



The Language of Natural Stone

Frequently-Asked-Questions

Getting Started with Natural Stone

Q. What is Natural Stone?

A. Natural Stone is stone which is sourced from the Natural Resources of the earth, and is not fabricated or engineered artificially. Types of Natural Stone include Granite, Marble, Travertine, Onyx, Limestone, Sandstone, Slate, Quartz, amongst others.

Q. Where can I use Natural Stone?

A. You can use natural stone in Flooring, Wall-Cladding, Kitchen Counter-tops, Bathroom Counters and Vanity Tops, Patios, Walkways, Fireplaces, etc. It depends upon your choice and needs.

Q. Can you explain the different finishes for stone?

A. There are many finishes and options available. The more widely used finishes are:

Polished – A high gloss surface

Honed – Smooth with squared edges and without a polished surface (matte)

Brushed – Acid washed and wire brushed for a smooth textured surface

Flamed – Blow torched for a rough textured finish

Antique tumbled – Medium tumble (edges and surface to achieve a slight rustic look.);

Cobbled or Distressed - Heavily tumbled edges and surface to achieve an aged or ancient look.

Q. What do I need to consider when buying marble or granite?

A. Because it is a natural stone, marble and granite have a remarkable natural beauty that has captivated humans throughout the ages. Inherent in such natural products is a certain lack of predictability that sophisticated architects and designers celebrate. Consumers who are less acquainted with the material expect the marble ordered to be identical to the picture or sample they were shown. Although sample stones are intended to be representative of the quarry's product, the material quarried at one time may differ slightly in colour and veining from the sample. Moreover, even a single marble or granite slab will possess a certain amount of colour variation from one end to the other. Interior designers and architects have come to view this tendency of natural stone as an advantage. Slight irregularities can be pleasing, introducing an element of the natural into human-designed spaces, whether residential or commercial.

Q. What's the difference between marble and granite?

A. Although both are natural stones and both are quarried from the earth, granite and marble (and marble's relatives - limestone, onyx and travertine) are very different from each other. Granite is formed deep in the earth's mantle at extremely high temperatures, and is a very hard, resistant stone made of crystallized minerals. The marble family - limestone, travertine, marble, onyx - starts out as sediment - animal skeletons and shells, plant matter, silt - at the bottom of bodies of water and seabeds. After millions of years this solidifies (lithifies) into stone. Because its main component is calcium, it can be affected by acids such as vinegar and citrus beverages.

Although both Granite & Marble solidify into stone after millions of years but the mineral composition of the two stones makes them react differently to various chemicals and household cleaners.

Q. What do I need to consider when buying a granite countertop?

A. Granite is a natural stone. It is very hard and durable, heat and scratch resistant, as well as easy to maintain; in all sense it's the material of the future. Aside from the practical aspect, granite is very versatile in the design field. It comes in various colours and structural compositions, our range includes more than 150 colours to choose from. All stones are not exactly identical, each lot will have unique characteristics attributed to the specific granite.

Q. Should I use marble or granite for my kitchen countertops?

A. Although typical application of marble is for the bathroom vanity tops, Jacuzzi tops and fireplaces, it is possible to use it in the kitchen. However, due to the fact that it is easy to scratch and is affected by acidic substances, such as vinegars, ketchups etc., we don't usually recommend it. Moreover the high-gloss of the marble countertop can be partially lost as many chemicals etch its surface. Granite in turn is considered the second hardest stone, its polish is not subject to etching by household acids, or scratching by knives and pots and pans under normal use. It is also not affected by typical kitchen heat such as hot pans.

Q. Is it necessary to seal stone?

A. Since mineral surfaces are quite porous they absorb liquids, which may result in discolouring and staining. Although there are many commercial grade products available on the market which may bring the stone to its original lustre, taking simple precautions and regular maintenance can save a lot of trouble and cost. All marble and granite tops are sealed immediately after they are installed. The impregnating substance penetrates the stone clogging most of its pores making it quite impervious to alcohol, juices, soft drinks, cosmetics, cleaners, coffee, food and even oil. With course of time, depending on how heavily the tops are used, the sealer gets washed out. The clear indication of this happening would be the fact that the liquids are easily absorbed into the stone leaving temporary (if promptly wiped off) stains. You should seal your marble every six months and your granite every year, at least.

