

Decorating with Granite



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Granite Tile: Stone Cold Beauty

By Rob Jones

Granite is a decorative natural stone that is truly eye-catching, delivering a unique, classy look to any interior or exterior. Granite is as durable as it is beautiful, being one of the hardest substances on earth. Also, to the question of usage and longevity, with proper care, your granite tile project can last a lifetime, transforming a foyer, a kitchen, or even in an outdoor installation (provided you've chosen a non-slip, unpolished finish) into a key feature of a property. Granite tile flooring is, in many cases, the obvious choice for those interested in any kind of natural stone tile flooring or countertops material.

The origins of granite

Granite tile is often a feature in a residence or a commercial building, not only because it is visually impressive, but because of the auspiciousness of having a flooring material which literally took ages to create! Formed deep in the earth, granite is the end result of tremendous heat and pressure applied over thousands of years. Granite is an igneous rock that is described as "intrusive". That is, granite is formed when liquid magma is forced between other layers of rock, where it eventually cools and forms a layer of its own. Here, it is fused with elements such as quartz, feldspar and mica among other trace elements. The cooling process is slow, the new layer of rock being shielded by the layers above and below where the molten magma had been forced. The mineral elements which have become suspended in the cooling magma define the crystalline appearance of this unique natural stone. Due to its harsh origins and the lengthy process that suspends so many stabilizing elements within it, granite is an incredibly hard surface. This is material you can trust for durability!

Granite at the Quarry

Once the raw granite has been removed from its bed, first stage in processing granite for the purposes of flooring or countertop slabs is cutting the larger chunks of granite into manageable blocks. These blocks of granite are then further cut to size for use as both slabs and tiles by means of wire saws which are treated with various kinds of durable abrasives, such as sand, aluminum oxide, and diamond. These saws are most commonly used with water as a coolant. Sometimes, high-pressure water jets are used to cut the

granite in tandem with the more traditional wire saws. Once the cutting process has been completed, the granite undergoes three processes that make them recognizable as tile flooring or countertop slabs. They are polished on one side, calibrated and gauged. These latter two terms refer to the process of making the back of each tile or slab as even as possible, and the edges as square as possible respectively. Once completed, the granite tile or slab is ready to be shipped to site, ready for your installation.

Popular uses for granite tile for flooring and countertops

Granite tile, being a very versatile material, can be installed in a great many locations in a residential or commercial project. Some of the more popular uses of granite are halls and foyers. Because of their decorative appearance, the popularity of granite tile in these areas is far from surprising. Granite tile helps to create an ambience of professionalism, strength, and permanence when placed in the foyers and halls of an office building. In the home, a granite tile floor can make all the difference in creating a space that is characterized by a singular, refined beauty that complements the surrounding décor.

Further to this, granite tiles and slabs make a great countertop surfaces. Granite tiles are commonly used as highly suitable backsplashes that can add just the right accent to a kitchen installation. For an outdoor installation, on a terrace for instance, or a walkway, unpolished granite tile can add similar visual accent to a property as well as overall value. If you have leftover granite tile pieces after your installation is complete, granite tile can be cut to size and serve as cutting boards, coasters, fireplace surrounds, and a number of other uses limited only by your imagination and sense of practicality.

Caring for granite tile flooring and countertops

Given the hardness of granite, and the harsh origins that make it extremely resistant to certain types of wear, many of the things you would have to worry about with a lesser material is simply not an issue. For instance, many people choose granite for kitchen countertops and flooring because granite tile and slabs are highly resistant to abrasion caused by cutlery. Granite is also extremely heat-resistant, making it a worry-free countertop solution when it comes to hot pots and plates placed directly on its surface.

However, despite how durable granite tile is, it does require your attention in terms of care. One of the first things to consider is the application of an appropriate sealant. The choice of sealant may be determined by the variety of granite tile you've chosen to install, and where you've chosen to install it. Generally, a sealant is required to protect your granite tile from moisture, which is the most insidious enemy of any building material. As to the specific brands and varieties, talk to your local retailer or flooring expert about which one is the most effective choice with regard to your specific choice in granite tile.

Many of the other approaches to caring for your granite tile come down to common sense; clean up spills right away, keep your granite tile free of dirt and grit that can scratch the polish, and see about which types of cleaners and polishes are most appropriate to granite tile. Also, consider what you are prepared to do to maintain your granite tile surface. A level of commitment is needed in order to keep the sheen of the polished granite tile the same as it is when you first lay it down.

Granite: All this and brains too!

Granite tile and slabs are both a decorative and practical choice, making your choice of granite both a stylish and smart one indeed! Due to its hardness, its resistance to heat and other forms of stress, as well as the versatility which is offered by granite tile, you are making an investment that will add value to your property and one which will be the source of a tremendous pride of ownership. The production of granite has been millions of years in the making, made by the greatest manufacturer there is - the earth itself. For a lasting durability designed by nature that is stone cold gorgeous too, granite may be the best idea you've ever had!

