

Princess Diana's Engagement Ring: History, Design, Cost & Why It Became an Icon



Princess Diana's engagement ring is more than a famous piece of royal jewelry. It is one of the most influential engagement rings ever created. Since its public debut in 1981, the ring has inspired countless engagement ring designs, increased the popularity of sapphire center stones, and become a lasting symbol of elegance and royal heritage.

What makes the ring truly remarkable is that its influence extends far beyond the British royal family. More than forty years later, jewelry designers still create sapphire halo rings inspired by Diana's iconic design, while buyers continue searching for rings that capture the same timeless beauty.

In this guide, you will discover the fascinating history behind Princess Diana's engagement ring, explore its design and gemstones, learn its estimated value, and

understand why it remains one of the most [*recognizable engagement rings*](#) in the world.

Princess Diana’s Engagement Ring at a Glance

Feature		Details
Owner		Princess Diana
Current Wearer		Catherine, Princess of Wales
Year Received		1981
Jeweler		Garrard
Center Stone		Ceylon Blue Sapphire
Sapphire Weight		Approximately 12 Carats
Accent Stones		14 Round Brilliant Diamonds
Metal		18K White Gold
Ring Style		Oval Sapphire Halo
Estimated Value	Today	Approximately \$400,000-\$500,000+

The Story Behind Princess Diana’s Engagement Ring

Princess Diana received her engagement ring from the then Prince Charles before their engagement announcement on **February 24, 1981**. While the royal engagement attracted worldwide media attention, the sapphire ring quickly became one of the most talked-about details of the announcement.

Unlike many royal engagement rings, Diana's ring was **not custom designed**. Instead, she selected it from Garrard's existing jewelry collection. Garrard had served as the Crown Jeweller for the British royal family for many years, and the ring was originally available in the company's catalog.

At the time, this decision surprised many royal observers. Traditionally, engagement rings for members of the royal family were commissioned exclusively for the wearer. Because Diana chose an existing design, anyone with sufficient financial means could theoretically purchase the same ring.

Although the decision initially attracted criticism, history proved that it became one of the reasons the ring achieved worldwide recognition. Rather than being remembered as "just another royal engagement ring," it became a design that millions of people could admire and even recreate.

The ring's story gained another emotional chapter in 2010 when Prince William proposed to Catherine Middleton using the same sapphire ring. William later explained that giving Diana's ring to Catherine was his way of ensuring that his mother remained part of an important moment in his life.

That gesture transformed the ring from a famous royal jewel into a meaningful family heirloom. Today, it symbolizes not only royal history but also love, remembrance, and continuity across generations.

Why Princess Diana's Engagement Ring Became an Icon

Many celebrity engagement rings receive attention when they are first revealed. Very few continue influencing jewelry trends more than four decades later. Princess Diana's engagement ring achieved exactly that because it combined timeless design with cultural significance.

It Changed the Popularity of Colored Gemstones

Before Diana's engagement, diamond solitaire rings dominated the engagement ring market. Colored gemstones certainly existed, but they were not a common choice for engagement rings.

Princess Diana's oval blue sapphire challenged that tradition. The rich royal blue gemstone showed that an engagement ring could be elegant, luxurious, and distinctive without featuring a diamond as the center stone.

Following her engagement, jewelers around the world reported increased interest in sapphire engagement rings, a trend that continues today.

It Introduced One of the World's Most Famous Halo Designs

The ring features a large oval sapphire surrounded by a halo of round brilliant diamonds. This arrangement creates contrast between the deep blue sapphire and the bright white diamonds, making the center stone appear even more vibrant.

Today, halo engagement rings remain one of the most requested styles, and many modern designs still borrow inspiration from Princess Diana's iconic ring.

It Became a Symbol of Royal History

The ring represents far more than fine jewelry. It reminds people of Princess Diana's grace, humanitarian work, and lasting influence around the world. After being passed to Catherine, Princess of Wales, it also became a symbol of family tradition within the British royal family.

Few engagement rings carry such emotional significance while remaining instantly recognizable across generations.

It Continues to Influence Modern Engagement Ring Design

Even today, jewelry designers frequently create rings inspired by Diana's engagement ring. Common features include:

- Oval center gemstones
- Diamond halo settings
- Vintage-inspired proportions
- Sapphire engagement rings
- White gold or platinum settings

The continued popularity of these elements demonstrates how a single engagement ring helped shape modern jewelry trends.

Design Breakdown: Why This Ring Still Looks Timeless

One of the reasons Princess Diana's engagement ring has remained fashionable for more than forty years is its exceptional balance. Rather than relying on excessive size or elaborate decoration, the design combines proportion, contrast, and craftsmanship to create a ring that feels just as elegant today as it did in 1981.

The Oval Sapphire Takes Center Stage

The focal point of the ring is a stunning 12-carat oval Ceylon sapphire. The elongated oval shape gives the gemstone a graceful appearance while allowing it to look larger than many other diamond shapes of similar carat weight.

The sapphire's rich royal blue color creates an immediate visual impact without appearing overly dark. Its oval cut also reflects light evenly, giving the gemstone depth and brilliance from different viewing angles. This balance between color and proportion is one of the reasons oval sapphires remain popular in modern engagement rings.

The Diamond Halo Enhances the Sapphire

Surrounding the sapphire are 14 round brilliant-cut diamonds arranged in a classic halo setting. Instead of competing with the center stone, these diamonds act like a

frame. Their bright white sparkle increases the visual contrast against the blue sapphire, making the gemstone appear even more vibrant. The halo also creates the illusion of a larger center stone while adding additional brilliance from every angle.

