



How to Choose Your Kitchen Countertop Material When Remodeling

When you're remodeling your kitchen, the type of countertop you install is one of the most important choices you need to make. Not only do the work surfaces have a fundamental influence on the kitchen's overall look and feel, but the different materials available have their own particular pros-and-cons to bear in mind.

Here are seven of the most popular countertop materials, and what you need to know about them when planning your kitchen remodel.



Marble

Marble offers a classic look that fits perfectly into an upscale kitchen. It's also hard-wearing, heat resistant, and easy to clean using just soap and water. Set against those advantages are marble's high cost, and also the need for resealing every year or two to maintain its water resistance.

Quartz

Quartz is a material that combines the great looks of stone with exceptionally easy maintenance. It's naturally non-porous so doesn't require sealing to keep liquids and bacteria out, while it's also highly resistant to chips, scratches, and other damage.

The only real downside is that it doesn't quite reach the visual quality of marble, while still costing at the higher end of the countertop material scale.

Butcher Block

Wooden countertops add a real warmth and character to a kitchen, particularly ones with a rustic slant on decor. They're also friendly surfaces to work on, with wood's slightly flexible surface taking heavy pots and pans without clattering or recoil. And if you're worried about hygiene, there's no need - butcher block is completely sanitary when it's correctly sealed.

On the downside, a butcher block countertop needs quite a lot of maintenance, including regular oiling and sanding down of the nicks and scratches that come with heavy use.

Concrete

Concrete is an unusual countertop material that's steadily gaining in popularity. When properly installed and treated, it's resistant to heat, water, and staining. It's also available in a choice of



thicknesses, finishes, and molded shapes to suit a wide variety of decor styles.

However, a concrete countertop needs a little investment in maintenance time and energy. If it's not resealed and waxed every so often, it'll lose its stain resistance, and will start to pick up discolored spots and splash marks.

Granite

Granite makes a dramatic, bold-looking countertop that also has several practical advantages. It's tough and durable, stain resistant, easy to clean, and relatively affordable. However, if you don't keep it properly sealed, it eventually becomes porous and starts to soak up any spills with surprising speed.



Limestone

Limestone is an all-natural material that's available in a wide variety of colors, patterns, and finishes. It certainly looks the part in any kitchen but requires perhaps the most maintenance of any surface. Spills need to be dealt with quickly to prevent staining, and the counter should be given a wipe with a mild detergent after every use.

But if you already keep your kitchen surfaces extremely clean as a matter of habit, limestone's excellent looks make it a great choice.

Steel

Steel is a modern countertop material that brings all the durability benefits of commercial kitchens into the home. It's simple to keep clean, will withstand heavy use with ease, and is completely unaffected by hot pans.

However, steel has a distinctive, contemporary look that's not easy to fit into more vintage kitchen decors or designs.

But whichever countertop material best suits your needs, the key is to buy the highest quality you can afford. Skimping on your work surfaces undermines your kitchen's quality from the bottom up, reducing the long-term value you get out of an expensive remodel.