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# Pearls: A Natural History



## Synopsis

A book with the luster and allure of its subject, *Pearls* is the most spectacular volume ever produced on this prized gem. Blending history, science, and the jeweler's art to celebrate these natural treasures - as in Abrams' hugely successful *Amber* - this lavishly illustrated volume, shimmering with new color photography and archival images, traces the natural and cultural history of pearls around the world. Published to accompany an exhibition organized by the American Museum of Natural History in New York and the Field Museum in Chicago, *Pearls* begins with the earliest pearl artifacts found in Mesopotamia and discusses how pearls are formed, in nature and by humans, the ways different cultures have used pearls in literature, paintings, religious objects, and sculptures, and, of course, pearls as personal adornment.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (9 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

This truly is a history book, written in a very accessible style with lots of great photos and illustrations. If there's anything else to know about pearls then I suspect it might just about fill up the back of a postage stamp with room to spare. A great resource for amateurs and professionals alike; I thoroughly enjoyed it and it's well worth the money.

This is an excellent, well illustrated book with everything you could want to know about pearls - how they occur naturally, the biology of this, how they are induced artificially (cultured pearls), how they are faked, the optics of their appearance and how they have shaped history and, of course, pearl

jewellery. The hard bits are explained without jargon, in intelligible words but without losing detail.

This well written book explores society's interest in pearls, from their prehistoric use to the recent environmental impact on pearl producing invertebrates. Six of the eight chapters of the book are devoted to a thorough survey of how pearls are utilized by humans throughout history. The authors provide both primary and tertiary sources, including discussion of pearls documented by contemporary observers as far back as Cleopatra's time. Later chapters devoted to the science of pearl growth are written in a style accessible to the layman enthusiast. This is a book that can be mined for its scholarly information, but its popular interest to those who enjoy pearls for their decorative use should not be ignored. Illustrations include extant artifacts, artwork from throughout history, maps describing pearl growth and trade locations, and comparisons of the different pearl producing species. Taken as a whole, *Pearls: A Natural History* gives us the first definitive book on the history and science of pearls since *The Book of the Pearl*, by George Frederick Kunz, published in 1906.

I ordered this book because I was very interested in learning more about pearls. I liked how comprehensive the book is. The pictures are also beautiful. It also would make a great coffee table book. I did read it from cover to cover, and found fascinating information about pearls, their history, where they come from....etc. Glad I bought it and would recommend it to any pearl enthusiast.

This is such a great book about the history of pearls. The photos are as delightful to see, as reading the wonderful stories about exquisite pearls around the world.

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