

# History of the Engagement Ring

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Nowadays, the **engagement ring** is a staple in our Western culture. It's taken for granted that if you want to tie the knot, you'll need a ring to show you're serious about a girl. Everyday guys come in our store needing to find the **perfect engagement ring**, but few know why or how a ring has become the symbol of love. I'll expound on the history a bit so you can not only be a knight in shining armor, but also an educated knight in shining armor.

The ancient Egyptians were the first civilization to use the circle as a symbol of the union between a man and a woman. The very nature of a circle, without a beginning or an end, represents the eternity of love.

The Egyptians formed the first rings from bone or simple metals. The ancient Greeks had a different angle on the ring. For them, the ring was a symbol of betrothal, a promise to one day become engaged. Across many cultures, there's evidence that a gold ring emerged as the traditional gift of choice for a man to give the family of his future bride.

If you're wondering when diamonds entered the engagement process, tradition has it that the first diamond engagement ring was given in 1477 to Mary of Burgundy by Archduke Maximillian of Hamburg. Because diamond is the hardest and strongest mineral on earth, it was seen to resist breakage, and thus symbolize the unbending union of a man and woman in wedlock.

So it became increasingly popular for the European super wealthy and royalty to give a diamond engagement ring at this time. Less wealthy citizens would have given a Fede

(faith) ring in the form of two clasped hands more akin to the more modern claddagh (clasped hands) engagement rings.

And why do we wear the ring on the left hand? Tradition states that a vein called the vena amoris runs directly to the heart from the third finger of the left hand.

Fashion must have moved slowly then, because it was almost another 300 years until the development of the wedding band. In 1761, Queen Charlotte was the first documented bride to wear a wedding band to "guard her engagement ring". It seems to be a nice present from her forward-thinking man, King George III. If only he knew the implications of that gift

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