White Gold Completes the Design

The gemstones are mounted in 18-karat white gold, a metal that complements both the sapphire and the surrounding diamonds. Unlike yellow gold, which introduces warmer tones, white gold keeps the focus on the gemstones themselves.

The cool color of the metal allows the sapphire's deep blue hue to stand out while maintaining a refined and sophisticated appearance. This neutral backdrop is one of the reasons many modern sapphire engagement rings continue to use white gold or platinum settings.

A Design That Balances Elegance and Simplicity

Perhaps the greatest achievement of Princess Diana's engagement ring is that every design element works together without overpowering the others.

The sapphire provides rich color, the diamonds add brilliance, and the white gold setting creates harmony between the two. The result is a ring that feels luxurious yet understated, making it just as appealing to modern buyers as it was more than four decades ago. Its timeless proportions are the reason countless jewelers continue to create sapphire halo rings inspired by this iconic royal design.

Gemstone Details: The Sapphire and Diamonds That Define the Ring

The beauty of Princess Diana's engagement ring comes from more than its famous design. Its carefully selected gemstones play an equally important role in making it one of the most admired engagement rings in history.

The 12-Carat Ceylon Blue Sapphire

The centerpiece of the ring is an approximately 12-carat oval Ceylon blue sapphire. Ceylon sapphires originate from present-day Sri Lanka, a country that has produced some of the world's finest sapphires for centuries.

These gemstones are prized for their vivid royal blue color, excellent transparency, and impressive brilliance. Unlike darker sapphires that can appear almost black under certain lighting conditions, high-quality Ceylon sapphires display a vibrant blue hue that remains bright in both natural and artificial light.

The oval cut enhances the gemstone's appearance by creating a larger face-up size while allowing light to travel evenly through the stone. This cut also gives the ring an elegant and elongated appearance that remains popular in modern engagement ring designs.

The Diamond Halo

Surrounding the sapphire are 14 round brilliant-cut diamonds arranged in a classic halo setting. These diamonds are not simply decorative. They serve several important purposes:

- They increase the ring's overall brilliance.
- They create contrast that makes the sapphire appear even richer in color.
- They visually enlarge the center stone.
- They add symmetry to the overall design.

The halo has become one of the most recognizable features of Princess Diana's engagement ring and has inspired thousands of similar engagement ring designs worldwide.

How Much Is Princess Diana's Engagement Ring Worth Today?

One of the most common questions people ask is whether Princess Diana's engagement ring has increased in value over the years. When Prince Charles

purchased the ring from Garrard in 1981, it reportedly cost approximately \$47,000. At the time, this was considered a significant investment, although it was relatively modest compared to many modern celebrity engagement rings.

Today, experts generally estimate the ring's value to be between \$400,000 and \$500,000, with some valuations suggesting it could command an even higher price because of its extraordinary historical significance.

However, assigning a precise value is difficult because the ring is considered priceless by many jewelry experts. Unlike ordinary engagement rings, its worth is influenced by factors beyond gemstone quality.

Can You Buy a Ring Similar to Princess Diana's?

Yes. Many jewelers now offer engagement rings inspired by Princess Diana's iconic design. However, choosing a similar ring involves more than simply selecting a blue sapphire. To capture the same timeless appearance, consider these design elements:

- An oval blue sapphire as the center stone.
- A balanced halo of round brilliant diamonds.
- White gold or platinum for a clean, elegant finish.
- Moderate proportions that prioritize balance over excessive size.
- High-quality gemstones with excellent color rather than focusing solely on carat weight.

If your budget is limited, laboratory-created sapphires or smaller natural sapphires can recreate the overall appearance while keeping costs more manageable. The enduring popularity of Diana's ring proves that timeless design often matters more than size or price.

Conclusion

Princess Diana's engagement ring remains one of the most influential pieces of jewelry ever created. Its combination of a vibrant Ceylon sapphire, sparkling diamond halo, and elegant proportions has inspired engagement ring designs for more than four decades.

Beyond its remarkable craftsmanship, the ring carries a unique history that connects two generations of the British royal family and continues to symbolize elegance, love, and enduring legacy. Whether you admire it for its royal heritage or its timeless design, Princess Diana's engagement ring remains a benchmark for classic engagement ring style.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is Princess Diana's engagement ring so famous?

Princess Diana's engagement ring is famous because of its royal history, distinctive 12-carat blue sapphire, elegant halo design, and continued popularity after being passed to Catherine, Princess of Wales.

How much is Princess Diana's engagement ring worth today?

Most jewelry experts estimate the ring is worth between **\$400,000 and \$500,000**, although its historical significance could make its true value considerably higher.

Why did Prince William give Kate Middleton Diana's engagement ring?

Prince William has explained that he wanted his mother to be part of his engagement and future family life, making the ring a meaningful tribute to Princess Diana.

Can you buy a ring similar to Princess Diana's?

Yes. Many jewelers offer engagement rings inspired by Princess Diana's design, featuring an oval blue sapphire surrounded by a halo of diamonds in white gold or platinum.

What gemstone is in Princess Diana's engagement ring?

The center stone is an approximately 12-carat oval Ceylon blue sapphire, surrounded by 14 round brilliant-cut diamonds in an 18-karat white gold setting.