

Stone Counters

Dark, handsome stone counters transform a kitchen from ordinary to extraordinary. Choose between stone slabs and stone tiles:

Stone Slabs

Granite slabs are the most enduring, and expensive, countertop. Easy to care for, waterproof, heat-, stain- and scratch-resistant, they're great around sinks. You can select many colors and patterns - polished or rough-texture. Choose slabs with little veining and no cracks.

Granite, however, isn't perfect. It's heavy, tricky to install and requires an extra-sturdy base. Its hard surface makes glassware and china damage unavoidable. If it's not sealed, oils penetrate permanently and discolor the stone. It's also brittle and can break.

Marble isn't practical for general use - it scratches and stains easily. Serious cooks may want to include a marble slab insert, though. Because marble maintains a lower temperature than other materials, it's great for working with pastry doughs and candies.

Stone Tiles

The most economical approach to stone counters is cut stone tile, either granite, slate or limestone. Granite tiles are far cheaper per square foot than large, polished slabs.

Slate and limestone tiles are quite porous and require repeated sealing, unlike granite. Their cost, though, is generally much lower than granite. Most limestone and slate tiles are not highly polished, a liability for countertops but perfect for a backsplash.