

Granite Finishes: What Are My Best Options?

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Granite is one of the most beautiful and versatile natural stones you can find. It is an excellent building material for the home and is quite popular as well. The stone is often used to create [granite countertops](#) for the kitchen, bathroom, or in some cases, outdoor living areas.

While granite offers you many options in terms of color and style, you can also choose from different types of finishes. The three most popular finishes for granite countertops are honed, polished and leathered. This guide will take a look at what the three different finishes are and how each will impact the appearance and functionality of your new countertop.

What Are the Different Types of Finishes for Granite?

While there are a few other options, the best finishes for granite countertops are a honed finish, a polished finish or a leathered finish. This section will elaborate on what exactly each of these finishes are.

What is Honed Granite?

Honed granite is granite that has undergone the polishing process, but not to the extent of polished granite. As a result, honed granite does not have a shiny surface like polished granite does, but rather more of a matte appearance. Many homeowners have come to desire honed granite because the surfaces look more natural than other finish options. Additionally, because honed granite does not have a glossy finish, the surfaces are better at hiding any imperfections.

On the downside, some feel that honed granite does not show the natural color and texture of the stone as well as polished granite does. Also, while honed granite is still moisture resistant, it is not as moisture resistant as polished granite.

What is Polished Granite?

Polished granite is the most common countertop finish seen with this natural stone. Polishing leaves the granite slab with a high-gloss, reflective finish. The mirror-like shine of a polished surface is often what many homeowners envision when they think of granite countertops. This surface finish helps to highlight the beauty and depth of the stone.

In addition, stone surfaces with a polished finish are easier to clean than others. Polished granite requires re-sealing less often than stones with other finishes.

What is Leathered Granite?

Leathering results in granite slabs that have a more textured appearance. The style has been rising in popularity over the last few years. The granite will have the appearance of leather, hence the term 'leathered granite'. This finish is an ideal choice if you want more of a rustic look to your granite countertop.

Leathered granite will show more depth than honed granite. It will show off the natural characteristics of the stone and will help to hide stains, scratches, smudges and fingerprints.

As far as negative aspects go, cleaning leathered granite can be a bit more challenging than cleaning polished or honed slabs. That said, while these three are your best granite finishes for countertops, no finish will be perfect.

Granite Finishes: Popular Types

Honed
Polished
Leathered

What Are Some Other Types of Finishes?

Honed, polished and leathered are not the only types of finishes for granite. Less common finishes for granite include [sandblasted](#), tumbled, flamed, bush hammered and sawn. The finishes are typically used for other granite surfaces, not countertops.

Granite Finishes: Additional Types

Sandblasted
Tumbled
Flamed
Bush hammered
Sawn

How Do You Clean Granite Countertops?

One of the major appeals of granite countertops are that the surfaces are among the easiest materials to clean. While you can use warm water, mild dish soap and a paper towel for a quick clean, you can achieve a deeper and more effective clean using products like [this](#).

Cleaning is a very important part of keeping your granite countertops in great shape. If you regularly clean the surfaces, you will be rewarded by the stone's beauty on a daily basis.

Different finishes will impact the cleaning process slightly. For example, to get down into the grooves of a leathered granite countertop, you may need to use a soft bristle brush. If you do not, dust and other small particles can get trapped in the surface.

How Do You Re-Seal Granite Countertops?

Although it may seem like a hassle, re-sealing granite is a very quick and simple process. To start, you must clear off any items from the countertop and clean the surface. Once you do this, apply your sealer to the surface by either spreading it on with a brush or spraying it on if it comes in a spray bottle. Next, wait 15 minutes for the sealer to sink in. If you notice that all of the sealer has absorbed during this time, apply an additional coat. After this, wipe off any excess sealer that remains. Lastly, wait for at least 24 hours before using your granite countertop.

Re-Sealing Your Granite Countertops: Steps

Step 1	Clear all items from the countertop and clean the surface
Step 2	Apply sealer
Step 3	Wait for 15 minutes
Step 4	Wipe off any excess sealer that remains
Step 5	Let the countertop sit without use for at least 24 hours

How Do You Polish Granite Countertops?