Q. What is the best way to clean marble and other stones?

A. The old rule of thumb is never to use anything you wouldn't use on your hands. Never use powdered cleansers or abrasive pads to clean your stone. Even "soft scrub" type cleaners contain pumice, which is powdered volcanic stone, and might damage your stone countertops or floors. Never use any product which is acidic; this includes substances like ammonia or many common liquid cleaners. You should always use sealers and cleaning products designed specifically for natural stone.

Q. Can I use Marble for my kitchen countertop?

A. Yes, marble that has a honed finish will not etch easily because its surface starts with a matte finish. Because marbles (and limestone & travertine) are calcium carbonate, the polished surface is more susceptible to household acids including vinegar, mustard oil and a host of food-related products. These acidic substances cause a chemical reaction which will remove the polish. Polished marble is frequently used in bathroom counter and vanity tops.

Q. Can I use limestone for my kitchen countertops?

A. Like marble, polished limestone can get damaged from kitchen acids including citrus juices, vinegar, and so forth. Unsealed, limestone can be subject to stains. If the limestone is polished or semi-polished, you will see spots where the substance sat on the stone. On a honed surface, such etches will be less visible. You can use honed finish in kitchen countertops.

Q. What is travertine? Can I use it as a kitchen countertop?

A. Travertine is limestone, in a sense. It is formed by geysers. But it is porous. Filling up small holes and pits gives it a more finished look. Travertine gets etched with acids and leave marks and rings. Travertine is available in Slabs & Tiles. If used as a kitchen countertop, adequate maintenance and care should be taken about its cleaning.

Q. Is Slate a good choice for a kitchen countertop?

Slate does not absorb water easily. Therefore, it is a good choice for a kitchen countertop. It is durable, waterproof and has elegant colours. It requires regular sealing and extra maintenance if used for a kitchen countertop.

FAQ - Granite Questions:

Q. Can I cut on my Granite countertop?

A. Granite is the hardest material amongst all. Granite is harder than your knife blades and will dull them very quickly, if you use the countertop as a cutting surface. Always cut and chop on a wooden or plastic cutting board.

Q. Can my granite top be damaged?

A. Like any solid surface, high impact blows can harm granite. Because of its crystalline structure, it can chip if subjected to sharp hard objects. Unsealed, granite can absorb stains such as oil, which can ultimately cause dark spots or discoloration. Heat from pots and pans or burning liquids will not affect granite under normal circumstances.

Q. My sample of granite has pits on the surface – will I have these on my kitchen counters?

A. Granite, which is crystalline in its structure, always has tiny pits - spaces between the various mineral crystals. You don't see them on a larger piece because the overall appearance is polished and mirror-like. 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 which formed the granite eons ago. These characteristics are part of the natural beauty of stone and will not impair the function or durability of the material. A product of nature cannot be expected to look manmade.

Q. Will my granite look like the online sample?

A. The samples you see on the computer have been scanned and saved as digital images. The colour tones may not be absolutely correct due to variations in computer systems, monitors and compression algorithms. Also, granite is a natural material with naturally occurring variations in colour, tone, granularity, pattern, etc. These variations are expected and are the source of its natural beauty.

Q. Can I set a hot pot or pan on my granite countertop?

A. Granite is formed by extreme heat and pressure combined beneath the earth's crust. It cannot be affected by heat from a cook top or frying pan. A lit flame placed under the granite will have no melting effect and will not leave any burned or scarred marks.

Q. Can granite chip?

A. Yes, but only in cases of severe abuse with a hammer or impact tool. A chip can be filled with a granite dust and epoxy mixture. If a chip occurs on your countertop, do not throw out the chipped pieces. We can use them to fix the countertop, so that no one will be able to tell it was ever chipped.

Q. How are seams made?

A. Seams are done where the two pieces of stone are put together. The seams are joined with epoxy that is mixed with the colour that matches the stone. Then the joined area is smoothed, leaving only a very thin line visible.

