

FREE GUIDE · GRANITE STONE & TILE SHOP

The Countertop & Flooring Selection Guide

Materials, honest cost ranges, lead times, and the 12 questions to ask any fabricator — everything to choose surfaces with confidence.

Countertops: the honest materials comparison

Material	Typical installed \$/sq ft	Strengths	Watch-outs
Granite	\$45–\$100	Natural, heat-tolerant, unique slabs	Needs periodic sealing; pattern varies slab to slab
Quartz (engineered)	\$55–\$120	Consistent, non-porous, low maintenance	Heat-sensitive; seams show on long runs
Marble	\$60–\$150+	Unmatched look	Etches and stains; a patina material, not a pristine one
Quartzite	\$65–\$140	Marble look, granite toughness	Price and fabrication complexity
Butcher block	\$35–\$75	Warm, repairable	Water discipline at sinks; regular oiling
Solid surface	\$40–\$80	Invisible seams, repairable	Scratches and heat marks more easily

Flooring: the honest materials comparison

Material	Typical installed \$/sq ft	Strengths	Watch-outs
Porcelain tile	\$8–\$20	Waterproof, hardest-wearing, wood-look options	Hard/cold underfoot; grout maintenance
Ceramic tile	\$6–\$15	Budget-friendly, huge selection	Softer than porcelain; chips show
Luxury vinyl plank	\$5–\$12	Waterproof, comfortable, fast install	Sun fade; resale perception vs real wood
Engineered hardwood	\$9–\$18	Real wood veneer, stabler than solid	Limited refinishes; water caution
Solid hardwood	\$10–\$22	Refinishable for decades	Movement with humidity; not for wet rooms
Natural stone tile	\$12–\$30+	Permanent, distinctive	Sealing; cold; cost

What actually drives your quote

- **Countertops:** slab grade and thickness, edge profile, cutouts (sink, cooktop), corners and seams, tear-out of the old tops, and backsplash height.
- **Flooring:** subfloor condition (the invisible budget line), pattern complexity (herringbone costs more than straight lay), transitions and trim, furniture moving, and old-floor removal.

- **Both:** measured square footage plus 8–12% waste factor — a quote without a waste line is a quote that grows later.

Lead times to plan around

Stage	Countertops	Flooring
Selection → template/measure	3–10 days	3–7 days
Template → fabrication	5–15 business days	Material delivery 1–3 weeks
Installation	Usually 1 day	1–4 days by room count
Full kitchen realistic total	3–5 weeks	2–4 weeks

The 12 questions to ask any fabricator or installer

1. Is my quote from a measured template or from my sketch?
2. What waste factor is included, and what happens to overage?
3. Who disconnects/reconnects plumbing and appliances?
4. How many seams will I have, and where exactly?
5. Can I see and approve my actual slab (not a sample chip)?
6. What subfloor prep is included, and what triggers extra cost?
7. Who removes and disposes of the old surfaces?
8. What is the moisture/acclimation plan for wood products?
9. What warranty covers workmanship — separate from the material?
10. Are you insured for in-home work, and can I see proof?
11. What is the payment schedule? (Never 100% up front.)
12. What does day-of-install prep do you need from me?

The sample rule: always take samples home and look at them morning, noon, and night in YOUR light. Showroom lighting is designed to sell; your kitchen's north-facing window is not.

Budget worksheet

Build your number before you shop: material (sq ft × installed rate from the tables above) + tear-out + subfloor/plumbing contingency (10%) + trim/transitions + appliance re-hookup. If the total makes you flinch, step down one material tier rather than one installer tier — the cheapest installer on a premium material is how horror stories start.

Matching material to room — the fit table

Room	Best-fit counters	Best-fit floors	Why
Busy family kitchen	Quartz, granite	Porcelain, LVP	Spill/impact resilience beats delicacy

Room	Best-fit counters	Best-fit floors	Why
Baking-heavy kitchen	Granite, quartzite	—	Heat tolerance at the range and pans
Bathrooms	Quartz, solid surface	Porcelain, LVP	Non-porous around standing water
Laundry / mudroom	Solid surface	Porcelain, LVP	Waterproof + forgiving
Living / bedrooms	—	Engineered or solid hardwood	Warmth and resale appeal
Rental / flip	Quartz (light patterns)	LVP	Durability per dollar + broad buyer appeal

Care & maintenance: what you are signing up for

- **Granite/quartzite/stone tile:** reseal on the schedule your fabricator specifies (test: water stops beading = time). Minutes of work, years of protection.
- **Quartz/solid surface:** soap and water; keep hot pans on trivets — that is the whole regimen.
- **Marble:** accept etching as patina or choose something else — no sealer prevents acid etching.
- **Hardwood:** humidity control (roughly 35–55%), felt pads, and refinishing budget every 10–15 years for solid.
- **Tile floors:** the grout is the maintenance item, not the tile — seal it and it stays the color you chose.

Ready to price your project for real? Request a free consultation at granitestoneandtileshop.com — selection guidance, measured quotes, and coordination with vetted local installers.

Educational resource only. Prices are illustrative national ranges and vary by region, material grade, and site conditions. Installation is performed by independent licensed professionals; confirm licensing and insurance for your jurisdiction.