian rulers and using gold as an ingredient in wedding rings and medals. The prestige of gold is further enhanced by its scarcity: all of the gold mined in 6,000 years man's recorded history would in pure form fit in a cube 60 feet by 60 feet.

Pure gold is a buttery yellow metal that is very heavy and easily bent. In its pure form, gold is nineteen times as heavy as water, yet it can be beaten so thin that the sun shines through it. In order to make every day, wearable jewelry out of gold, metallurgists add other materials known as alloys to the gold. Alloys lessen the density of the gold, in addition to altering the color and providing gold with greater durability and shine. While alloys are typically a secret recipe of individual metallurgists, common ingredients are silver, copper, and aluminum. The ratio of gold to alloy determines the purity, or the Karat value of the gold. Pure gold is 24 Karat gold, 24 out of 24 parts are pure gold. 18K gold is thus 18 parts pure gold to 6 parts alloy. 14K gold is 14 parts gold to 10 parts alloy. Any gold less than 10K can not, according to U.S. law, be called gold.

Our gold here at Karats comes from the Hoover and Strong Refinery, a renowned company who manufactures alloyed gold taken in two forms: old, recycled gold – molecules of which may have originated from an Egyptian pyramid or one of King Solomon's mines and new gold – which is mined from one of the largest gold mines in the U.S., the Homestake Mine in Lead, South Dakota. Gold mining continues to be a difficult and expensive process, in which it is not uncommon to extract three to five tons of ore from depths of over a mile to recover only one ounce of gold. The Homestake Mine produces over 250,000 ounces yearly at a cost of about \$342/ounce.

As gold does not rust, tarnish, or corrode, the beauty of gold remains constant over the years. Gold's indestructibility as a metal means that it requires very little care. To clean gold, it is advisable to use only jewelry cleaner or mild detergent, followed by a thorough rinsing and wiping. Keep gold away from chemical abrasives such as chlorine. Although gold does not tarnish, the level of body acids in some individuals can cause gold jewelry to leave a black smudge on the skin.