

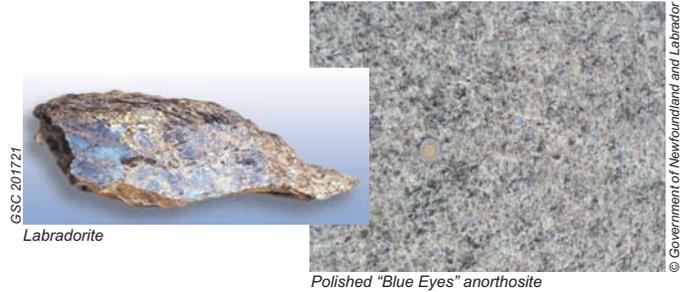
LABRADORITE



1

What is Labradorite?

Labradorite is a type of feldspar, and near Nain in Labrador, it is found in a rock called anorthosite. Anorthosite is an igneous rock that is almost completely composed of feldspars.



GSC 201721

Labradorite

Polished "Blue Eyes" anorthosite

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Artist Gilbert Hay

©Birches Gallery

In the past, labradorite was thought to have mystical qualities because of its captivating play of colours. It was called firestone, and pulverized labradorite powder was used as a potion to cure ailments. Labradorite was collected near Nain in the 1770s by missionaries and taken to Europe, where it was valued for its beauty.

The quarry rights to the Nain labradorite and anorthosite deposits belong to the Labrador Inuit Association.

The anorthosite is quarried at the Ten Mile Bay and Igiak Bay quarries, and huge blocks are shipped to Italy for finishing as dimension stone (decorative cover for building). The main market is European, but it is sold all over the world. Anorthosite is also used for table and counter tops and other decorative pieces.



Ten Mile Bay Quarry, Labrador

© Government of Newfoundland and Labrador



The Nain anorthosite rocks are about 1.29-1.35 billion years old!

Labradorite is the provincial mineral of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Ten Mile Bay Quarry produces 1,000 m³ of dimension stone per year.

Gilbert Hay of Nain creates sculptures in anorthosite and labradorite mined from the Ten Mile Bay Quarry.

Nain labradorite is used locally in jewelry and other handicrafts, and is sold to rock shops outside of Labrador.

LABRADORITE



2

Shimmering Rocks!



Artist Jamie Meyer

The mineral labradorite is one of the most beautiful and popular of the semiprecious stones and is often used in jewellery and ornaments. It is found in abundance near the community of Nain and elsewhere in Labrador, and on the island of Newfoundland.

Labradorite is usually dark grey, but in the right angle of light, it displays a play of colours mainly in shades of blue and green, but sometimes in yellow, red, and gold.

This shimmering effect has nothing to do with surface colour. It is due to internal reflection, and the colours vary depending on the angle of light.



Artist Gilbert Hay

Did you know?

Labradorite is one of the feldspars (the others are orthoclase, microcline, albite, oligoclase, andesine, bytownite, and anorthite).

Feldspar is used in making glass and ceramics.

Feldspar is one of the most common rock-forming minerals.

On the mineral hardness scale of 10, feldspar has a hardness of 6, but diamond, at 10, is 22 times harder.

Moonstone (the June birth stone), is a feldspar with bluish reflections (commonly albite, oligoclase, or labradorite); sunstone is an oligoclase with reddish-gold reflections.

Labradorite is found in Labrador, eastern and western United States, northern Mexico, and Madagascar.

Labradorite is named after Labrador, andesine after the Andes in South America, and bytownite is named after Bytown, the former name of Ottawa.



Artist Jamie Meyer

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