Create a Pie Chart in Google Sheets (With Example)

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November 2, 2025

RECOMMENDED CITATION

Mohammed looti (2025). *Create a Pie Chart in Google Sheets (With Example)*. PSYCHOLOGICAL STATISTICS. Retrieved from https://statistics.arabpsychology.com/?p=8352

A pie chart is an exceptionally effective visualization tool, structured as a circular graph where individual slices represent the relative magnitude of distinct categories. This design effectively illustrates the proportions of constituent parts contributing to a total sum. Consequently, pie charts are the ideal choice when the objective is to display how components break down the whole, such as market share, budget allocation, or sales distribution.

This comprehensive tutorial provides a detailed, step-by-step methodology for efficiently creating, customizing, and deploying a highly informative pie chart within the powerful cloud-based spreadsheet application, Google Sheets. We will walk through the entire process, from preparing the raw data to applying professional formatting.

Step 1: Preparing the Data Structure in Google Sheets

The success of any graphical representation is fundamentally dependent on the quality and organization of the input data. For a standard pie chart, the required dataset configuration is straightforward: it necessitates two columns. The first column must contain the categorical labels (e.g., product names or regions), while the second must contain the corresponding numerical values (the magnitudes, such as revenue or unit sales, that define the size of each slice).

For this example, we will utilize sample data tracking the sales performance across six different product lines. It is crucial to organize this information clearly, ensuring that headers are included in the top row to define the content of each column clearly. This organization aids both the user and the automated chart generation feature in Google Sheets.

	A	B	C	D
1	**Product**	**Sales**		
2	A	45		
3	B	58		
4	C	32		
5	D	13		
6	E	19		
7	F	30		
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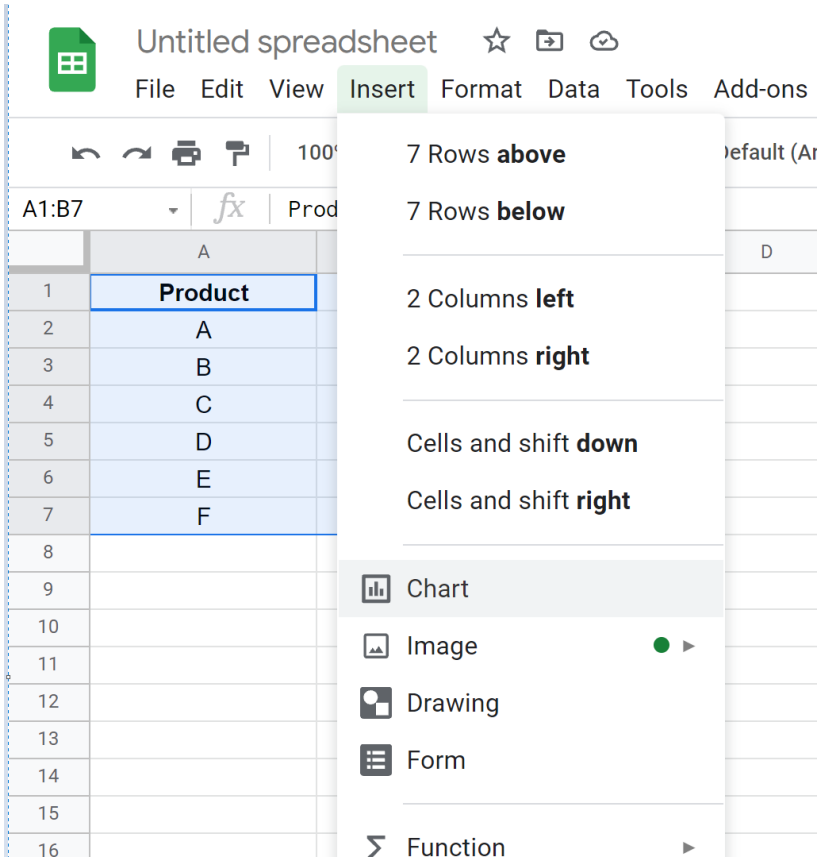
In this structure, the product names serve as the unique identifiers or labels for the slices, and the associated sales figures (the numerical values) will automatically determine the size and weight of each segment in the resulting visualization.

