



350 Manor Court
Bolingbrook IL 60440-3401

Phone 630.783.1990
Fax 630.783.1992
www.cabinets4Uonline.com

How Countertop Choices Compare

The right countertop for your cabinetry depends on your needs, tastes and budget. Consider your lifestyle, consider your sink, and consider the seams.

Here's a rundown of the leading types, based on Consumer Reports testing.

Engineered stone: These materials are made primarily of quartz combined with resins and pigments. Engineered stone can look much like granite, but has a more uniform appearance. It's resistant to stains, heat, and abrasion and never needs sealing.

Brand names include: Silestone, Hanstone, Zodiaq, Cambria

Real stone: When properly sealed, granite is the toughest and least porous choice. It should not stain or etch, if you mop up spills quickly. Marble is softer and more prone to staining and etching from acids in foods and cleaners. Limestone, slate, soapstone, and sandstone are softer still. New penetrating sealers have increased stain resistance. Semi-annual resealing is suggested for kitchen use. Beware of lesser quality stone sold at "too good to be true" pricing!

Solid surface: This material is made of resins and mineral filler and comes in dozens of colors and patterns that resemble marble or granite. Solid-surface material has virtually invisible seams and can have integral sinks and backsplashes. Small nicks can be sanded away. Brand names include: Corian, Alantra, Gibraltar, Meganite, Avonite

Laminate: It's inexpensive, easy to install, and available in hundreds of colors and patterns. The laminate consists of layers of paper and plastic fused under high heat and pressure, glued to plywood or particleboard. Laminate resists stains, heat and impact, but you cannot cut on it or use abrasive cleaners. The new High Def laminates have a heightened appearance of depth and texture, with natural stone looks, and are much more durable and scuff resistant than standard choices.

Other options: Butcher block is vulnerable to water, cuts, burns and scratches. It requires thorough disinfecting when exposed to raw meat or fish. It needs regular treatment with mineral oil, or sealing with a coating safe for food preparations. Cast concrete, stainless steel and sheets of zinc each have a following too.