

Ceramic Tile Counters

A popular choice for kitchen and bath countertops, tile works especially well around cooktops. Burn-, scorch-, knife- and blister-resistant, tiles are so durable they could last as long as your house. In the rare case where one is damaged, just break out the damaged tile and install a new one.

The rainbow of colors and patterns gives you design latitude. Grout, too, is available in many colors. Imported, hand-painted or custom-patterned tiles cost the most.

Tiles do have disadvantages. They're heavy and need a sturdy base. The hard, uneven surface can chip china or glass. Grout joints require periodic treatment with an acrylic or silicone joint sealer to prevent staining and mildew.