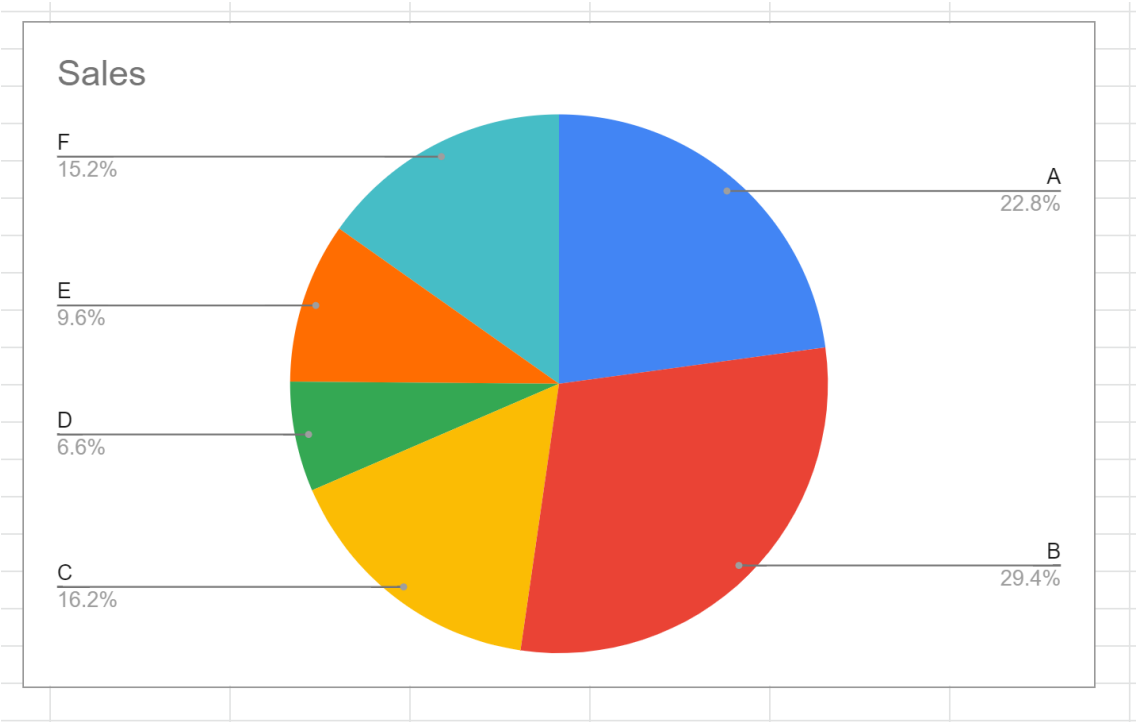
Step 2: Selecting the Data Range and Inserting the Visualization

With the dataset correctly input and organized, the next phase is instructing Google Sheets which specific range of cells should be used for the visualization. Begin by highlighting the entire relevant dataset, including the headers, which spans the range from cell **A1** to cell **B7**. Accurate selection is vital to ensure that all necessary labels and values are included in the chart generation process.

After highlighting the range, navigate to the primary menu bar located at the top of the interface. Click the **Insert** tab, and then select the **Chart** option. Google Sheets incorporates intelligent detection algorithms designed to analyze the structure of the selected data. Because the data represents parts of a whole, the system will typically suggest the pie chart as the default, most appropriate graphical type.



