

Buying Guide: Granite vs Concrete

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When shopping for a new countertop, you will find there are many different material options available for purchase. From luxurious marble to basic laminate, there is a material for every home decor style and budget.

In this article, we compare two of the most popular materials: granite and concrete.

Granite is a naturally occurring stone material, the result of lava cooling over millions of years. This is a common stone, found in a variety of locations around the world, including Brazil, India and Italy. Each area has their own unique aesthetic characteristics. Granite is a combination of quartz and feldspar, with sparse combinations of other minerals. To create a slab of granite, the rock is mined and then cut and polished into slabs that you find at your local showrooms.

Concrete is a mix of different materials. Concrete is often used interchangeably with cement, however, the two are actually different. Cement is an ingredient of concrete. Different kinds of concrete have different kinds of material combination. Typically, it is made by mixing cement and water into a paste, and then adding an aggregate such as sand or gravel.

Cost

For many homeowners, it's all about the price tag.

Granite typically goes for \$35 to \$100, depending on the stone's finish and color. For example, rarer colors that are mined from farther locations will cost more due to shipping cost and scarcity.

Concrete typically goes for \$65 to \$135, depending on the amount of customization. One of the top advantages of using concrete is the ability to customize its appearance. This customization can quickly add to the cost.

Generally, granite stone countertops are actually cheaper than concrete countertops in terms of material cost, however, there are other costs associated with installation that may change the cost drastically. More advanced customization in terms of shape may require more advanced professionals installing it, which may raise the price even further. Although there are instructions online on installing your own concrete countertop, we recommend hiring a professional.

Appearance

Although granite is a naturally sourced material, there are still many different granite colors available for purchase. At Marble.com, there are over 600 colors available for purchase, in just about every color of the rainbow. Every slab will be completely unique, which is great for homeowners looking for individuality, but could be an inconvenience for a homeowner working on a large project that would require multiple slabs. Multiple slabs may require a seam in between, which, depending on the granite's veining, may be an eyesore. Granite also comes in multiple finishes: polished, a glossy finish, honed, a matte finish, and

leathered, a slightly textured finish.

Concrete countertops are also available in just about any color. As concrete is a manmade mixture, it can be dyed to be any shade. Different materials can also be added to the mixture, for example, some beach-loving homeowners have added small pieces of shell to their concrete. Things like stencils or textures in specific spots can also be added to concrete. In installation, it will be poured into a mold allowing it to fit every shape. It is important to note, however, that while a homeowner can get extremely creative with their concrete installation, the more unique a design is the more costly it will be as well. As a custom made product, it will also take longer, with design and advanced installation being part of the timeline. They may also develop a patina, or a slight staining from chemical reactions. Many homeowners enjoy the patina appearance and say it adds a more natural quality to their countertops, however, it is definitely something to be aware of.

Durability

Granite is one of the most durable materials available for countertops. It is stain, scratch and heat resistant, making it perfect for an active kitchen. It has a typical Mohs hardness rating of 6 or 7, making it one of the harder materials used in countertop construction. In terms of care, it requires a daily cleaning with soapy water, as well as periodic resealing. The sealant is important as it makes the stone resistant to staining. Resealing is an easy process that can be completed by the homeowner rather than a professional.

Concrete is extremely durable as well, however, it does have its issues. While it is scratch resistant with a similar Mohs hardness rating, it does have some issues with staining if not taken care of properly. Naturally, it is highly porous, so it will require a wax and a sealant to prevent detrimental staining. This wax should be reapplied very often, with some requiring a monthly reapplication session. Even when properly waxed and sealed, it can still develop a patina over time. In terms of heat resistance, the exact mixture used will change its resistance abilities.

Conclusion

There are advantages and disadvantages to both countertop materials.

In terms of cost, granite is generally less expensive than concrete. Although many may think of concrete as a lesser material since it is used so often in public infrastructure, it is actually considered a luxurious material. As such, it is more expensive than granite, especially when you take into account that small items can be added to the concrete mixture.

Both granite and concrete can look a wide variety of ways. Granite has many, many different colors available for purchase with over 600 at marble.com. Concrete can be completely customized to look exactly as you wish, however, this typically comes at a cost.

In terms of durability, both are considered quite durable materials. With proper care, both materials will last a lifetime. Concrete requires more attention than granite as it is naturally a highly porous material. Staining is the most common complaint from homeowners with concrete countertops.

If you have a strong vision for what exactly you want your countertops to look like, try concrete. Concrete can achieve many things due to its unique physical properties. If you find your ideal countertop can be achieved with one of the many granite colors available, we recommend sticking with granite as it is more durable and more easy to care for, on top of being less expensive.

Our top picks for granite countertops are the Sea Pearl, a gorgeous white stone with grey and blue veining; Snow White, a pristine white granite; and Everest, a beige stone with splashes of dark brown and tan.