Granite Tile Do's and Don'ts

Here are a few things to think about when you are considering granite tile for your project:

Do:

Consider the area where you intend to install granite tile. Make sure that factors such as moisture levels, foot traffic, and slip resistance are carefully considered. Consider what type of surface is the best - polished, honed, or

brushed (AKA flamed) are popular varieties in granite tile, each better suited to certain areas than others. Polished granite is great for countertops and low traffic areas, but often becomes slippery when wet. Honed flooring is more all-purpose, but may be considered less decorative by some. Brushed or flamed granite tile is most commonly used outdoors

Read all warranty information before purchase

Look into hiring a flooring tile professional to help you as working with granite can be very strenuous, due to its weight particularly. When in doubt, it's always best to get experienced help

Inspect the whole batch before beginning an installation for possible breakage and any other issues, and consult your terms and conditions as to how to see about compensation, if any

Expect color variations in your batch of granite tile. Remember, granite is a natural material. Use these natural color variations found in your batch to your advantage. Get as creative with your layout as you can

Lay out all of your granite tiles in a dry run before applying mortar or other chosen adhesive agent.

Choose a sealant that best suits your choice in granite tile. Ask your sales rep or flooring professional about specific varieties and brand names

Initiate a cleaning and maintenance regimen; choose the appropriate cleaners and polishes based on experienced advice in order to make sure your granite tile retains all of its natural beauty

Don't:

Install granite tile on an uneven, dirty or wet subfloor

Leave spills to sit on your granite tile flooring or countertops. It is important to avoid excessive moisture as this is what contributes to the wear of any building material. Also, liquids with an acid base are often culprits of stubborn stains

Allow dirt and grit to remain on the surface of your granite tile. These elements can affect the finish over time and take away from the natural beauty of granite

Use acid-based cleaners or other agents on your granite tile. This can be a major source of wear on your tile, cause stains to become permanent, and dull the finish as well. Avoid using any product your no sure about

Forget to thoroughly rinse your granite tile once you've used a recommended cleaner, or forget to change dirty water or solution which you are using to clean the tile

Use scouring powders, steel wool, or other abrasive materials to remove stains from your granite tile

Obviously this is not a complete list. Once again, one of the best courses of action to take to ensure that granite tile is the right choice for a flooring or countertop solution is to consult with the experts. This way, you are benefiting from years of experience which will allow you to avoid costly mistakes. It will also help to make sure that your granite tile will be as attractive and long lasting as it is meant to be with you as its best ally!

Rob Jones is Communications Coordinator with BuildDirect, a leading online wholesaler of building products. Rob writes articles for commercial contractors and DIYers on features, installation, and maintenance of building materials used in commercial and residential projects. These articles focus on materials such as flooring, decking, roofing, and siding, and other related topics.

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How to Care For Granite Countertops

By Kristie Brown

If you don't know already, Granite is a gorgeous stone often used for countertops and flooring in kitchens and bathrooms. Unlike marble, granite is more durable and easier to care for. Real natural granite offers much sought after qualities such as durability, wear ability, and a rich design that is unmatched by synthetics.

Granite is an all natural, naturally formed stone that is simply harvested from quarries, cut, polished, sealed, and installed. Granite is available in many natural styles and colors such as black, pink, brown, grey, and 275 other varieties. Its enduring qualities and easy care maintenance make it the perfect stone for countertops in bathrooms and kitchens.

All About Granite

Granite's many colors are due to the various minerals that are found in the rock naturally. Granite comes from all over the world, the different regions and different environmental factors that lend to its uniqueness are due to these minerals or cofactors of the regions in which granite formed.

In addition to its main component quartz crystal, it also contains various amounts of feldspar, mica, copper, iron, and other metals. Some granite may even have bits of gold or silver. These are all formed into a hard stone by heat and pressure over time. While the rock is forming, rain adds other minerals to the granite. The amount of the ingredients as well as the way the granite is formed depends on the region of the world it comes from. Granite is available on every continent and in every country. The granite from each region is unique to that region.

How to Care For Granite

Granite is a natural indigenous rock that is not able to be duplicated by man. It's sought after qualities include scratch resistance, stain resistance, heat resistance, and wear ability. Granite is a figure that becomes part of your home. Its long lasting durability means that you will not have to replace it every few years like synthetic products. Even so, granite still requires proper care if it is to last a lifetime.

First, granite is very durable, but it is not stain resistant. For optimal stain resistance a highly durable sealant coating is placed on the granite. Since granite is extremely porous, this coating is important. Therefore, it is this sealant coating that needs the attention when it comes to caring for your granite stone.

Second, granite is scratch resistant. This means that it should not show wear and tear as readily as synthetic products or ceramic tile. However, this does not mean it should be used as a cutting board nor should cleaning products such as steel wool or comet be used to clean it. These can also dull the sealant coat and expose the granite to the possibility of stains.

Third, while granite is heat resistant, it is still wise to place a barrier between the granite and hot pans. When taking items from the stove or oven and placing them on the granite simply place a trivet, thick towel, or hot pad between them. Even though granite is heat resistant, over time the stress from hot objects can begin to show by dulling the sealant.

