

Kitchen Countertops: Should I choose Granite or Marble?

Which is better for kitchen and bathroom countertops; Marble or Granite? Both are high quality products that add beauty and elegance to any home. Both are available in a wide variety of colors and can be finished with a variety of techniques to get different looks. Both are easy to maintain with cleaners and sealers that are specifically designed for use on these products.

Of course they have their differences too. Let's discuss the Pros and Cons of each so you can make an informed decision as to which of these products is right for your decorating taste.

The Pros and Cons of Marble

Marble is metamorphic rock found deep in the earth. Its basic ingredient, calcium carbonate, can be found everywhere, from limestone to baking soda. This basic ingredient is known by other names, depending on its application and form. Limestone is a sedimentary form of calcium and is found in the earth, where it undergoes intense heat and pressure to be formed into what we know as marble.

Amazingly, this rock can also be ground to a filler ingredient for use in many products including medications, writing paper, white wash and cement hardener. Marble is a beautiful, durable product, but it is also porous and can easily be ruined by acid or direct heat. Even if a quality sealer is applied each year to maintain the countertop, care must be taken or your marble countertop can be destroyed by hot pans, certain chemicals or citric acids like lemon or orange juice. Because marble is porous, it can be stained. If it is scratched, liquids can leak under the sealer and stain the marble.

Marble is a beautiful product and must be properly cared for to maintain its beauty. It is most ideal for low traffic areas or sculpting, but when used as a countertop or floor, extra care and maintenance are required.

The Pros and Cons of Granite

Granite is also a metamorphic rock, found deep in the earth. It is composed of quartz, silicon, feldspar, mica and several other minerals. Like marble, it is formed under high pressure and heat. It is also quite beautiful and will add elegance to any home. It is not as porous as marble, so it is resistant to chemicals, heat and acids. The quartz is what provides the hardness and durability unlike that of softer marble.

Granite is more stain and wear resistant than marble and holds up well in high traffic areas, making an ideal material for countertops and floors. With a proper seal and maintenance, it will last for years without scratching, chipping, cracking or staining.

Granite slabs are very heavy, so changing your countertop may require extra reinforcement of your existing cabinets. Granite can be expensive because installing it is labor intensive, but the cost is easily offset by its elegance and beauty.

Granite is more readily available and there is more abundant than marble. Granite can be found in Arizona, New Mexico and some northern states and it's easier to ship, easier to obtain and less expensive to use. Marble is imported from South America or Europe.

So, the choice is up to you. Both products are beautiful and elegant but granite seems to hold up the best in high traffic areas and countertops and has a stronger tolerance to staining, chemicals, heat and breakage. Both products need to be maintained with specifically designed cleaners and sealers and both are strong and durable.

This article was written by Chuck Russo of Surface Encounters, the leading granite and marble countertop fabricators in the US. Surface Encounters uses advanced technology to stay ahead of the competition. With computer numerically controlled stone processing equipment, they get a perfectly cut and polished edge on every countertop. Artfully merging the latest technology with old world stone craftsmanship, Surface Encounters are the experts at creating quality granite and marble countertops which they professionally install.