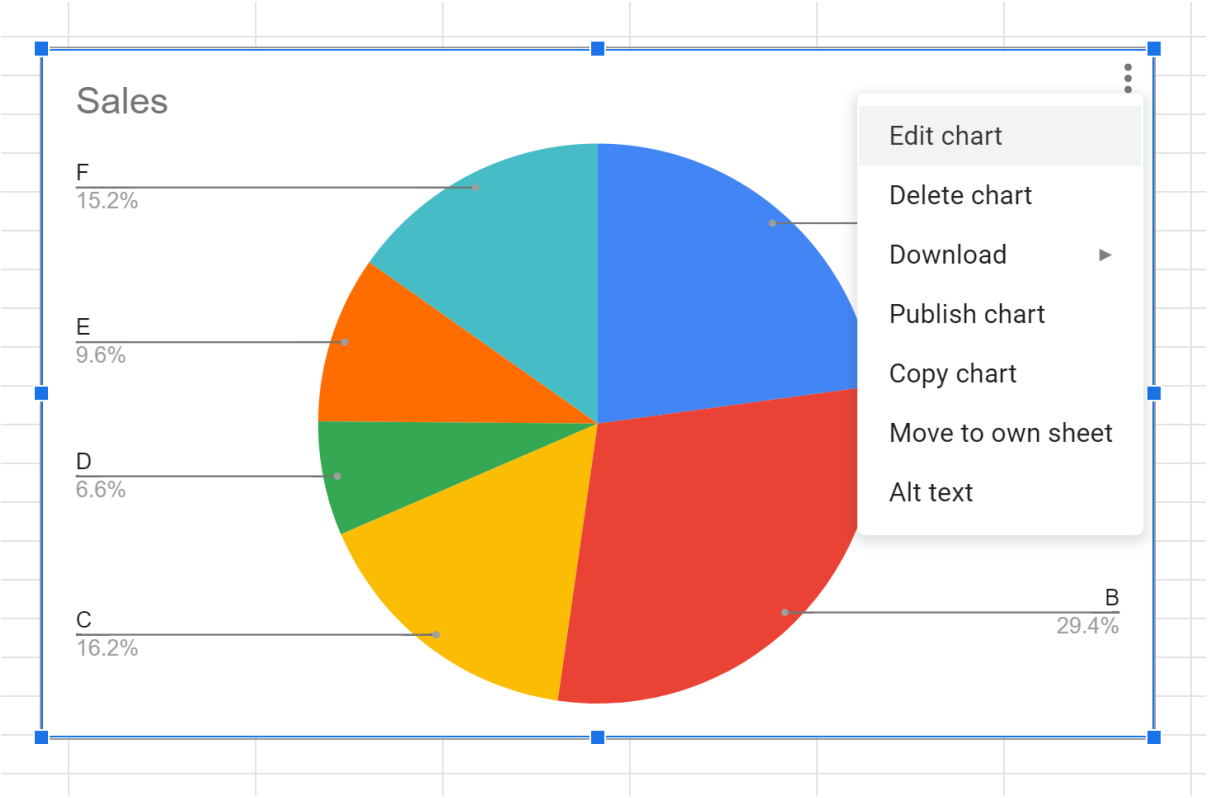
Once this step is executed, the system immediately inserts a default, unformatted pie chart visualization directly onto your spreadsheet canvas. This initial chart already displays the defined sales figures proportionally, providing an immediate visual insight into the distribution.



Step 3: Launching the Chart Editor for Advanced Customization

While the automatically generated chart provides a baseline visual representation, it rarely meets professional reporting standards without further refinement. Customization is essential for maximizing readability, adhering to brand guidelines, and emphasizing key insights within the visualization.

To initiate the customization process, first click anywhere on the newly inserted chart object to select it. Next, locate the context menu, represented by three vertical dots, situated in the upper right corner of the chart box. Clicking these dots will reveal a dropdown menu from which you must select the **Edit chart** option.