Fourth, to care for your granite and improve its long lasting durability, it needs to be cleaned properly. Simply wiping up spills as soon as they occur so that no abrasive agents or scrubber pads need to be used is ideal. To keep the surface clean a simple mild cleaning solution such as dish soap or multi-surface cleaner should be used on a daily basis. Spray or wipe on the cleaner, and rinse off with a damp cloth. Dry the surface with a lint free cloth to reduce water spotting or lint trails.

Why Granite?

Granite is an all natural stone that is both durable and beautiful. Of all installed surfaces it is the strongest and most durable. It is heat resistant, scratch resistant, and when sealed it is also stain resistant. When cared for properly, granite will likely outlive your home. With over 275 colors and textures to choose from, you can be sure to find one that will add a touch of beauty and elegance to your home. Granite is an excellent choice for your home, bathroom, flooring or even fireplace surround. Keeping your granite cleaned and well maintained will ensure your granite countertops last a lifetime.

Looking for a supplier of granite countertops in Wisconsin? View the many different styles of exotic marble and granite in Wisconsin through Halquist Stone's 10,000 square foot showroom. For more information, call (262) 246-9000 or visit HalquistStone to request a free brochure.

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Granite Tales - Myths, Urban Legends, and Fabrications (Of the Other Kind)

By John Forguson

The following bits of commercial granite folklore have been taken directly from customer comments and questions, pieces circulating on the web, and discussions with hundreds of homeowners who graced me with the opportunity to service their commercial granite. Just for fun, I'll give you a little background on each, where they came from, and how they got started. In case you haven't heard some of these before, you'll be prepared when they eventually make their way 'round to you!

Please note I use the term "commercial granite" throughout this article. This is because we are referring to stones that are sold commercially as granite, rather than the (very) narrow subset of stones that meet the scientific definition.

1.) My Contractor / Granite Salesperson / Internet Guru (Pick Your Favorite Perpetrator) Said My Granite Doesn't Require Sealing - Those of you that have read my previous work are probably sick of me harping on this, but I (unfortunately) hear this one more often than all others. It is the most damaging of all the granite maintenance malpractices you can commit if you rely on this unsound advice.

Interestingly, there are a couple of Internet "experts" who semi-endorse this fallacy (but will sell you their impregnator if you ABSOLUTELY, REALLY insist on having one, and theirs lasts FOREVER... Hilarious!). One even goes so far as to state that the physical properties of granite dictate it never needs to be sealed (funny, they also have a "lifetime" sealer for sale two paragraphs later).

I was in recently in Los Angeles, visiting a property manager who had stains in approximately 1/3 of the 305 commercial granite counters they recently installed in their newly renovated luxury apartments. I wish I could have brought the naysayers with me so they could convince the distraught maintenance folks that those oil and wine stains were only figments of their imagination...

From the contractor perspective, back in the bad old days, impregnators were primarily based on silicone derivatives. While fantastic against water, they were (and are) poor performers against oil-based stains. Additionally, if they were over-applied, the impregnator residues on the surface of the stone would also absorb oil. Double whammy. Here's the logic: If it's a given that oil stains are the worst to remove, and if the impregnator won't stop them anyway, why bother? That was in the late '80s - this is 2007, and we have technology that will stop oil staining dead in its tracks. Like all misinformation, it has a little root in fact, and it dies slowly.

The Internet folks have different motivations. Either they are:

A: trying to sell you granite slabs by disavowing any faults commercial granite has, or

B: using reverse psychology sales techniques (poorly, I might add) to sell you their impregnator.

2.) My Neighbor Told Me My Granite Isn't Safe Because it Harbors and Grows High Amounts of Bacteria - This one is still circulating even though it has been proven false numerous times by both government and industry organizations. Please allow me the opportunity to set the record straight on this one, once and for all - it is absolute rubbish. In fact, properly maintained commercial granite surfaces are some of the most sanitary you can buy. Like all other food prep surfaces, commercial granite should be properly cleaned.

It is widely held that the manufacturers of man-made counter top materials started these rumors, although no solid proof exists. In summary, The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health has given commercial granite a clean bill of health, as has the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

3.) Someone Told Me My Granite Emits Radon Gas and is Radioactive - A little bent science goes a long way... Minuscule amounts of radon gas are emitted by nearly any type of stone found where uranium is present, and trace amounts of uranium can be found nearly anyplace you find stone. Bottom line? There are no health or safety risks associated with the release of radon gas or radioactivity from commercial granite.

As a matter of note, concrete, cement, and gypsum all release as much or more radon gas than commercial granite, and there is no health risk

associated with them, either. It is also believed that a manufacturer of man-made counter top materials started this rumor.

4.) I Was Told to Clean My Granite With Just Soap and Water - This one has a couple of variants floating around, including specifically using dish detergent (and a special brand, I might add) or plain water. Will doing this harm your commercial granite? No, it won't. Will it impact the way it looks? Yes, it will.

