

FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions About Granite Countertops

What is Granite?

Granite is a natural stone composed of several large mineral grains tightly packed together. The main components include Feldspar and Quartz with a mix of other minerals including Biotite and Muscovite.

The minerals Feldspar and Quartz, which are the major components of granite, are harder than steel, this is why throughout human civilization, granite has been used as a building material

The mica mineral called Biotite and Muscovite are more minor components of granite and give it a glittery appearance

Why is granite so popular?

Granite has emerged as the most popular kitchen countertop material because of its natural beauty and durability.

- * The elegance of granite countertops add value to homes
- * Heat, scratch and stain resistant
- * Granite outlasts even the life of the home
- * Very little maintenance is required
- * It is more affordable than many people think because of the abundant supply

Where does granite originate?

Granite is naturally formed in most parts of the world, but it is quarried in significant quantities in Brazil, India, Italy, Africa, Norway, Finland and China. A majority of the desirable granite used for kitchen countertops in the USA are from Brazil, India and Italy

What should I consider when purchasing Granite or marble?

Granite and marble are creations of nature that have a unique natural beauty that has been used in architecture throughout the ages. Since granite and marble are made by nature, each piece is unique and matchless. Customers who may not be familiar with these materials may expect the granite they order to be identical to pictures of samples they have seen. Although sample stones are intended to be representative of the material, the granite or marble quarried at one time may differ in color and veining from the sample. A single granite or marble slab will possess a certain amount of color

variation from one end to the other.

Should I use granite or marble for my kitchen countertops?

Marble is typically used for bathroom vanity tops and fireplaces. It is not usually recommended for kitchen countertops due to the fact that it is easy to scratch and acidic substances such as vinegars, ketchups, citrus beverages, etc. can affect it.

Granite, however, is considered the second hardest stone. Most granite is not subject to etching by household acids or scratching by knives and pots or pans under normal use. Granite is a great choice for your kitchen countertops.

How do I clean and seal granite?

There are many granite cleaners on the market and those are the most popular. However, plain soap and water works just as well.

Down East sells granite sealer and it is very simple to use. Clean the granite with soap and water and make sure it is dry. Use painters tape to tape the bottom of the faucet and around the sink. Saturate the top with the sealer (it comes in a spray bottle) and let it set for about 20 minutes, saturate a second time and let it set another 20/30 minutes. Wipe off any sealer that doesn't soak in. Sealer does not change the finish of your granite or fill in any pits that may be in the granite. It sinks into the granite and does not "coat" the granite. Remember, your granite is sealed at installation and doesn't need to be sealed for 1 year.

Will my granite countertops have pits on the surface?

Granite which is crystalline in structure sometimes has tiny pits (spaces between the various mineral crystals). You do not see them on a larger piece because the overall appearance is polished. Granite sometimes has natural fissures as well, which may look like cracks, but are not structural defects and are a naturally occurring result of the immense heat and pressure that formed the granite ages ago. These characteristics are part of the natural beauty of the stone and will not impair the function or durability of the granite.

Are seams necessary on granite countertops?

Because granite is a natural material and is mined from the quarry in blocks usually not more than 10 feet long, you may have a seam. The visibility of seams depends on the granularity, color and pattern of the granite. A small uniform grain will not be as apparent as a larger varied grain. A seam in a dark color will be less apparent than a seam in a light color. A dramatic pattern with swaths of color will show more seams than a uniform pattern. The seams are joined with an epoxy that is mixed with the

color that matches the stone as close as possible. The joined area is smoothed, leaving only a thin line visible.

What surface finishes does granite come?

- * Polished: Shiny surface and is the most popular
- * Honed: A matte finish
- * Brushed/Leather: Texture you can feel and see

How much does Granite weigh?

Granite weighs about 16 to 17 pounds per square foot.

How thick is granite?

Down East uses 3cm granite which is approximately 1 1/4 thick.

Can Down East help me in granite color selection?

Yes, when you come visit us you will have help in making these decisions from our in-house color specialists at no additional cost. Having installed thousands of kitchen countertops, we can share our experience to enhance your project with countertop color as well as tile selection, paint colors etc.