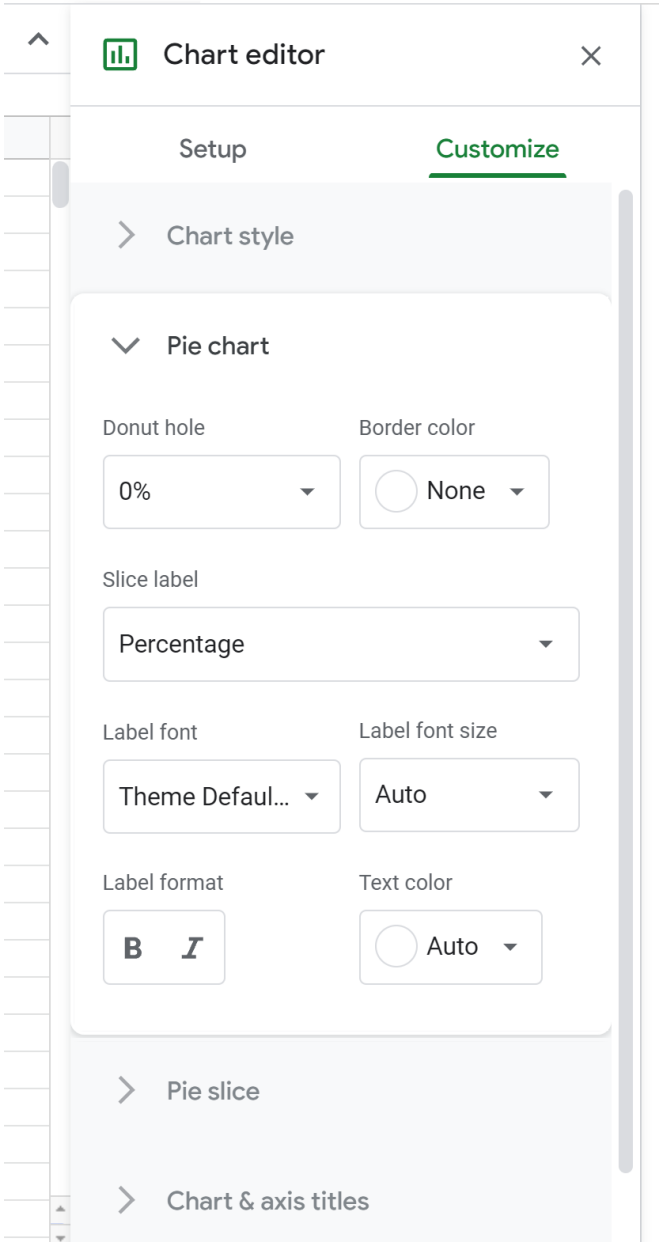


Executing this command instantly launches the comprehensive **Chart editor** panel, which appears docked on the right side of your screen. Within this editor, ensure you navigate specifically to the **Customize** tab. This tab houses all the critical styling, labeling, and layout configuration options necessary to transform the default chart into a polished graphic.

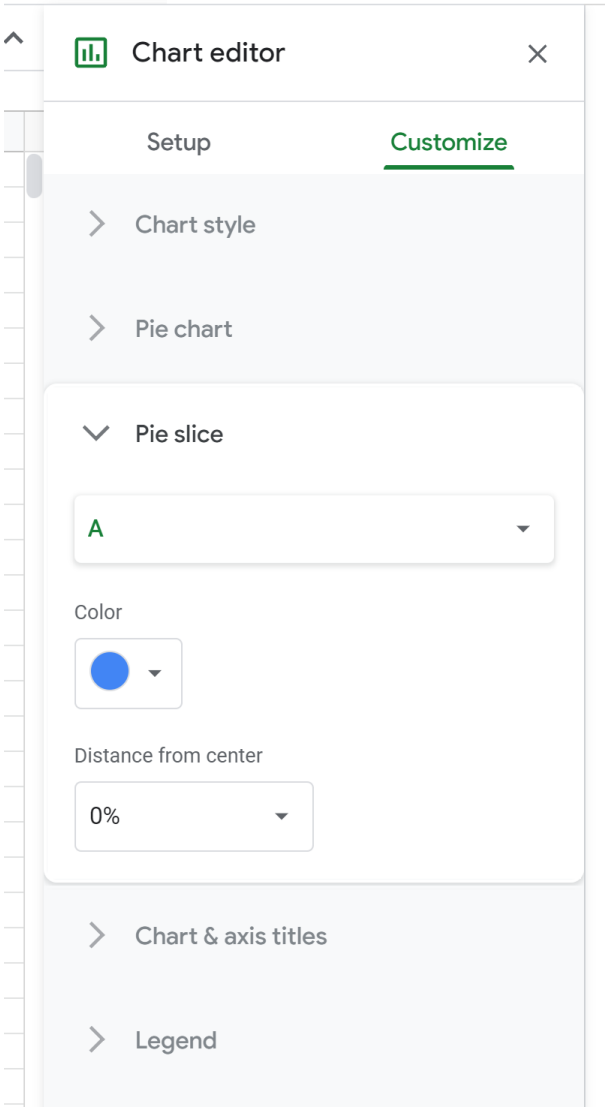
Step 4: Enhancing Readability with Slice Labels and Color Palettes

A fundamental requirement for an effective pie chart is ensuring that the audience can instantly gauge the contribution of each segment. The customization menu provides granular control over how slice magnitudes are displayed.

First, locate and expand the **Pie chart** section within the editor. Find the **Slice label** dropdown menu. It is highly recommended to change the default setting (which may show raw 'Value' or 'Label') to **Percentage**. Displaying the percentage directly on the slices significantly increases the chart's immediate comprehension by clarifying the proportional breakdown of the total sum.