If you were to wash your windows with plain "soap and water" (or dish detergent, or plain water) and a sponge, I guarantee that you will not be pleased with their appearance.

With this in mind, it is best to perform routine cleaning of your commercial granite with a product that is specifically designed for use on natural stone. Using soap, dishwashing detergent, or non stone-specific cleaners will leave your commercial granite looking dull and lifeless.

5.) Somebody Told Me the Shine Will Wear Off My Granite, and It Will Require Re-Polishing - Unless you are playing roller hockey on your commercial granite surfaces, it is highly unlikely you will need to have them re-polished. I have seen very isolated instances (all of them on very dark "granite") where the surface actually deteriorated under normal use and required re-polishing. In reality, these stones were suspect to begin with, as it was unlikely that they met a 5.5 rating (the minimum hardness allowed) on Mohs's Scale of Hardness. Good quality commercial granite, properly maintained, will not permanently lose its shine for a long, long, time - even under heavy (but considerate) use.

If your granite has been waxed, then the "shiny" will wear off, and you will need to re-wax them. Waxing of commercial granite is generally NOT RECOMMENDED, so do it only if your surfaces were previously waxed to provide their final gloss.

Most shine and reflectivity loss is caused by the use of improper cleaning chemicals, improper cleaning methods, or both. As I mentioned earlier, if you need a demonstration of what soap and water do to the appearance of your commercial granite, just wash your windows with (fill in your favorite "soap" here), water and a sponge. "Soap and water" leave residues on the stone that will eventually dull the finish.

The good news is that dulling from surface residue is not permanent. It can be removed using a high alkaline content cleaner designed for natural stone. In some instances, calcification (mineral deposits from evaporated water) will dull surface areas, especially around faucets and fixtures. These deposits may also be quickly, easily, and safely removed.

I also recommend the weekly (or whenever you want to) use of "vanity" products to increase the gloss and improve the general appearance of your commercial granite. These products provide the additional benefits of reducing water spotting and fingerprints on polished surfaces.

6.) Practices & Products

At the end of the day, it all boils down to this:

- Keep your commercial granite properly impregnated (sealed).
- Clean up spills and contamination in a timely manner.
- Do not use sharp implements on your commercial granite.
- Do not place extremely hot items on your granite.
- Use quality products, specifically designed for commercial granite.

John Forguson is General Manager of My Stone Care, and a highly experienced stone restorationist. He has performed remedial and restoration services on over 1 million square feet of natural stone and tile surfaces, and is intimately familiar with all aspects pertaining to the maintenance and restoration of marble, travertine, granite, limestone, slate, sandstone, onyx, quartzite, and man-made surfaces.

<http://www.mystonecare.com>

http://www.mystonecare.com/The_Everything_Granite_Care_ProKit_p/mscprokit-g.htm

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Frequently Asked Questions About Granite Countertops

By Greg C Robinson

What makes granite ideal for making countertops?

Granite is the second hardest stone when compared to diamond and this means it can make one of the toughest and a long lasting countertop. Granite is also very unique because it's highly unlikely that you will find two similar granite slabs depending on the quarry and the minerals components. Another reason that makes granite ideal for making countertop is its easier to maintain. Granite is stain, heat and scratch resistance which means you can place a hot pan and not worry about dulling it. You can use it as a cutting board for vegetables and the only thing you have to worry about is dulling your knives.

What are the different types of granite countertop finishes?

Granite countertops surfaces can be finished in using different techniques, you can have it honed, polished, flamed or brushed surfaces and each technique is meant to give the granite slab a unique look and feel. The most common finish is the polished finish because it's easy to maintain and it gives the granite a sparkling and a mirror like appearance that makes your kitchen radiate and more elegant. The Honed finishes is gaining popularity because its less shiny giving your home a casual feel while still maintaining originality and elegance. You can also go for flamed finishes whereby granite is exposed to extreme heat that it melts and crystallize making it rough, textured and slip resistant.

What are the best maintenance practices for granite?

Granite is very easy to maintain for it only need to be sealed once a year, the installer will seal for you during installation which is one of the most important step. Sealing is important because granite is porous and without the sealing agent it has a small possibility of staining and absorb water easily. Other maintenance practices are the daily wiping with a soft cloth and a neutral cleaner to remove dust or any spillage. Ask your supplier or installer to recommend the best cleaner ideal for granite and will not remove the sealer.

How long do granite countertop lasts?

Granite countertops are consider a one time investment because once you have it installed in your home it will last for a life-time.

Which are the available granite colors?

Granite countertops come in a wide variety of colors and no matter the color you choose its luster and originality never fade. Our granite slabs are unique and the color ranges from black, green, pink, yellow, white and blue but you can get many more colors. The color choice can complement the interior décor of the room and at the same time brighten a darker room.

What are the available granite countertop thicknesses?

Granite slabs vary in thickness but the most popular thickness is the 3 cm also known as 1 ¼ thickness, you can also get the 2 cm also known as ¾ thickness. The weight of the granite slab will also vary with the width but the general weight is 12-13 lbs per square foot to 18-19 lbs for the 2 cm and 3 cm respectively. The advantage of going with a 3 cm granite slab is you will not need to reinforce it with plywood unlike the 2cm that must be reinforced to support the granite itself.

