

Slate Countertop Cost: What Will You have to Pay for This Natural Stone?

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If you are looking for a countertop that is stylish but not too flashy, slate countertops are an excellent option. The surfaces will give you a uniform darker toned look that will visually enhance any space you install them in. The countertops are also one of the most durable options on the market. This guide will walk through what slate is, how much the material costs and everything else you will want to know before you invest in the countertops.

What is Slate?

Slate is a metamorphic rock that forms from the combination of clay and silt sediment over time. Like many other natural stones, slate is formed by intense heat and pressure. Because of this, the material is very tough and will stand up well anywhere you use it.

What Factors Impact the Cost of Slate Countertops?

There are a number of factors that influence the prices of slate countertops. Some of these factors include:

- Grade
- Color
- Texture

Grade

Slate is categorized by three different grades – low-grade, mid-grade and high-grade. Low-grade features the lowest cost, while mid-grade is a middle point and high-grade will be more expensive. The table below displays the general costs for each grade of slate.

Low-grade	\$50-\$70 per square foot
Mid-grade	\$70-\$90 per square foot
High-grade	\$90-\$200 per square foot

Grades of Slate

Color

The color of the slate you choose will also impact the cost. Colors such as grey, white and blue fall in the low- to mid-grades, while a color such as black falls in the high-grade.

Texture

There are three types of textures that you can choose from for your slate countertop: cleft, cascade and honed. The three options are explained in further detail below.

Cleft

Cleft is often referred to as natural or textured slate. This is the least expensive texture option that you will have. The countertop will be a rough, non-uniform surface. This is beneficial because it will help hide any imperfections, such as scratches or dents. However, this texture is more prone to having dirt stuck between the ridges.

Cascade

Cascade is a cross between cleft and honed. This is the perfect choice if you do not want a completely smooth surface but do not want all the ridges you would get with a cleft texture.

Honed

Honed will give you a smooth countertop surface. You can either choose a matte look or something that is glossier. Take note that you will have to be proactive when it comes to scratches and dents, as they will not be hidden on a honed surface like they would be on a cleft surface.

Repair and Maintenance of Slate Countertops

Much like many other natural stone countertops, slate countertops require consistent maintenance to keep them in top shape. Considering the large investment you are making in your new countertops, you will want to make sure they stay in good shape for years to come.

Pros and Cons of Slate Countertops

There are pros and cons to having slate countertops in the home. These pros and cons are analyzed below.

Pros and Cons	
Pros	Cons
Heat Resistant	Price
Stain Resistant	Subdued Look
Water Resistant	Edges Prone to Chips and Cracks
Uniform Look	

Pros

Heat Resistant

Slate countertops are heat resistant. This is a major advantage – especially in the kitchen. Hot pots and pans will not damage the surface, nor will any hot hair styling tools from the bathroom.

Stain Resistant

Another benefit you will get from slate countertops is stain resistance. Although you should still wipe up any spills as soon as possible, you will not have to worry as much as you would with other stones, such as marble.

Water Resistant

Slate countertops are water resistant. This is yet another benefit you can see in the kitchen, bathroom or any other room the countertops are installed in.

Uniform Look

If you want a uniform look to your countertops rather than elegant patterns, slate is one of your top choices. The stone naturally comes in solid colors that are subdued, yet still very stylish.

Cons

Price

If you want natural stone countertops, you will have to pay a higher price than you would for something like laminate. However, one could argue that you would much rather pay more for quality than to sacrifice quality in the interest of getting a countertop that is cheap. Considering that buying new countertops is usually a large, one-time investment, paying a little more for the countertops you really want can be well worth it.

Subdued Look

As mentioned, slate countertops will give off a more subdued look and feel. This is only a negative if this is not what you are going for. If it isn't the look you want, you should look into other countertop options. Natural stone options that can be busier looking include granite and marble, among many others.

Edges Prone to Chips and Cracks

One of the major downsides to slate countertops are that the edges are prone to cracking or chipping. However, if you exercise enough caution, this will not be an issue.

Installation of Slate Countertops

Slate countertops, much like many other natural stone surfaces, are very heavy and you will need to have them installed by a professional. You should not attempt to install them on your own, as you will be risking damages to the countertop as well as injury to yourself. Although it will add to the overall cost of the project, hiring a professional is the way to go.

