

GRANITE STONE & TILE SHOP

The Countertop & Flooring Selection Guide

Materials, real cost ranges, and lead times — the honest reference for choosing surfaces you'll live with for twenty years.

How to use this guide: read the material chapters for the rooms you're renovating, then use the cost and lead-time tables to sanity-check every quote you receive. If a quote doesn't fit these ranges, ask why — sometimes there's a good reason, and sometimes there isn't.

1 • Countertop Materials — What Each One Is Actually Like to Own

Showroom samples all look wonderful. The differences show up at year three, around lemon juice, hot pans and resale. Here is the honest comparison:

Material	Strengths	Weaknesses	Maintenance	Installed cost / sq ft
Granite	Genuinely heat-proof; every slab unique; strong resale signal	Needs sealing; visible seams on long runs; porous if neglected	Reseal every 1–3 yrs (a 20-minute DIY job)	\$50–\$120
Quartz (engineered)	Non-porous — no sealing ever; consistent pattern; huge color range	Resin scorches above ~300°F — trivets are not optional; UV-sensitive (not for outdoor)	Soap and water. That's it.	\$60–\$150
Quartzite (natural)	Harder than granite; marble looks without marble fragility; heat-tolerant	Priciest common option; some slabs sold as "quartzite" are soft — always scratch-test	Reseal every 1–2 yrs	\$80–\$200
Marble	Unmatched depth and veining; cool surface bakers love	Etches from anything acidic (wine, citrus, tomato); scratches; stains	Reseal 2–4×/yr and accept patina — or choose something else	\$60–\$180
Butcher block	Warm, workable, repairable — sand out damage	Water damage at sinks; knife marks; needs oiling	Mineral oil monthly at first, then quarterly	\$35–\$90
Solid surface (Corian-class)	Invisible seams; integrated sinks; renewable finish	Scorches and scratches more easily than stone; dated in some markets	Nearly none	\$45–\$85

The scratch test: when a "quartzite" slab is priced suspiciously close to marble, drag a knife tip across an offcut corner. True quartzite laughs at it. If it scratches white and powdery, you're holding mislabeled marble or dolomite — and it will etch like marble too.

2 • Flooring Materials — Bamboo, Engineered and Solid Hardwood

Material	Best for	Watch out for	Refinish life	Installed cost / sq ft
Strand-woven bamboo	High traffic, pets, budget-conscious modern looks; hardest common floor (2×+ oak on the Janka scale)	Quality varies wildly by brand; cheap product delaminates; humidity swings matter	1–2 refinishes (thin wear layer)	\$5–\$11
Engineered hardwood	Slabs, basements, kitchens — anywhere moisture rules out solid; wide planks that stay flat	Wear-layer thickness decides its whole future: 2mm is disposable, 4–6mm is a real floor	1–3 refinishes depending on wear layer	\$7–\$16
Solid hardwood	Above-grade rooms over wood subfloor; the 50-year floor	Never over concrete without sleepers; gaps/cupping if humidity is uncontrolled; acclimation is mandatory	4–7 refinishes — effectively a lifetime	\$8–\$18

The subfloor decides, not the showroom. Solid hardwood glued straight to a slab is the most common four-figure flooring mistake in warm-climate homes. If your home sits on concrete, your realistic choices are engineered hardwood, quality bamboo rated for it, or tile — and any installer who doesn't ask what's under your current floor before quoting has already told you something.

3 • What Projects Really Cost — Whole-Project Ranges

Per-square-foot numbers hide the true total. Typical all-in project ranges (material + fabrication/labor + prep):

Project	Modest	Mid-range	High-end	What moves the number most
Kitchen countertops (40–55 sq ft)	\$2,500–\$4,500	\$4,500–\$8,500	\$8,500–\$18,000+	Material tier, edge profile, sink cutouts, waterfall ends
Bathroom vanity top	\$600–\$1,200	\$1,200–\$2,500	\$2,500–\$5,000	Slab remnant vs. full slab; integrated sinks
Flooring, 3 rooms (~700 sq ft)	\$4,000–\$7,000	\$7,000–\$12,000	\$12,000–\$22,000	Material, subfloor prep, furniture moving, trim/transitions
Whole-home floors (~1,800 sq ft)	\$10,000–\$17,000	\$17,000–\$30,000	\$30,000–\$55,000+	Same, multiplied — plus staging logistics of living through it

The 10–15% rule: carry a contingency of 10–15% on any surfaces project. The most common surprises: subfloor repair discovered at demo, slab breakage requiring a second slab, and "while we're at it" backsplash additions.

4 • Lead Times — When to Order What

Item	Typical lead time	Notes
Quartz (common colors)	1–3 weeks to template, 1–2 weeks fabricate	Fastest path overall
Granite / quartzite (stocked slabs)	2–4 weeks total	Add 2–6 weeks if your slab ships from a distributor
Exotic / bookmatched stone	4–10 weeks	Slabs are reserved, shipped, inspected — plan early
Engineered hardwood (stocked)	1–2 weeks + 3–5 days acclimation	Acclimation is not optional, whatever the installer says
Solid hardwood	1–4 weeks + 5–14 days acclimation	Longer acclimation in humid seasons
Quality bamboo	1–3 weeks + 72 hrs acclimation	Order from the same lot for the whole job

Sequencing rule of thumb: floors before baseboards, countertops after cabinets are set (templating needs the real cabinets), backsplash after countertops. A project that violates this order is paying twice somewhere.

5 • The Ten Questions That Separate Good Quotes From Expensive Ones

- **1.** Is this quote from a measured template, or from my phone-call dimensions? (Only one of those is a price.)
- **2.** What exact material, brand and thickness — written down? "Quartz" is not a spec.
- **3.** Where will the seams fall? Show me on a drawing.
- **4.** What's included: demo, disposal, plumbing disconnect/reconnect, sink, faucet holes?
- **5.** For floors: what subfloor prep is assumed — and what happens to the price if demo finds damage?
- **6.** What's the wear layer (engineered) or density rating (bamboo) of the exact product quoted?
- **7.** Who does the work — your employees or subcontractors — and who warrants it?
- **8.** What does the warranty cover in writing: material, labor, or both, and for how long?
- **9.** What's the payment schedule? (Never more than a third down; final payment after walkthrough.)
- **10.** How long is this price valid, and is the slab/lot reserved while I decide?

Want the choosing done with you — and the quotes made comparable?

Granite Stone & Tile Shop runs independent selection and coordination services: we spec your project, then qualified local fabricators and installers bid against the same document.

Countertop Selection + Quote Service — \$497 (fully credited toward your project) · **Flooring Selection + Install Coordination — \$997** · **Whole-Home Surfaces Package — from \$9,500**, consultation first.

Start at granitestoneandtileshop.com/request-a-consultation

Cost and lead-time figures are typical U.S. ranges compiled for planning purposes; your market, material availability and site conditions will move them. This guide is general information, not a quote.