

# Countertop Options



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## Comparing countertop choices.

**For many families, the kitchen is the heart and soul of the home. Chances are that you, your family and friends spend a great deal of time in there. And today, numerous kitchen countertop choices offer plenty of options to make a dramatic statement with color, material and finish.**

It may be tempting to choose a countertop on looks alone, but a material's durability, maintenance and cost are other important factors to consider.

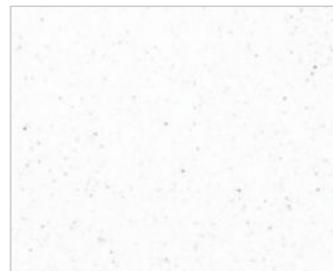
Countertops set the tone for the kitchen, so choose materials and a look that not only reflect your style, but also are in line with how you use the kitchen. Granite and engineered stone products represent high-end design today and their functionality as stain-resistant, durable, sleek-looking surfaces fulfill lifestyle and aesthetic prerequisites for many.

### 2 Other stone materials



Other natural stone materials, like marble, limestone and soapstone, are softer than granite and require greater care. All stone countertops must be sealed periodically.

### 3 Engineered stone



These are your quartz surfaces composed of 93 percent quartz particles and available in a larger range of colors than granite. Prices are comparable to granite, sometimes more. Engineered

stone countertops are also durable and easy to maintain.

### 4 Solid surface



Solid surface countertops (such as Corian™ and LG-Himacs™) have a lot of appeal. They are made of 100% acrylic, 100% polyester, or a combination of the two. They come in

countless colors, are seamless, and they resist stains. Most scratches can even be buffed out. One word of caution, though: hot pans can damage solid-surface countertops.

### 1 Granite



Granite, a popular choice in countertops, is available in a variety of shades. No two pieces are exactly the same.

Granite is available in two finishes: a

polished finish results in a shiny look and often darkens the appearance of the stone, while honing is soft and matte. Costs for granite depend on many variables, including color, finish and origin of the stone. Granite is porous and must be sealed properly.

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## 5 Concrete



Concrete countertops, which can be completely customized with pigments, are gaining in popularity. Concrete is available in several different finishes: trowel (smooth), ground

(sanded to expose the sand aggregate) and pressed (a tool is used to reveal marble-like veining). Extreme or abrupt changes in temperature may cause concrete to warp or curl, damp sponges left on the counter can cause discoloration and acidic spills may etch the surface. To keep a concrete countertop looking its best, it's advisable to seal them to manufacturer's recommendations.

## 6 Laminates



Plastic laminate (trade name: Formica™) is the most affordable countertop material on the market and comes in an array of colors and designs. It is a durable and hard-wearing material

that can survive many years in the toughest kitchens. Laminate can scorch if a hot pan touches the surface and has a reputation for scratching easily.

## 7 On the edge

Flat edges are standard on most countertops, but decorative edges like rounded, ogee, bullnose and eased edge—while a bit more expensive—are another way to customize a kitchen. Availability of edges varies based on the countertop material you select.



 **Rounded**



 **Ogee**



 **Bullnose**



 **Flat**



 **Eased Edge**

Whatever your choice of countertop material, make certain you fully understand the care and maintenance required to keep it looking its best.