Resale Value of Slate Countertops

Slate countertops will make your home more appealing when the time comes to sell. The countertops are extremely desirable because of their high-quality looks and relatively easy maintenance. In general, prospective homeowners love the idea of having natural stone countertops in their new home.

What Pairs Well with Slate Countertops?

Since slate comes in many neutral tones, the stone pairs well with virtually any décor. Whether you are going for a matching look with dark grey walls or cabinets, or if you want more of a contrasting look with white walls or cabinets, your slate countertops will look stunning.

What Room Should You Have Slate Countertops In?

Slate countertops will work well anywhere in the house. You will receive the same appearance and functional benefits anywhere you install them.

How Does Slate Compare to Other Natural Stone Countertop Options?

When searching for natural stone countertops, you will discover that you have many options to choose from other than slate. Below are breakdowns of how slate countertops compare to various other types of natural stone countertops.

Slate vs. Granite: How Do They Compare?

Granite is one of the top natural stone options on the market. Below is a comparison of slate and granite, broken down into different categories.

Appearance

Granite countertops come in a wide range of looks, from various different colors to all different types of swirls, veins and flecks. If you want a diverse set of options, granite is a stone you should definitely check out. You can go for a more traditional color, like white, or go for something that is bolder, like red or green. On the other hand, slate has a limited color selection to choose from. This is not to say that the colors of slate are not beautiful, but rather to say that you will have less options to select from. Slate can be found in neutral or cooler colors, which can work well throughout the house. As for which natural stone looks nicer, that is strictly a matter of personal opinion.

Cost

Cost is one area in which granite can definitely top slate. Granite countertops typically go for anywhere between \$35 to \$75 per square foot, while slate falls in a range of \$50 to \$200. As mentioned earlier in the article, you should not let price get in the way of having your dream countertop. If slate is the material you have your heart set on and your budget allows for it, you should choose slate.

Maintenance

Granite countertops, like slate, are relatively easy to care for. You can clean granite countertops using just warm soapy water. One thing to note about granite countertops is that they must be re-sealed once a year to protect against damages. This is the case with most natural stone countertops on the market, although some need to be re-sealed even more often than granite.

Slate vs. Marble: How Do They Compare?

Marble is one of the most elegant natural stone countertop options you will find. Below is a comparison of the appearance, cost and maintenance of slate and marble.

Appearance

Marble has long been used as a building material primarily due to the gorgeous looks of the stone. Marble has been used to construct everything from countertops in homes to some of the world's most famous statues. The natural stone can be found in many different colors that feature beautiful veining. Slate has a

more uniform look to it, so the difference in appearance between it and marble are notable. If you are looking for something flashier, perhaps the elegant veins that can be seen in various types of marble will suit your taste. On the other hand, if you are looking for something that makes a more subtle statement, slate is a great choice.

Cost

Marble can typically be found in the range of \$40 to \$100 per square foot. Compared to slate (\$50 to \$200 per square foot), there is some overlap present, with higher end slate soaring to prices that marble does not reach.

Maintenance

Maintenance is one category in which slate has a major advantage over marble. One of the major drawbacks of marble is the maintenance required for the stone. It needs to be re-sealed once every few months and you will need to be extremely careful around the surface, as any acidic spills can cause permanent damage to your countertop. You will not encounter issues such as these with a slate countertop.

Slate vs. Quartzite: How Do They Compare?

Quartzite is an absolutely gorgeous natural stone countertop option. Below is a comparison of slate and quartzite based on the stones' appearance, cost and maintenance.

Appearance

Quartzite is one of the most beautiful natural stone countertop surfaces you can find. It comes in many different colors that will take your breath away. It is typically seen as a great alternative to marble because it offers high quality looks but with added strength and durability. If you are looking for a countertop that will feature bolder colors and veining, quartzite is a good option for you. On the other hand, if you are set on the idea of a darker colored countertop with a uniform look, that is what you will get from slate.

Cost

Quartzite is usually priced in the range of \$60 to \$120 per square foot, compared to the \$50 to \$200 per square foot you can expect to pay for slate. This shows that there is some overlap present in the pricing of both stones, with some types of slate extending past the higher end costs of quartzite.

Maintenance

Quartzite countertops do not require a lot of maintenance compared to many other countertop options. Your biggest concern will be re-sealing the countertops every six months. Other than that, all you will need to do is make sure you keep up on cleaning. Slate requires even less maintenance than quartzite, however.

