

# African Jewelry

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History of African Civilizations

AFN 121 [1400 – 2503]

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December 13, 2021



# Introduction

In this short presentation, you will learn about African Jewelry, and:

- What it's made out of
- What it's used for
- The different types of jewelry
- What it's like today.

# What is the background of African Jewelry?

- African Jewelry traces back to over 75,000 BC, where perforated snail shells were being used as beads, and perforated ostrich shells were in Kenya.
- The earliest known bead jewelry came from 10,000 BC in Libya
- Jewelry has been seen as a symbol of wealth and power and social status.

# What is African Jewelry used for and what it is made out of?

- African Jewelry is made out of materials like the ostrich and snails as mentioned before, but also bones, stones, gemstones, hair, teeth, wood, ivory, amber, and glass.
- With these materials, they used to make things such as beads, earrings, necklaces, and even for hair.
- It's also not designated to any gender, as both men and women wear jewelry, and even children.

# Perforated Mollusc Shells



# Different Types of Jewelry

- Fulani Earrings- One of the most known types of African jewelry due to their craftsmanship and length, the ultimate showing of higher wealth.
- Zulu Bead Jewelry-Works a communication between men and women, as a Zulu bead facing downward means an unmarried women, while a Zulu bead facing upward means an unmarried man. Also the colors represented on the bead have negative/positive meanings (Yellow in positive means Wealth, while Pink in negative means poverty).
- Maasai Bead Jewelry-Very similar to Zulu beads, except instead of a triangle, it's an flat disc.

# Fulani Earrings

## Zulu Beads



# African Jewelry today

- African Jewelry today is considered to form for expressed individuality and an art
- Beads like Zulu and Maasai are sold at a market
- Afrocentric Jewelry- A form of jewelry that takes inspiration for the ones mentioned before, seen in cities like Chicago or N.Y.



# References

- “African Jewelry.” *Contemporary African Art*, <https://www.contemporary-african-art.com/african-jewelry.html>.
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