



Amazonite

with Smoky Quartz

Pikes Peak Region, Colorado

Amazonite is a variety of microcline feldspar. Amazonite is sometimes also called Amazonstone. It is a light blue-green variety of microcline. Feldspar crystallizes in the Triclinic Crystal System and forms complicated crystals and crystal groups. Wonderful groups of Amazonite, often with well-formed Smoky Quartz crystals, are found in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado.

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Amethyst Geode

Brazil

Amethyst is the purple variety of quartz. It can be light purple to very dark purple and every shade in between. The color results from irradiated iron impurities. As quartz is a relatively hard mineral, the amethyst variety is often cut and polished to make gemstones.

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The Alma Rose

Sweet Home Mine, Colorado

The Sweet Home Mine near Alma, Colorado was first mined for silver, but it never produced much silver. Miners and collectors have found some of the best rhodochrosite crystals found anywhere in the world in this mine high in the Colorado Rocky Mountains. And one of the very best of the rhodochrosite crystal groups found in the Sweet Home Mine is called "The Alma Rose."

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Autunite

Spokane County, Washington

This is a very special specimen in our collection. It is a very large example of this rare mineral. These crystal groups are known by serious mineral collectors all over the world. Also, it is a radioactive mineral! This means that it contains a radioactive element (uranium) that breaks down and gives off radiation. But don't worry. You are safe. The glass of the display case blocks any harmful radiation keeping all visitors safe.

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Azurite

Morenci Mine, Morenci, Arizona

Azurite is one of many copper minerals. Azurite is always a shade of blue. Malachite and azurite are copper minerals that are commonly found together. Malachite is green and azurite is blue. Mineralogists call them monochromatic minerals. This means that they occur only in one color. In other words, you will never find red or orange or yellow malachite or azurite. Malachite is always a shade of green; azurite is always a shade of blue.

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Chalcedony

Banded Agate

Condor, Argentina

Agate is a variety of chalcedony. All chalcedony varieties are made up on quartz crystals, but the crystals are so small, they can only be seen with a microscope. Mineralogists call this cryptocrystalline. While both agate and quartz share the same chemical formula (SiO_2), only quartz crystals can be seen with the naked eye.

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Emerald

Coscuez Mine, Muzo, Colombia

There is a group of minerals known by the name beryl. Beryl minerals are glassy, silicate minerals (which means they have silicon and oxygen molecules in them) and they are often gem-quality. Green beryl is called emerald. Gem-quality emeralds are among the most valuable of all gemstones.

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Dugway Geode

Juab County, Utah

A geode looks like a ball of rock. But when it is broken or sliced open, there is a hollow space inside that is lined with crystals. Even though these specimens are known as "Dugway Geodes," they are technically what geologists call thundereggs. Yes, many have some small pockets with quartz crystals. But they are mostly solid. Rounded balls like these, that are mostly chalcedony, are properly called thundereggs.

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Crocoite

Dundas, Tasmania

Crocoite is a very rare mineral. The most famous and beautiful crystals come from Tasmania, like this crystal group in the Rice Museum's collection. It is brilliant red-orange and forms thin crystals and crystal clusters. Crocoite contains the element chromium and is a chromium ore. Chromium is an important element used in the production of stainless steel, and used for chrome plating on motorcycles and cars, giving them a shiny silver appearance. Crocoite is used primarily for making pigments. The pigments have very bright colors, including school bus yellow!

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