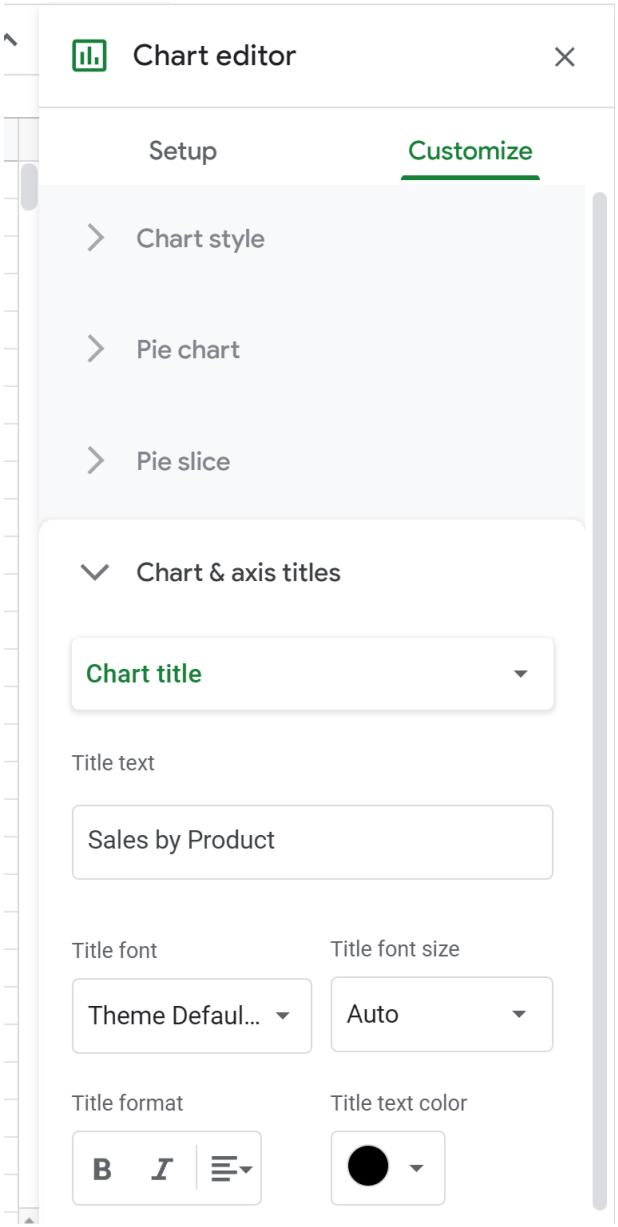
Secondly, visual distinction is often required, either for aesthetic reasons or to highlight specific categories. To customize the color scheme, expand the **Pie slice** section in the **Chart editor**. Here, you are granted the ability to individually assign colors to each product line or category. Utilizing this feature is invaluable for maintaining corporate visual identity or drawing attention to particularly high or low-performing segments within the data set.



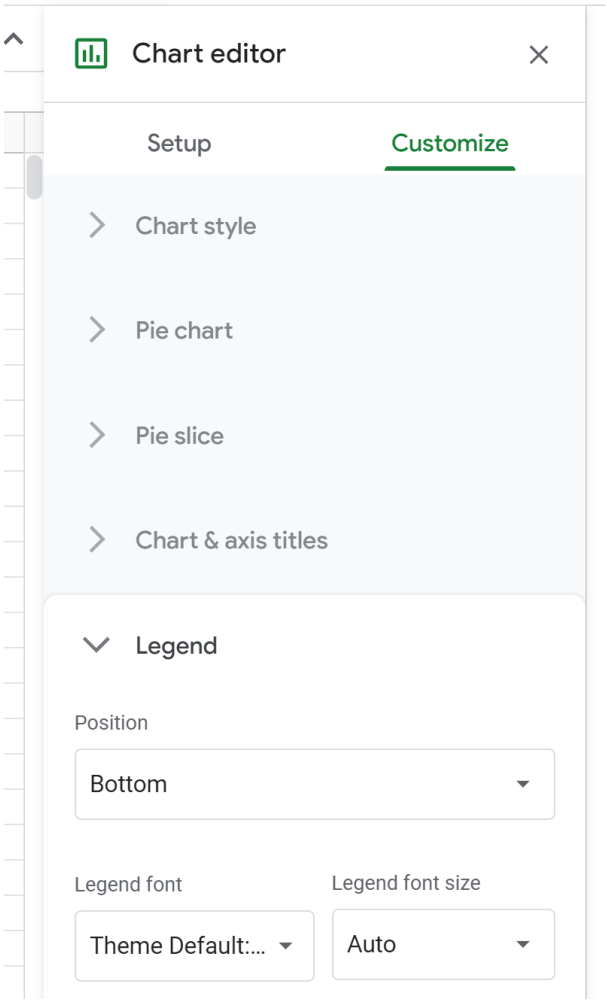
Step 5: Finalizing Context with Titles and Legend Optimization

The final crucial steps involve adding necessary context and ensuring efficient layout. A chart must possess a clear, descriptive title, and its accompanying legend must be positioned optimally to avoid distracting from the core visualization. Navigate to the **Chart & axis titles** section within the **Customize** tab to begin this process.

