

# Five Countries Lead Diamond Supplies to the US

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Diamond supply to the US comes from all over the world. As the world's largest diamond consumer market, the US is the country that imports the most diamonds – more than \$400 billion worth of polished diamonds in the last 30 years.

To be precise, between January 1989 and August 2020, US gross imports totaled a mammoth \$426,142,353,096 worth of polished diamonds.

By the end of 2024, there is a good chance that this number will reach a massive half trillion dollars. Where do these diamonds come from, and what does it say about [diamond mining](#)?

## Where Do US Diamonds Come From?

For most of those 30 odd years, and until 2015, Israel was the leading source of diamond supply to the US. Belgium was a close second until 1992, when matters started to change in the midstream of the diamond pipeline.

By 1993, India's diamond manufacturing sector was large enough and its drive to conquer market share strong enough to rise from the third to second largest source of polished diamonds to the US.

In 2016, India was already the largest supplier of polished diamonds to the US. By then, manufacturing in Israel found it impossible to compete with India on cost or scale.

The three – India, Israel, and Belgium – accounted for 90-93% of US diamond imports until 2005. At that time, imports from South Africa became of growing importance. Never a source of many polished diamonds, the high average value of diamond imports from South Africa, however, were enough to propel it to the fourth largest supplier of US diamonds.

# At Fifth, Value Over Volume

Throughout the years, a fifth country was an important source of diamonds. Very different from the other four, Switzerland closes the list of top five diamond suppliers to the US.

While the three leading diamond suppliers to the US are the world's largest polishing and trading centers, and South Africa is a diamond producing country with an active polishing activity, Switzerland is neither.

Without a meaningful polishing industry or any diamond mining, the European country better known for its banking system, is an important diamond supplier to the US for a very different reason.

Like South Africa, Switzerland it is a source of high value goods – very high. The average value of polished diamonds imported into the US in 2019 was \$2,099.57 per carat. Imports from South Africa averaged more than nine times higher – \$19,106.96. Imports from Switzerland were considerably higher – \$45,174.60, or 21.5 times above average.

During the 30 year period, the diamond supply to the US arrived from 162 different countries. Some very small, almost accidental suppliers, but 29 of them supplied \$100 million or more over the years. The super suppliers are 13 countries that are source of \$1 billion or more worth of polished diamonds since 1989.

The \$1 billion diamond super suppliers are:

<b>Country</b>	<b>\$ Bln</b>
Israel	\$175.2
India	\$120.1
Belgium	\$74.4
South Africa	\$12.4
Switzerland	\$8.0
Hong Kong	\$5.5
Russia	\$3.0
China	\$2.9
UK	\$2.4
UAE	\$1.8
Canada	\$1.8
Botswana	\$1.5
Thailand	\$1.0

For annual diamond trade by the US and other leading countries, [see the diamond statistics page](#).

# Average Value of Diamond Supply to the US Declining

Despite the high average of goods imported from Switzerland, the average value of diamond supply to the US has declined in the past couple of years. From a historic high of \$2,289.63 in 2018, they are down 15.7% to this year's current average of \$1,930.03 per carat

This is an interesting trend. The average price of US diamond imports was on an upward trajectory. Major economic downturns could only pose temporary pullbacks. It stands to reason that average prices will continue to rise in the long run, [but not only](#).

Also, the recent increases took place while the average wholesale price of polished diamonds declined. Partially, this has to do with most diamonds entering the US set in jewelry. Loose diamonds that enter the US, which is what is shown here, are trending differently.

One possible explanation for the rise in average value of loose is that more Americans are buying larger diamonds after picking them out at the jeweler.

## Is There a Diamond Monopoly?

Many believe that the diamond mining industry is a monopoly, and that De Beers sets the price, quantity, and pace of diamond supply. However, [De Beers](#) is no longer a monopoly. It is still the largest supplier by value, [but its](#)

market share has fallen below 30%. There is another large player in the market, ALROSA, which is the largest supplier by volume.

These companies are joined by three other large suppliers. Each of them markets their goods separately and is fiercely competitive. This is important in the context of polished diamond supply to the US. Diamond miners' different pricing methodologies and marketing approaches impact how manufacturers buy, polish, and even trade rough diamonds.

The variance in polished diamond supply movement, competitiveness between the main manufacturing centers, differences in efficiencies, areas of specialty, and local economic setting all ensure that the market place remains competitive.

This is why consumers in the US and elsewhere have a real choice. US diamonds were sourced from 71 different countries in 2019. Since 1989, the US imported diamonds from 161 countries. Each country supplied something different, with variance in color, clarity, and price. That is the beauty of a competitive consumer market.