Q. Do granite seams show?

A. Because granite is a natural material and is mined from the quarry in blocks usually no more than 10' long, you will most likely end up with seams. Also, because granite is sold in rectangular pieces, you may want to use seams to reduce your costs, such as in an "L" shaped corner. The visibility of seams will depend on the granularity, colour and pattern. A small, uniform grain (such as Violetta, Tropical Brown) will not be as apparent as a larger varied grain (such as Peacock Green). A dark colour (Black Galaxy) will be less apparent than a light colour (Imperial White). A dramatic pattern with swaths of colour (Paradiso) will show more seams than a uniform pattern (Dakota Mahogany). Most customers have found that the beauty of natural granite outweighs the concern of seams.

Q. Can granite crack?

A. No, not with regular use. Granite is most susceptible to cracks during shipping and installation. Normal use will not overstress this durable material

Q. Can granite cantilever?

A. You can cantilever granite up to 14" with sufficient support on the fixed end and with a large enough piece. Never cantilever unsupported granite where it might receive excessive stress like someone sitting on a counter or stepping on a counter to change a light bulb. You must have support underneath for these situations.

Q. What is the appropriate thickness for a granite countertop?

A. A kitchen countertop should ideally be 30mm thick for structural reasons. However 20mm countertops are also widely used provided sufficient support is given. Bathroom vanity tops can be thinner.

Q. Does granite have any pits or fissures?

A. Yes granite has natural pits and fissures that are part of the stones natural structure. Some types of granite have more of such characteristics than other types, and pits can be minimized by applying sealer to the surface of the counter.

Q. Can granite be repaired?

A. It is very hard to damage granite. If any damage occurs it can be sealed with a mixture of epoxy and ground up chips of granite.

Q. How is Granite formed?

A. Granite is an igneous rock of visible crystalline formation and texture. It is composed primarily of feldspar, quartz, and mica. It starts off as liquid magma deep within the earth's core where it is cooled and compressed over millions of years under tons of pressure. It is then quarried, cut and polished. After that process it can be applied in various ways like kitchen countertops, vanity tops, fireplace surrounds as well as Jacuzzi surrounds and other custom designs.

Q. What are the different applications of granite?

A. Granite is a very durable stone. It is also much harder than marble. Granite has been used in the past in the commercial industry. Some of the obvious applications have been panels on the outside of buildings, walls, and floors of "high-traffic" areas.

Q. Can I get granite in a honed and polished finish?

A. Granite is called honed before the polishing process. This gives a softer, matte appearance to stone. We offer Granite in a variety of finishes, namely, Polished, Honed, Leather, Flamed, Sand-blasted etc. amongst others.

Q. How do I clean my granite countertop?

A. Granite will withstand almost any element it comes up against including heat and cold. Granite itself is approximately 95-98% stain resistant but, we use a special impregnator on all of our natural stone products. This will insure lasting life and beauty. Polished granite should receive the same cleaning care as polished marble, preferably using specially formulated daily granite cleaner or using a mild phosphate-free, biodegradable liquid dish-soap, soap flakes or powder which contains no aromatics. This should be followed by a thorough rinsing and drying with cotton-flannel or chamois.

If you are going to go with just plain soap and water, keep in mind that this can lead to soap build up. This, in turn, will dull your countertop's finish significantly and you don't want that. Also, plain soap and water will not bring your countertop to a beautiful shine like our daily granite cleaner will. When using a granite cleaner, let it sit for about 30 seconds and then wipe it off well using a soft cloth. This will work best.

Q. Does granite stain?

A. In general, No. All stone, however, is porous to some extent, but Granite has very little porosity. Most colours will never show any moisture. A few colours may show some moisture if exposed for a period of time. For example, a puddle of water left on the counter for 30 minutes for some colours, may show a dark spot when the water is wiped away. This spot will then dry up and no evidence will show. Only a few colours demonstrate this trait. Our installers will seal the countertops after they are installed. Also if daily granite cleaner is used there will be no need to reseal the countertops because cleaner contains some sealer and every time the countertops are cleaned they are also being sealed at the same time

Q. Does granite stain or burn?

A. No. You can't burn it with ordinary use. Granite does not stain. The only caveat is that a few colours may absorb some moisture with prolonged contact. Usually, no evidence remains when the liquid is removed and the granite dries, but could be a problem with dark pigmented liquids. Our installers seal your countertops with a specially formulated stone sealer that is recommended for all granite after installation. Also regular maintenance of the countertops with use of daily granite cleaner will give great results because cleaner contains sealer which means that every time the countertop is being cleaned it will be sealed as well.