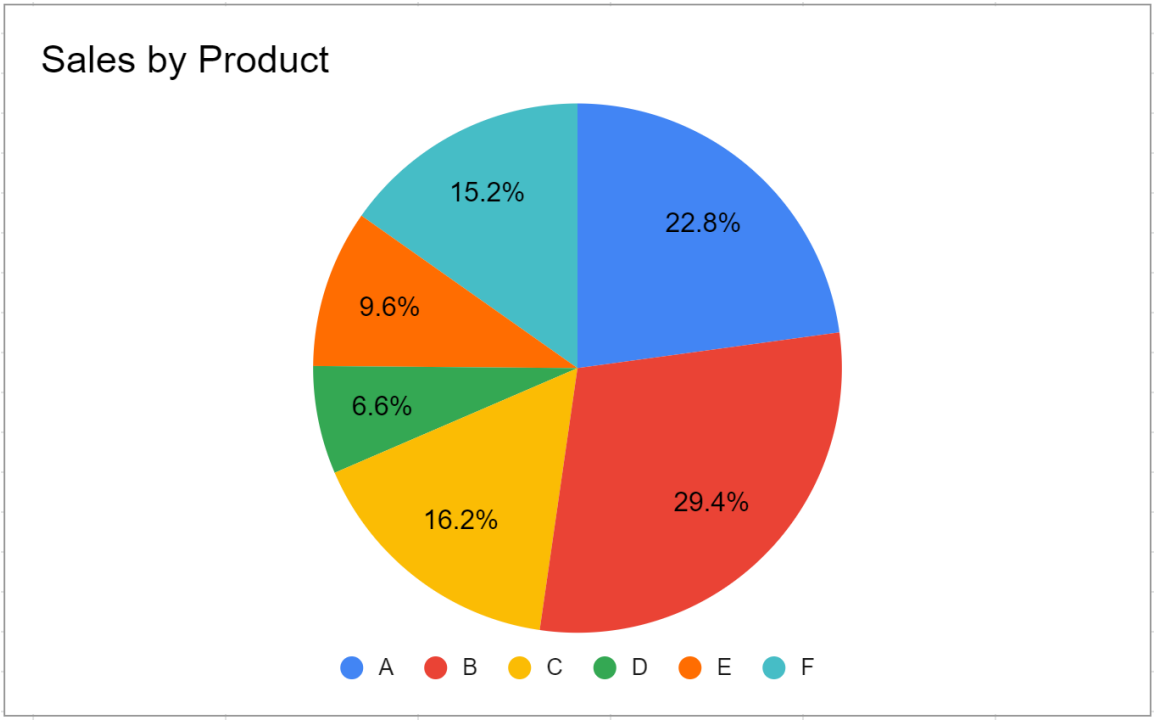
Select the **Chart title** option and input a precise, meaningful name that accurately summarizes the information presented, such as "Total Sales Breakdown by Product Line, Q4 2023." A robust title immediately informs the audience of the chart's purpose and scope, preventing misinterpretation.



Subsequently, optimize the positioning of the category identifiers by expanding the **Legend** section. The **Position** setting offers various layout choices (e.g., Top, Bottom, Right). Selecting the best position ensures that the legend complements the overall design, maximizing the visual space dedicated to the pie chart itself and maintaining a clean, professional aesthetic.



Upon successfully applying these sophisticated customization techniques, the result is a professional-grade, highly informative pie chart suitable for immediate reporting, presentation, or publication:



Conclusion and Further Visualization Opportunities

Successfully mastering the creation and detailed customization of a Google Sheets pie chart is a foundational skill in modern data visualization. However, different datasets require different graphical representations. Expanding your repertoire of charting techniques will significantly enhance your ability to communicate complex information effectively.

We encourage users to explore additional tutorial resources for other powerful chart types available within Google Sheets to ensure they always select the optimal method for displaying various types of quantitative information:

How to Create a Bubble Chart in Google Sheets