How much does it cost to install the granite countertop?

The price will depend on many factors such as the area you are in, how large your countertop is, the color of granite etc. An average granite countertop will cost between \$2500.00 to \$4000.00 to have installed. This should include sink cutouts, cook top cutouts. Do understand though depending on the granite you get it could cost more a lot more.

Can I avoid the seams on a granite countertop?

It's hard to avoid seams on granite especially if you have to join two granite slabs but there are ways to make them less visible. One of the ways is having them hidden away from view, sometimes if possible you can have the seam run on a diagonal sometimes making the seam harder to see.

What is the granite installation process?

Granite countertops need to be installed by a highly qualified professional for it needs accurate measurement to ensure it fits and last for a lifetime. Installing it yourself is not recommended because if you make a mistake it will be very costly to correct. Normally the granite fabricator will install your granite for you.

What are the available granite edges?

We offer a wide variety of edges available and each is used to give the countertop a unique shape but if you have kids around the best edge will be

the double bullnose and it's hard to chip. Other edges available are Bevel, Ogee, Eased and straight.

If you would like to receive more information about granite countertops go to <http://www.myinstalledcountertops.com>

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Article Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/7405272>

Granite Countertops: An Overview

By Jason Gluckman

Home remodelers and builders have experienced a boom in the demand for granite countertops in kitchens and bathrooms. The beauty and warmth of granite makes it an ideal material for aesthetic appeal in home design, and the durability and easy care of granite countertops keeps them a favorite for homeowners who are looking into the future. Though adding granite countertops to any kitchen can be quite costly, they remain the premiere choice in upscale homes, as they retain their value better than most other improvements.

Granite, like marble and other popular stones, are as old as the earth. Granite is found all over the world. As a preferred material, granite was used in the construction of temples and other public buildings in ancient societies. In the recent past many builders continued to use granite for pillars and exterior finishes. Stone suppliers didn't begin experimenting with polished granite until 1831. The preference for polished granite began in 1851, when a finished piece of granite was displayed in London at The Great Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations.

Granite makes an excellent medium for countertops, as it is the most durable of all stones. The hardness of granite is rivaled only by the hardness of diamonds. The durability and versatility of granite countertops makes it a favorite of professional and home chefs. Granite can withstand the placement of a hot pot and serves as an excellent surface for handling doughs and confectionery. The natural beauty of granite countertops complement any tone of wood or style of cabinetry, from French country to sleek modern styles. Granite is an attractive stone that adds color and warmth to any room.

A popular choice of designers for decades, granite countertops have now become popular with the public. There are literally hundreds of colors of granite, from variations of white through browns, reds, greens, blues, and black. Brown and beige tones are the most popular, as they work well with most any kitchen color scheme, allowing greater flexibility in redecorating over the years. Some of the granite colors exhibit "movement," or a design within the natural color. Movement from large patterns can carry the eye quickly over the surface of the countertop, while small patterns have a more

sedate appearance. The combination of color and movement means that no two countertops are exactly the same.

While granite countertops are a favorite choice due to their beauty and durability, they are not impervious to damage. Regular care includes proper cleaning and the use of sealers to prevent staining. Although granite is quite hard, it can be easily be chipped. A skilled professional can perform repairs that are nearly invisible.

Granite countertops can cost more than other countertop materials, with prices starting at \$60 a square foot installed. The majority of the cost is not in the stone, but in the quarry work, cutting, transportation, polishing and installations. It is not recommended that the do-it-yourself homeowner to take on this project. Despite the strength of granite, the oversized slab sheets must be precisely cut to fit the counters, and are very delicate when transported. Special care must be taken to reinforce the base cabinets, and the slab must be set perfectly level. Failure to properly set a granite countertop could cause it to break during regular use.

When a homeowner desires the utility of granite countertops, but is unable or unwilling to pay a premium, discounted granite for countertops may be a good option. Retailers maintain groupings or tiers of stone based on popularity of color and movement. Lower tiered cuts of stone maintain the consistent characteristics granite is known for, but the shade of a color may vary according to current fashion trends.

Granite countertops will continue to remain a favorite of homeowners, architects and interior designers. The ageless beauty and durability of granite makes it a home improvement treasure to last a lifetime.

Granite Countertops provides detailed information on granite kitchen and tile countertops, advice on installing and cleaning granite countertops, information on price and locations to purchase discount granite counter tops, and more. Granite Countertops is the sister site of Kitchen Sinks Web.

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Article Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/65866>

Advantages of Kitchen Granite Countertops

By James Mahoney

Kitchen granite countertops are created by nature and fashioned by man are a beautiful, durable and cost effective choice for kitchens and baths. The term granite comes from the Latin root word granum, which means "grain."

Granite is often imported from Europe, Africa, Brazil and other regions of the world rich in natural stone. Granite is an attractive natural stone that will add color and warmth to your kitchen. Granite is an extremely hard material that will not blister, scratch or crack.