Polishing is the process of buffing your stone to restore the shine it had when it was new. This process does not add a shine to your countertop, but rather brings back the shine that was once there. As with re-sealing, begin by clearing off and cleaning the surface. Then, seal off the area to ensure you are just polishing the countertop. Lastly, make sure to closely follow all the instructions that come with whatever product you are using, as different polishing products have different requirements. Alternatively, you can opt to hire a professional to come polish the countertops and restore their shine.

Why Choose Granite Countertops?

There are many terrific reasons that homeowners choose granite countertops. The surfaces are beautiful, durable and are resistant to stains, heat, scratches and more. Granite is truly a versatile material, as it can work well as a kitchen countertop, bathroom vanity top, fireplace surround, outdoor kitchen countertop and various other home surfaces.

How Much Do Granite Countertops Cost?

The cost of granite countertops depends on a variety of factors, including which finish you choose. Factors that impact the cost of granite countertops include color, style, how much of the material you need, any cutouts or angles the fabricator has to make, and of course, the type of finish the stone has.

In terms of the three most popular finishes, polished granite is the least expensive. While this may come as a surprise because it is the shiniest of the three finishes, the cost of polished granite is lower due to its availability. Although honed and leathered granite are becoming more popular, both styles are still not very common for countertops.

Although the overall cost of your new granite countertop will depend on several different factors, in general, you can expect to pay somewhere between \$35 to \$75 per square foot for granite. The more common the type and finish you choose, the lower the cost will be.

Honed, Polished or Leathered: Which Granite Finish is Right for Your Home?

While all three of these finish options have positive and negative aspects about them, evaluating what qualities you want in your granite countertop will help you narrow down which finish will be ideal for you. The following is an analysis of the positive and negative qualities associated with all three finish options.

Honed

Pros and Cons

Pros	Cons
Looks great on darker granite	Stains easier than polished granite
Subtle, yet stylish appearance	

Honed granite countertops are the ideal choice for a homeowner who wants a countertop with a matte appearance. If this appeals to you, honed granite will be the way to go. However, if the decision is still up in the air, consider a honed finish if you have a darker colored granite. It will create an eye pleasing look for any dark granite countertop. Sticking with appearance benefits, you should surely consider honed granite if you want something that is not too flashy yet is still very stylish.

Honed granite, while durable and tough, is slightly more prone to staining than polished granite. Keeping the stone adequately protected by re-sealing should make this a non-issue, however.

Polished

Pros and Cons

Pros	Cons
Beautiful reflective surface	Not unique
Resists stains, scratches and heat	

Polished granite countertops will provide your surface with a beautiful and distinctive shine. These surfaces can very easily become the focal point of whatever room you install them in. In addition, because polished granite is the most resistant to stains, scratches and heat, it is the perfect surface for a busy kitchen and homeowners who enjoy cooking. The aesthetic and practical benefits of polished granite countertops make them a great choice for any home. It is no surprise this finish is such a popular choice on the market.

On the downside, since polished granite is very common, you will not be getting a surface that is unique in that respect. If you want a granite countertop that has a finish that will make it stand out, a honed or leathered surface is probably the better option for you.

Leathered

Pros and Cons

Pros	Cons
Looks great on darker granite	Dirt and dust can be an issue

Leathered granite, much like honed granite, is more suitable for darker colored styles of the stone. A leathered dark granite countertop will look terrific in your kitchen – especially if you pair it with rustic décor elements.

As mentioned above, dirt and dust can get trapped in the grooves of a leathered granite surface. You can try to prevent this by using a soft bristled brush to clean in between the grooves.

No matter which granite finish you choose, you can expect to get a high-quality countertop that will stay in great shape for many years if you properly care for it. Granite is truly one of the best materials you can install in your home. This guide will help you narrow down your options when it comes to granite finishes.