Slate vs. Onyx: How Do They Compare?

If you are looking for a natural stone countertop that is truly exotic, onyx perfectly fits the description. Below is a comparison of the appearance, cost and maintenance of slate and onyx.

Appearance

Onyx is a unique natural stone that is one of the most gorgeous you will ever find. If you choose to use it for a countertop, onyx will offer you an interesting feature that you will not get with the other countertop options: Because the stone is translucent, it has the ability to be backlit. Doing so can truly create a countertop that is unlike the others. On the other hand, as mentioned, slate countertops are the way to go if you want something subdued and uniform.

Cost

Onyx countertops come in a wide range of prices – everywhere from \$75 to \$250 per square foot based on what type you choose. This means that there is some overlap in the pricing of slate and onyx countertops. You will have to be prepared to pay the price for both, so make sure to carefully think through your decision.

Maintenance

One of the major downsides to onyx countertops is that you must keep up on maintenance. If you have a busy lifestyle, onyx countertops may not be the best choice for you. You will have to be extremely careful, especially with spills. You will need to re-seal an onyx countertop frequently to avoid damages. Compared to slate, onyx is practically the opposite in terms of maintenance.

Slate vs. Soapstone: How Do They Compare?

Soapstone is widely regarded as one of the best natural stone countertop options, due to both its looks and functional benefits. Below is a comparison of slate and soapstone which looks at the appearance, cost and maintenance of each natural stone.

Appearance

Soapstone is the natural stone countertop option that slate is most often compared to. Like slate, soapstone can be found in a variety of darker tones, as the stone is grey. Different types have hints of blue, green or black present. If you are looking for something that is close to the appearance of slate, soapstone will be your best bet.

Cost

Soapstone is usually found in the range of \$55 to \$100 per square foot. While there is much overlap in pricing between soapstone and slate, higher end slate will be more expensive than higher end soapstone.

Maintenance

Soapstone is one of the easiest stone countertop surfaces to care for. You can clean the surface using any regular household cleaner. One thing to note is that soapstone naturally darkens over time, but the process can be accelerated if you treat the countertop with mineral oil. If you do opt to treat it with mineral oil, you should only clean the countertop using soap and water, as harsh cleaners may remove the mineral oil treatment. Overall, soapstone and slate match up well in all three categories.

Slate vs. Limestone: How Do They Compare?

Limestone is an elegant natural stone that will freshen up whatever room it is installed in. Below is a comparison of slate and limestone.

Appearance

Limestone is a beautiful natural stone that comes in a range of colors from grey to gold. It is very pleasing to the eye and can be used to brighten up any room you install it in. Although there are types of limestone that are grey, slate is typically darker than limestone.

Cost

Limestone countertops usually cost somewhere in the neighborhood of \$70 to \$200 per square foot. This essentially puts it in the same price range as slate countertops, so perhaps you should keep limestone in mind if your budget allows for it.

Maintenance

Limestone is very porous, so you will need to be extremely careful with where you install it. It is not the best stone countertop option for the kitchen, although if you are willing to take on the challenge of frequent maintenance, it can bring beauty and life to the room. Slate is the more durable option – especially in the kitchen.

Slate vs. Gemstone: How Do They Compare?

Gemstone is a truly unique and eye-catching natural stone countertop option. Below is a comparison of the appearance, cost and maintenance of slate and gemstone.

Appearance

Gemstone is practically a piece of art for your countertop. If you are looking for something that is flashy and colorful, check out gemstone countertops. The surfaces are basically the opposite of slate in terms of appearance.

Cost

Gemstone countertops are the priciest option on this list; the countertops start at around \$100 per square foot. If you want gemstone countertops, you will have to be prepared to pay for them. This is one of the few options that is generally more expensive than slate.

Maintenance

Gemstone countertops are surprisingly durable considering their precious looks. If you take proper care of your gemstone countertop, it will easily become the centerpiece of your home. Granted, that can be said for most natural stone countertops, slate included.

While slate countertops are not cheap, they are definitely a great option for a stone countertop that is both good looking and durable. The colors of the stone work well as neutral tones, so you will not have to worry about slate fitting in with the décor. There are many reasons that slate is an appealing countertop option, but you should always carefully review your other options as well. Whether slate is your final choice or not, this guide provides necessary information for you to keep in mind before you buy your new countertop.