The hardness of granite is rivaled only by the hardness of diamonds. In fact diamonds are used to cut and polish granite.

Over the last 10 years kitchen granite countertops have become popular with homeowners, after first being popular with designers for decades. Granite is available in hundreds of colors, from various shades of white to browns, reds, greens, blues, and black. The most popular tones are brown and beige.

As well as being hard kitchen granite countertops can take hot items, like pots and pans, and is very stain resistant to hot grease and oil if it is sealed with a silicone-based impregnator. It can easily be cleaned and cut for a basin. Granite has a cool polished surface that makes it an excellent surface for rolling out pastry dough. The polished finish of granite will not wear off.

Kitchen granite countertops are unique because no two pieces of granite are exactly the same, therefore granite provides an interesting design element and adds certain richness and texture to your kitchen not found in other surfaces. Kitchen granite countertops can create a brilliance and elegance that is only found in nature. Granite adds a personality and character to kitchen countertops that is unsurpassed. Kitchen granite countertops have a natural beauty that is capable of complementing any tone of wood or style of cabinets.

It doesn't matter if you are planning a new home or remodeling an existing kitchen, with granite kitchen countertops you can be sure that you will add to value of your home.

Kitchen remodelers and home builders have experienced a boom in the demand for kitchen granite countertops. Although it can be more expensive to put in granite countertops, they remain the odds on favorite choice for more upscale homes, since they keep their value better than most home improvements

The investment you make in kitchen granite countertops should pay you back at least three times what you invested. If you are selling your home you will find that home buyers wanting kitchen granite countertops will be willing to pay more for your home than if you have ceramic tile or plastic laminate.

Planning out your kitchen granite countertop first involves selecting the right granite color. You should concentrate on the most popular colors. Even though granite tones are usually neutral, you may find that a certain color goes well for your kitchen design.

If you are replacing the old countertop material in your kitchen with granite, carefully diagram all the measurements for the granite installer. If installing new cabinets is part of your kitchen remodel ask the granite fabricator what they recommend for cabinetry.

Since you are using such a superior product as granite, you should think about the right type of sink to go with your new kitchen granite countertop. You should definitely consider going with an undermount stainless steel sink, as opposed to an overmount sink that would be difficult to clean around.

In addition to getting the right kind of sink installed, it is also important to select the just the right faucet to go with the sink. A stainless steel faucet would go well with the looks of a rich kitchen granite countertop.

The next important area is upgrading your cabinet hardware. The handles and knobs should also be of high quality in order to provide good accent to the overall look of the kitchen. Even if you are not replacing the cabinetry having high quality hardware will make those cabinets and the whole kitchen stand out.

So in planning your kitchen remodeling, just remember that kitchen granite countertops will make a provide a world-class addition and increase the resale value of your home.

James Mahoney is the author of many kitchen design articles and has a site about kitchen design ideas at Kitchen Designers Ideas.com. He also publishes a newsletter on kitchen design.

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Distinguished Feature Of Granite

By Shiji Shijina

Granite, the most precious natural stone used by home owners and builders for their houses, building and monuments. Granite stones come in different products like tiles, slabs, sinks, countertops. Granite stones guarantees durability, existence, resistance, long lasting beauty and long lasting stone. Most of the people prefer to install granite for their kitchen, bathrooms as well as for interiors and exteriors of the building, because of its durability. Generally, granite is said that it is next to the diamond, i.e. its hardness is compared to diamond. Nowadays, the trend has been changed and most of the people prefer to install granite stones for the homes, buildings and monuments.

It can also be said that granite stones satisfies the needs and requirement of the customer around the world and large number of install granite for their floors. Installation of granite plays major role in the existence and beautifulness of the stone granite. When proper installation process does not takes place for the floors, buildings, monuments and homes then the home owners and builders have to suffer. Installation of granite stone can be carried with the help of the installer or professional or experts who posses adequate knowledge and experience in the field of granite installation. Granite comes up with wide applications and features to facilitate the customers to meet their requirements.

Granite adds beauty to the homes and buildings for which it is installed. Granite stones are considered one of the important and essential materials of interior and exterior decorations. When proper care and maintenance is given for the natural stone granite then the home owners and builders can feel hassle free. Granite stones are imported and exported from many countries and large numbers of manufacturer are involved in the field of supply of granite stone to the people needed. Granite stones are supplied at competitive prices and it is also an expensive natural stone. Among the different natural stones such as marble, limestone, travertine, vanity, granite plays the dominant role in the market.

Nowadays, large number of home owners and builders started installing granite stones for their houses, monuments and buildings. From during the past days itself, granite founds its existence and for large monuments and

buildings, granite stones were used. Granite stones come in different colors, designs and shades to satisfy the requirements of the customer. The customer can select any of the color and design for their houses and buildings in reasonable prices. Granite stones are resistance to stains, scratches, spills, heat, moisture and water and so on. This resistance will prevent the granite stones with everlasting beauty and everlasting existence.

