

Will you choose a natural or a lab-grown diamond?

Are lab-grown diamonds an ethical choice?

Lab-created diamonds, also known as lab-grown diamonds or synthetic diamonds, are an option that is often mentioned these days. Entirely man-made, these diamonds look identical to natural diamonds, and because they are "grown" in a lab, they are formed without any risk to miners or the environment. But are lab-grown diamonds really as ethical as they are claimed to be? However, we encounter a few problems here. Natural diamonds took billions of years to form in the deep layers of the earth under enormous pressure, as we know them today. For several decades now, humans have also been able to develop them artificially. This takes place over a period of two weeks in chemical reactors that burn at up to 8000°C (which is hotter than the surface of the sun). Unfortunately, it takes an incredible amount of energy to make these diamonds. And in many cases, this is done using brown coal as a base (with China, India, and Singapore playing a leading role). Studies show that natural diamonds emit three times less carbon emissions per carat than lab-grown diamonds. However, more and more efforts are being made in this area. Lab-grown diamonds generally consume fewer natural resources and cause less direct ecological damage than mined diamonds. They often require less water consumption and no mining that damages ecosystems. At the same time, the production process remains energy-intensive, and not every manufacturer uses green energy. When choosing a manufacturer, it is of course advisable to opt for production that uses renewable energy. Another disadvantage of lab-grown diamonds is their resale value. Lab-grown diamonds lose their value. It is almost impossible to resell them because there is no interest in them. Natural diamonds, on the other hand, are becoming increasingly rare and will therefore continue to rise in value. A disadvantage of natural diamonds, however, is their price tag. A natural diamond is much more expensive to purchase than a synthetic diamond. If you are a fan of large diamonds, then you are better off choosing a beautiful, excellent lab-grown diamond that has been produced using renewable energy.

The natural diamond industry has also worked hard over the past 20 years to achieve an incredible transformation. In the past, there were certainly things that were unacceptable. When you purchase diamonds in an ethical manner today, you can choose not to buy diamonds from conflict areas. Furthermore, modern mining methods provide safe, high-quality jobs in areas where employment opportunities are typically scarce. Employees of leading diamond producers are paid 66% more than the national average salary in those countries. Furthermore, there is only one safety incident per 1,000,000 hours worked. By comparison, that is 15 times less than in the retail sector or 30 times less than in the transport industry. The natural diamond mining industry is one of the most regulated industries in the world. Diamond producers have only a small footprint on the land because mining operations are compact. Worldwide, producers use an area that is roughly the size of New York City. On the other hand, they protect three times more land than they use. Diamond mining does not use toxic chemicals. Water is used to separate the diamonds from the kimberlite rock. Natural diamond producers are all committed to recycling 83% of the water. They are determined to further reduce emissions each year and empower local communities. Since the production of synthetic diamonds is relatively new, there is still more work to be done in this area. On the other hand, synthetic diamonds offer better traceability and transparency: you know exactly where and how they were produced.

Characteristic	Natural Diamond	Lab-grown Diamond (Synthetic)
Origin & Formation	Deep within the earth; formed over billions of years under natural pressure.	In a laboratory; formed in two weeks using chemical reactors (up to 8000 °C).
Price & Accessibility	High price tag due to rarity and complex extraction.	60-85% cheaper; ideal for those who want a larger stone on a budget.

Retention of value	Become rarer; retain their value or increase in value (suitable as heirlooms).	Lose their value; almost no interest on the resale market.
CO2 emissions	Carats emit 3x less CO2 than the average lab diamond.	Highly energy-intensive; often produced using lignite (especially in China/India).
Environmental impact	No toxic chemicals; 83% water recycling. Compact mines with land restoration.	No direct mining damage to ecosystems; lower water consumption.
Ethics & Work	Offers secure jobs (66% above average wage) and local empowerment; strictly regulated.	No risk to miners. Traceability and transparency are often easier.
Employment	Many people at work.	Few workers in the factories.
Appearance	Physically, chemically, and optically identical to lab-grown diamonds.	Physically, chemically, and optically identical to natural diamonds.
Rarity	Final offer; each stone is unique due to a natural process.	Unlimited production; man-made in a controlled environment.

Which choice is right for you?

- Choose Natural if you value symbolism, a lower carbon footprint per carat, and a tangible investment that will retain its value for the next generation.
- Choose Labo if you are looking for a visually perfect, large diamond at a fraction of the price, provided you choose a manufacturer that uses renewable energy.

Elisa Lee guarantees that both natural and synthetic diamonds are high-quality diamonds with the least possible impact on the environment and people.