

CLARITY GUIDES

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GEOLOGY · HISTORY · LORE · EVIDENCE

CRYSTALS

History, lore & an honest look:
from Egyptian amulets to Scottish charm stones



Published by Clarity Guides · Cover: amethyst crystals from Puy-de-Dôme, Auvergne, France. Photo: G ry Parent, public domain

Preview – full guide coming soon – goclarity.uk

ABOUT THIS GUIDE



Crystals are some of the most beautiful things the Earth makes. People have carried them, carved them, buried them with their dead and told stories about them for at least 7,000 years.

This guide is for anyone who loves crystals, is curious about them, or has been given one and wondered what it really is. It covers the simple geology, the long history and lore (with a special look at Scotland's own charm stones), an A-Z of 30 popular stones, and the practical things shops rarely mention: where stones come from, how to spot fakes, which ones are unsafe, and how to collect responsibly in Scotland.

We respect the many people who find crystals calming or meaningful, and we describe the traditions as fairly as we can. We are also honest about the evidence: **no crystal has been shown to heal any illness**. Both things can be true at once. A stone can be a lovely focus for attention without having hidden powers.

Our three labels. **RECORD** means something we can show from a historical document, an archaeological find or a published study. **LEGEND** means a story, tradition or traditional meaning, often treasured, that cannot be checked. **MODERN** means an idea or practice created or reshaped in the last century or so. All three have value. Problems start only when one is passed off as another.

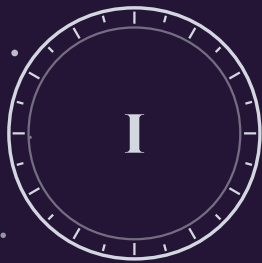
Through the guide you will also find paired boxes headed **What people report** and **What the evidence says**, so you can see both sides at a glance.

Not medical advice. This guide is for general interest and education only. Nothing in it diagnoses, treats or cures any condition. Never use crystals in place of care from your GP or another health professional, and never stop prescribed medication because of crystal advice. Please read the safety chapter before making anything with stones, especially "gem waters".

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WHAT IS A CRYSTAL?

A crystal is any solid whose atoms are stacked in a regular, repeating pattern. That hidden order is what gives many crystals their flat faces, sharp edges and sparkle.

RECORD Most of the “crystals” sold in shops are **minerals**: natural, solid substances with a definite chemical make-up and an ordered atomic structure. Quartz, for example, is silicon and oxygen (SiO_2) arranged in linked chains of tiny pyramids. Amethyst, citrine, smoky quartz, rose quartz, agate, carnelian and tiger’s eye are all forms of quartz, coloured by traces of other elements, natural radiation or tiny inclusions.

Some popular “crystals” are not minerals or not crystalline at all. **Rocks** such as lapis lazuli and Iona marble are mixtures of several minerals. **Obsidian** is natural volcanic glass. **Amber** is fossilised tree resin, **jet** is fossilised wood, and **pearl** and **coral** are made by living animals.

♦ HOW CRYSTALS FORM

FROM MELTED ROCK As magma cools underground, minerals crystallise out. Slow cooling gives big crystals, as in granite; very fast cooling gives glass, such as obsidian. Gas bubbles in lava can later fill with agate or amethyst to make geodes.

FROM WATER Hot, mineral-rich water flowing through cracks deposits quartz veins and many metal ores. Evaporating lakes and seas leave gypsum (selenite) and halite (rock salt).

FROM HEAT AND PRESSURE When rocks are buried and squeezed during mountain-building, new minerals grow, such as garnet in schist or marble from limestone. This is called metamorphism.

FROM WEATHERING Near the surface, rain and air alter minerals. Green malachite and blue azurite form where copper ores weather; turquoise forms in dry regions from copper- and aluminium-rich rocks.

Most crystals sold today took thousands to millions of years to form. Many of the quartz crystals in shops are hundreds of millions of years old. Those that were mined are not replaced on any human timescale.