

Morocco – This is a source of attractive fossils, particularly ammonites and orthoceros, which are formed into pendants. Mudstones are also available; they are an attractive dark brown stone with patterns of white quartz.

Mozambique – A small selection of gems is produced here, including aquamarine, ruby, morganite and purple tourmaline; notably, there was a recent find of Paraiba-type tourmaline.

Purple Tourmaline.
(Photo: ATG/LAB)



Namibia (formerly South West Africa) – A beautiful country for its wildlife, it is also fascinating for gems, renowned as the place where you could pick up diamonds from the sands along the coast. (This area has now been partitioned off and is patrolled by armed police.) Several other interesting gems are found here: aquamarine, tourmaline, fluorite, diopside, prehnite, mandarin garnet and demantoid garnet. A very rare gemstone is also reported – Jeremejevite (see Minor Gemstones).



Prehnite Rough. (Photo: KW)

The best place to buy is in the capital, Windhoek, where there are many jewellery shops. There are several organised tours, some visiting the gem-producing areas. Beware: you are likely to be offered stones off the street that will turn out to be not you wanted.

Nigeria – This is the source of many gemstones, mainly centred around Jos, the capital of the Plateau

State. Sapphire, ruby, tourmaline (including Paraiba type), aquamarine, garnet (spessartine, called Orange Garnet) and quartz are found here. However this is not a place for the layperson to go buying; strictly for the hardened professional gemmologist.



Spessartine Garnet.
(Photo: ATG/LAB)

South Africa – Contains the largest sources of precious metals and gemstones in the African continent. The Premier Mine, supplier of the Cullinan diamonds and many other of the world's largest diamonds, is situated here (see under Diamonds), together with several other important mines.



Premier Mine, South Africa. (Photo: PR)

Lesotho, an independent kingdom, produced a diamond rivalling those from the Premier Mine in 2006. It was called the 'Light of Leseng', weighed 478 carats and sold for \$18.43 million.

The largest gold mines in the world are located around Johannesburg, the largest city and capital of the Witwatersrand area.

Jewellery stores sell a wide range of loose certified