



Explore the Alternatives to Granite Countertops

Granite has long been a popular countertop material for homeowners looking to combine functionality with aesthetic appeal in their kitchens. But granite is no small investment, and homeowners looking to refurbish their kitchens should know there are a multitude of countertop materials available to those working on a budget or those who simply want to give their kitchens a different look.

Solid wood:

Wood countertops create a warm, homey interior. Butcher block counters are less expensive than granite and do not necessarily need to be ordered from a speciality retailer. But wood can stain and dent and can even burn when hot kitchenware is placed atop it. Regular application of oil can help homeowners maintain the appearance of their wood counters for years to come.

Marble:

Marble tends to be less expensive than granite without

sacrificing aesthetic appeal. However, marble is softer and more porous than granite, so it can stain and be etched. Diligence in wiping away spills, routine sealing and a gentle touch is necessary for those who choose marble countertops.

Soapstone:

This is a natural stone composed mainly of mineral talc that gives the stone its smooth feel. Soapstone ranges from black to gray but can sometimes have a green shade to it. Other materials in the stone can produce veining. Although softer than granite, soapstone is still high-density and will hold up well. It's impervious to stains and bacteria, and exposure to chemicals will not damage it.

Quartz:

Quartz is a manufactured product made of stone aggregate and polymers compressed under high pressure. It has the look of natural stone but requires less

work to maintain. Quartz has consistent colors and patterns and is a nonporous material, so it will not need routine sealing and resealing.

Glass:

Glass countertops are back-painted, so homeowners can order just about any color they want. Glass will be tempered, so it is safe and heat-resistant. Glass can scratch, though, so it is not as impervious as other materials.

Concrete:

Concrete is another material that can be colored to match homeowners' whims. Concrete is relatively inexpensive compared to other countertop materials, but it can crack or chip.

While granite is a popular countertop material, homeowners who want something new have many additional options at their disposal.

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