Granite stones are the hardest material, durable, resistant, beautiful material. When people finds to be satisfied, when they install granite stones for their kitchen and bathrooms. Even scratches affects the granite stones, it can be removed using quality products. While stains or spills takes place, then quality cleaning agents can be used to remove the spills and stains from the surface. Therefore, granite stones provide excellent workmanship to the customers.

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Why Granite is the Material of Choice for Countertops

By Kathy McGourley

You may be wondering why granite is such a popular material for countertops. First and foremost, looks! With its rich polished surface, granite appeals to every décor style from elegant or modern to traditional or country. Granite comes in some amazing colors, and is considered to be one of the most beautiful stones in the world. Installing granite countertops is not only timeless, its durable and virtually maintenance free, economical, and eco-friendly.

The best place to begin in understanding why people choose granite countertops in their home is to understand what granite is. Granite is a natural stone and comes from the Italian word "granito", meaning grained. It is an igneous rock, essentially molten magma, which is cooled and then hardened below the earth's surface. Granite contains crystallized minerals such as feldspar, quartz and mica. The colors and patterns of granite are determined by these minerals, their varying concentrations, temperature, pressure and the rate at which the rocks cool down on their ascent to the earth's surface. It is this range of colors and patterns that make granite such an appealing and unique material to use for countertops.

Let's move on to durability. As you are probably aware, diamonds are the hardest material. Granite is the second. Ask any stone fabricator what they use to fabricate granite in their shops and their answer will be consistent-diamond blades! It is for this reason that granite is a highly durable material. It is recommended that you do not use knives on granite, not out of concern for scratching the granite, but because the hardness of the granite will dull the blades. In addition, you can set hot pots on your granite tops without any concern. Anything short of a blowtorch will not affect your countertop. Granite is one of the most heat resistant materials you can use. It is commonly used as building material for high-rises due to its ability to withstand gale force winds and rain. Needless to say, its durable.

Granite is a fairly maintenance free material, as well. Routine cleaning with mild soap and water is all that is generally required. Unlike marble, which is generally a callous stone formed from oceanic deposits and then compressed under pressure (metamorphosed), granite, an igneous rock, is less porous. An occasional re-application of a penetrating sealer should be performed,

which only takes about 15 minutes-less time than scouring a solid surface countertop with a cleanser to remove scratches. Unlike marble, which will lose its polish with time, granite will shine years from now just as if it was brand new.

Many so-called "experts" advise re-applying stone sealers on an annual (or more frequent) basis - this is just not true. In actuality, there is no "calendar" for re-sealing, and over-application of sealer can build up over time and cause a haze on the surface of your countertops. The frequency for re-sealing depends on the type of stone installed and the amount of use that the countertops see. An easy "rule of thumb" is to closely monitor the area around the sink. If you begin to notice water that does not bead up or soaks into the stone within 10-15 minutes, then it's probably time to re-seal. Applying a sealer is easy, you can apply a liberal amount of sealer in the evening before going to bed and just let it penetrate and cure overnight. Sealers can be picked up at any "big box" hardware store.

Contrary to popular belief granite is not very expensive. With the new technology available to the miners and fabricators of granite, the cost of granite has dropped dramatically in the last few decades. Stone prices are now competitive and even lower than man-made options. Granite lasts longer than any other surface, not only for its durability but because it is not just the latest trend. Keep in mind, its been around and has been in use since, well, the Stone Age.

Although it is true that mining is rough on the environment, other products are far worse in several ways. Man-made products create potentially deadly by-products which end up straight in our already crowded landfills. Due to granite's durability and timeless beauty it does not need to be replaced or upgraded. Man-made counters are replaced several times over the life of a building, further adding waste (both environmentally and financially). More importantly, to your own family's health, granite does not harbor bacteria. In fact, in one study comparing granite with other countertop choices such as laminate, wood, tile, concrete, and stainless steel, sealed granite was shown to be second only to the stainless steel for resistance to bacteria.

It is for these reasons that granite has recently become the material of choice for homeowners remodeling their kitchens. With its durability and timeless beauty, granite is here to stay.

Kathy specializes in granite and marble fabrication and installation and services residents and businesses in the Tampa Bay area.

For more information on the benefits of granite countertops in your home, please visit <http://www.kascostone.com>

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Granite Countertops - Naturally Better

By Ryan Burden

Granite countertops are now the most popular choice for kitchens and bathrooms. But it wasn't always that way. Not too long ago granite was somewhat rare and expensive since it was so hard to quarry and cut.

Now that effective techniques and machinery has been developed, the price of granite has come way down and the availability has skyrocketed.

Today, granite is imported to the United States from quarries around the world. With over 2700 varieties of granite, there is seemingly no end to your choices for color and pattern.

Advantages Of Granite Countertops

Granite is nature's most perfect countertop. It's been created over millions of years and as a consequence has a hard, generally impervious surface.

You can drop things on it, spill stuff on it, set hot pans and cut on granite without damaging it. Some of these activities are not recommended because in extreme circumstance you could cause damage, but the risk is low. Granite is very tough and durable.

