

## Typical Features of A Tile Countertop

Ceramic, porcelain and stone tile are a fairly popular choice in countertops. They offer a wide variety in color and style as well as being very affordable and durable. This is balanced by the fact that tile countertops probably require more maintenance and care than most of the countertop surfacing choices.

Design and price are larger factors in choosing tile for a countertop. There are hundreds of choices in tile color and patterns that can make the countertop the focal point of the overall kitchen design and style. If a suitable pattern or color is not found, ceramic and porcelain tile can even be custom ordered and manufactured without too long of a wait. Tile patterns or pictures are limited only by the artistic imagination of the designer.

Ceramic and stone tiles made for countertops can be heavy. Tiles usually come in 12 inch square sizes, or less for ceramics, with a thickness of either 5/16 inch or 1/4 inch.

Tiles can also be cut easily during installation to fit even the most complex countertop sizes or obstacles, such as external piping. The downside to installation is that it is not the cleanest process and generally cannot be completed in a single day. After setting the tile, 24 hours is needed before the installation can be completed with grout and sealant, which is required on unglazed ceramic and natural stone.

Ceramic and porcelain tiles can be formed to create corner edging, radius caps and cove or radius trim. It also accommodates wooden edging and backsplashes as high as desired. Sinks can typically be installed with a tile-in option, which sits below the tile surface, or with a self-rimming sink on top.

Tile countertops do require maintenance, and cleaning is recommended even when the countertops are not in use. The grout between the tiles can be troublesome if allowed to harbor bacteria and mildew, which is not only unsanitary but can cause unsightly stains and discoloration. While tiles are quite durable, they are not impervious to damage. Tiles of all sorts can be cracked from force or improper installation. The tile itself is heat resistant and can take the heat from pots and pans, but the grout between them is less so. Grout joints are softer and prone to cracking and discoloration from heat exposure. Ceramic and porcelain tile are relatively scratch-resistant but deliberate cuts will scratch the surface of tile and it is even easier to damage the grout.

The second biggest reason in choosing tile is cost-effectiveness. Ceramic and porcelain tile is very inexpensive. Tile can be purchased and installed, all inclusive, for about half the price of granite, quartz surfacing or solid surface countertops. Intricate cutting and custom designs will cost more. Tile is also in many cases, all-natural products, containing little if any man-made materials.

However, as stated previously, sealant is necessary. Typically this earth-friendly material can be recycled and purchased recycled and has few issues with safe disposal.



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