

How to Get Countertops for Less: Best Ways to Save

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Installing new countertops can drastically transform your home in a positive way. From increasing the aesthetic appeal to bettering the functionality and raising the overall value of your home, new countertops have many significant impacts. This is precisely why you will want to thoroughly research all your material options before making a decision on which to choose.

One of the important parts of the decision making process is staying within your budget. This can sometimes put your dream countertops out of reach. However, with careful planning, there are several ways to get countertops for less.

Getting countertops at a lower cost should not simply mean settling for a material like solid surface or laminate countertops if you truly want stone countertops. This guide will help you learn how you can find your ideal new countertops at a lower price.

How Much Do Different Countertop Options Cost?

Countertop cost depends on a wide range of factors. Some of these include the following:

- Where you live
- What type of material you choose
- How much of the material you need
- Any special cutouts and angles the fabricator must make

As you can see above, different countertop materials will come at different costs. The table below displays the average prices for many types of popular countertops.

Countertop Options: Average Costs

Ceramic Tile Countertops	Between \$5 to \$7 per square foot
Laminate Countertops	Between \$20 to \$50 per square foot
Cultured Marble Countertops	Between \$30 to \$100 per square foot
Granite Countertops	Between \$32 to \$75 per square foot
Cultured Granite Countertops	Between \$35 to \$60 per square foot
Butcher Block Countertops	Between \$35 to \$200 per square foot
Marble Countertops	Between \$40 to \$100 per square foot
Wood Countertops	Start around \$40 per square foot

Bamboo Countertops	Start around \$40 per square foot
Quartz Countertops	Between \$50 to \$120 per square foot
Recycled Glass Countertops	Between \$50 to \$125 per square foot
Slate Countertops	Between \$50 to \$200 per square foot
Soapstone Countertops	Between \$55 to \$100 per square foot
Quartzite Countertops	Between \$60 to \$120 per square foot
Concrete Countertops	Between \$70 to \$150 per square foot
Limestone Countertops	Between \$70 to \$200 per square foot
Solid Surface Countertops	Between \$75 to \$120 per square foot
Stainless Steel Countertops	Between \$75 to \$150 per square foot
Onyx Countertops	Between \$75 to \$250 per square foot
Gemstone Countertops	Start around \$100 per square foot

While all the materials above can be found in many homes, this does not mean that they are all of equal quality. For example, natural stone countertops will not only look nice, but will be a stronger option than wood countertops or laminate (such as Formica). Finding a countertop material that is both beautiful and tough can be the key to success for any kitchen remodel.

How Can You Keep the Cost of Your New Countertops Low?

This section will focus on various ways that you can get your dream countertops at a lesser cost.

Buy Remnants

When stone countertops are cut, there are leftover pieces not used for the project. These pieces are not simply thrown away. You will often find that a stone yard has many of these extra pieces, referred to as remnants. Remnants are a perfect lower cost option if you have a smaller home improvement project. While they may not be suitable for large kitchen countertops, remnants can be a great idea for smaller backsplashes or other home surfaces.

Stay Away from Big Box Stores

Big box stores often sell countertops for a higher cost than your local stone yard. By staying away from these stores, you will end up saving money in the long run.

Choose a Common Color

Rare colors of stone will come at a higher cost. By choosing common colors, such as white, black or gray, you can keep the overall cost down. Colors like blue and red are typically more expensive.

Note the Country of Origin

Where stone slabs come from can impact cost. For example, imported stone can be more expensive than native stone, especially when you factor in shipping costs.

Custom Edging

If you want to keep costs down, choose a standard countertop edge, rather than a premium edge. The more detail your edge has, the higher the cost will be. There are plenty of stylish standard edges that you can choose from, so you should not worry about having to sacrifice appearance.

Special Cutouts/Backsplashes

Cutouts for sinks and other fixtures will factor into the cost of the countertop. The less cutouts you need, the lower the cost. Similarly, if you choose a matching backsplash, keep in mind that it will influence the final cost as well.

What Finish You Choose

Many stone surfaces have different finish options. For example, with granite countertops, you can have a polished, honed or leathered surface, among other options. Out of these three specifically, a traditional polished finish will come at the lowest cost.

Quality of the Slab

The overall quality of the slab you choose can influence the cost. Slabs that are of lesser quality will cost less. Note that it is not a very wise idea to choose a lesser quality stone just to save money. While you can do this, you may just end up spending more money in the near future to replace the countertop. You are much better off investing a little more money to get a high-quality surface.

Slab Thickness

How thick your slab is can also impact the cost. Thicker slabs will cost more, while thinner slabs will cost less. Spend enough time thinking this through, as the slab's thickness will greatly impact its appearance.

Removal of Old Countertops

Depending on what type of countertops you currently have, removal may or may not be a DIY project. Some materials are very heavy and difficult to handle, meaning you will need to hire a professional to remove them.

Why Are Stone Countertops the Best Option?

As mentioned above, if you are looking for high-quality countertops, stone slabs are the best way to go. Stone slabs create quite the visual impact in the home. In addition to countertops, you can also use natural or engineered stone for a new kitchen island top, bathroom vanity top, backsplash and more.

You will find stone tiles (granite tile, marble tile, etc.) available on the market. However, countertops like these will come with grout lines, which can lead to difficult cleaning.

Frequently Asked Questions

Below are answers to some common questions regarding the cost of countertops, as well as the overall quality of various materials.

What Makes a Countertop ‘High-End’?

As you may have noticed in the average pricing table above, there is significant variance in cost with many of the countertop options. High-end countertop options are typically types of the material that are rare colors or have more detail, like stone with more veining.

What is the Best Choice for Countertops?

While it has been mentioned that stone countertops are the better option, by evaluating what is important to you, you can further narrow down your search. For example, some homeowners may have their heart set on marble countertops, while others may just know they want stone. For a popular choice that is low maintenance, comes in a variety of colors and styles, is stain resistant, heat resistant and scratch resistant, and only typically requires a new coat of sealant once per year, granite countertops are one of the best versatile choices.

While new countertops are a major expense for your home, not all hope is lost if you are on a tight budget. Completing your remodel by installing your new countertop will surely leave you satisfied. By following the advice in this guide, you can do so without having to break the bank.