However, not all granite is created equal and many stones with similar qualities are sold as granite, but are not true geological granite. They are not "fake" granite necessarily. Scientifically speaking, they simply are not classified as granite, but in your kitchen they perform very similar to granite, so commercially they are sold as one group. But again, performance can vary with different colors or species of granite.

For instance, some granite counter tops should be sealed to retard staining, but many granite varieties are naturally non-porous, nearly impossible to stain and don't need sealing at all.

You can perform simple tests to determine if the granite you like is a good choice for your kitchen.

Disadvantages Of Granite

You will get a tiny seam where the different slabs of granite have been placed together. Most likely you will also have a break in the color and pattern due to the seam. In most cases, however, the break can be minimized with good planning by the fabricator when cutting the slab and matching similar sections during installation.

Proper installation and support is paramount. Installing granite is not a do-it-yourself job. Granite is very hard and strong, but if not handled, installed or supported properly, cracks can develop.

You must seal many types of granite as soon as it is installed in order to avoid staining. You will also have to reseal it on a regular basis. This is not a difficult or complicated process and it only takes a few hours. So, you must maintain the surface, but that is true with any surface.

And remember.... you can test your granite samples and choose a granite that doesn't need to be sealed or one that won't need re-sealing but every 3-5 years.

Tip: Go to the granite importer's warehouse with your designer or fabricator and pick out the exact slab that you want to ensure you get the color and pattern you like. Even among granites with the same color and name, from the same quarry, there are variations from slab to slab. Most people view that as a benefit since your counter top will truly be one-of-a-kind.

Price

Granite countertops are most commonly sold by the square foot of the slab needed to cover your entire countertop including leftover scraps. Currently the price varies, depending on the quality and supply of the granite you choose, from a low of about \$25/sq ft to a high of about \$125 per square foot including edge detail.

Edges come in a variety of styles to match your design theme whether ornate or sleek. Some of the fancier edges are created by gluing or laminating the edge for greater thickness and then cut to style.

You really can't go wrong with granite. There are other surfaces that are very good, but when comparing all the pros and cons, none are better than granite.

Ryan Burden is the creator of CountertopSpecialty.com which provides comprehensive information on all your countertop and remodeling needs AND... produces a nice income on its own. Why would you care?

Perhaps YOU have a business, hobby or passion that you'd like to turn into online profits. Discover how Ryan did it and how easily you can Build Websites That Work with the right tools.

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How to Select Granite Color?

By R Govindan

Granite is one of the hardest stones available on the earth and is found across various countries and continents. Another value proposition held by granite is its color which adds on or matches to the standard of aesthetic elegance as desired by designers. It's not a hidden fact that granite is the ultimate choice for kitchen counter tops, bathroom vanity counters and has also made its way into the floorings, fireplaces and many other such applications.

The most critical issue faced by most of the designers or individuals is the choice of granite color. As granite has a wide array of color options starting from the blacks, whites, browns, blues, greens and the variations thereof. With such subtle variations it increases a challenging task to freeze upon the right granite color and hue. It has been often seen that black and blue granite is much more in demand and so are its prices. Brown and beige on the contrary give you a lot of variety to work with the combinations in your kitchen. Dark counters for light color cabinets and light counters for darker color cabinets is an accepted norm. What would be the factors which one would need to bear in mind while choosing granite color for a kitchen counter top?

Beginning off the first factor would be to walk in to a near-by granite supplier or warehouse which stocks, imports and deals with a large selection of granite slabs and not just a few samples of granite stuck on to a board. Ideally you would like the granite color to match up with your kitchen's cabinets, hence it would be advisable to carry a cabinet sample along. The same would apply in case of your granite color having to match with your existing flooring. In case of new house you could have your granite counter top selected first and then decide on the flooring, the flooring too can be of granite. Ideally run through the slabs which are a near match or a perfect combination before you intend to freeze on the granite color, as it is an one time affair and you need to make the most perfect selection which won't make you repent later.

Once you have done with your color selection you could request the granite supplier to draw out a couple of similar slabs to check for variation in color tones. Few of these granite warehouses also are efficient and expert granite installers. So you could always get the right measure of the kitchen and

select the pattern. Prior to running through this exercise it would also be worthwhile to visit a few online granite stores which display granite colors along with the names or the codes and the country of origin. With a bit of online search and local market granite supplier or warehouse visit, you would be able to get hold of the right granite color that you are looking out for.

Marble City Company is the largest importer of granite slabs and offer multiple granite color options to choose from black granite, blue granite, green granite, brown granite, beige granite etc.

Peek into the online gallery and get insights to the various natural stone colors, country of origin and application. For details visit :
<http://www.marblecityca.com/stones/>

Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=R_Govindan
Article Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/1374866>

We hope you enjoyed this ebook AND we hope you were able to find out everything you needed to know about granite and using granite for remodeling in your home. When in doubt, please visit A & R Granite at www.argranite.co for the best in granite installation in the South Sound Region of Washington State.

Decorating with Granite



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