Q. I am considering purchasing a granite countertop for my kitchen. Is it expensive?

A. Excellent choice! The cost of granite counters is comparable to and sometimes lower than Artificial / Agglomerated Marble surfaces, while offering more benefits.

FAQ - Marble Questions:

Q. Where can I use marble?

A. Besides wide application in flooring and medallions, Marble can be used for a number of other applications like fireplace surrounds, tabletops and shelves. Ideally it can be applied to a number of projects in the bath area like Jacuzzi surrounds, vanities, floor, and shower panelling. Generally you can safely use marble in low traffic areas.

Q. Is marble suitable for a kitchen countertop?

A. No, marble is not a good choice for a kitchen countertop. Although it can be sealed, it is not as dense as granite and therefore it is more porous and susceptible to being stained in a highly used area like a kitchen. It is much softer and it will chip and crack under frequent use.

Q. What is the difference between granite and marble?

A. The main difference between granite and marble is that granite is a highly dense material composed deep inside the earth's core while marble is formed from sediments under the seabed. Both solidify into stone after millions of years but the mineral composition of the two stones makes marble and granite react different to various chemicals and household cleaners.

Q. Can I seal marble?

A. Just like granite, marble is sealed after the fabrication process; unfortunately due to its porous nature sealing marble is insufficient for everyday kitchen use.

Q. Is marble really appropriate to use in living areas?

A. Yes. Since ancient times, marble has been used in all areas of the Grecian home; from furnishings to floors. These Greek marbles have proven as durable as materials traditionally considered to be sturdier with the added benefit of creating a warm welcoming atmosphere.

Q. How do I deal with sink and stove cut-outs?

A. With water jet technology we have the ability to cut any sink or surface unit cut-out with computer aided design files. Under-mount sinks (sinks that are mounted under that countertop so as not to show any rim) are fully cut out, then the inside of the hole is polished. The countertop is then flipped over and fitted with special grommets for your plumber to fasten the sink. Self rimming cut-outs are cut 6" into each corner leaving some of the straight section to be cut in the field to facilitate safe shipping.

FAQ – Ordering Process

Q. Can you describe the process of ordering with your company?

A. The whole process is designed for quality, comfort and speed. Our showrooms are equipped to display the widest range of Natural Stones in various colours, finishes, thickness, edge profiles etc. to give the customer a sampling of the entire Natural Stone Collection 'under one roof'. Our trained Customer Service Associates and Design Consultants will be on hand to explain the nuances and features of each type of stone and colour, and to ascertain your true requirement. We will also recommend the best solution to meet your requirements. The customer will also have the choice of cutting-edge technology via touch-screen panels installed at the showrooms, through which the customer can access information about each and every slab in our inventory in addition to seeing high-resolution, true-to-life images of individual slabs. The customer would make the selection and complete

the invoicing process. GRAAVAA will deliver the selected material to the customer's site in a pre-defined time-frame (generally 48 hours for delivery within Delhi & NCR).

Q. Do I need an appointment to come down to your place?

A. No appointment is necessary; GRAAVAA is open 7 days a week from 10 am to 8 pm and our Customer Service Associates will be pleased to assist you in your selection process

Q. Where do you operate?

A. GRAAVAA at present operates from New Delhi and can supply within the National Capital Region including Gurgaon, Faridabad & Noida.

Q. How do I contact GRAAVAA?

A. We can be contacted via Telephone (011-43760000 & 011-43760001) during working hours, Fax (91-11-43760003) or email info@graavaa.com

You can also call our Customer Service Toll-Free Line No. 1-800-102 7675 (10 am to pm)

Q. Do I have to buy the whole slab?

A. Yes. However, our trained consultants will determine your exact requirement and will propose the exact number of slabs required, to minimise wastage on your account. We have in our inventory slabs of different sizes which will facilitate an optimised selection.

Q. What is your payment policy?

A. GRAAVAA accepts cash, cheques and all major credit cards. If payment is done by a cheque, delivery and shipping will be done after clearance of the cheque with our bankers.

Q. Do you accept credit cards?

A. Yes, GRAAVAA accepts all major cards including Visa, MasterCard & American Express.