



## The STONE Cold Facts

### **Granite: Beauty *and* Brawn**

Granite. Everyone wants it; we marvel at its natural beauty. But what exactly *is* granite?

In a word, rock. It is igneous rock, that is, formed by magma or lava (molten rock) that has cooled and hardened. Granite has resided in the earth's continental crust throughout all geological periods. Composed of a range of minerals including quartz, feldspar, and mica, you may notice what appear to be cracks and pits in some stones. These are merely natural fissures that formed in the granite over the millennia.

Each stone is a unique one, even if it is the same granite by name. One should never rely on a sample or picture for the final appearance of the stone. Each stone belongs to a "lot," and you can think of granite as a loaf of bread being sliced. These slices form the stone's lot. Using slabs from the same lot is the only way to ensure that your slabs will match. Not only is this important for blending the seams, but also for the overall look and flow of the stone's direction.

The primary reason for granite's meteoric rise in popularity is credited to its endurance. Granite withstands the scalding heat of pots and pans; and cutting directly on your granite will do nothing more than damage your knives. Although Granite is the least porous of all stones, proper maintenance goes a long way to preserve its original luster, so we recommend regular sealing once a year.

### **More Options in Stone: Don't take these for Granite**

Aside from granite and marble, there are plenty of stone choices you may not have heard much about, including:

Engineered Stone: This composite, or merged material consists of milled quartz, resin, and dyes. Engineered stones can also contain recycled glass, concrete, paper and broken porcelain. Many go by popular brand names such as Silestone, Caesarstone, Zodiaq and Cambria. Engineered stones require no sealing.

Limestone, Marble, and Onyx: These sedimentary rocks formed from residues, are composed largely of the mineral calcite and can contain animal skeletons, shells, and plant matter. They can scratch and stain easily. Acids such as fruits and vinegar can also etch the stone's polish, but honing the marble can keep the appearance of scratching to a minimum. Like Granite, these stones will need to be sealed every year.

Slate: This sedimentary rock is composed of clay and volcanic ash. Fossils can be found in slate as well as microscopic remains of delicate organisms. Slate is usually dark and earth tone in color and is never polished. It can easily flake. It should also be treated with a silicone sealer.

Soapstone: One of the softest of stones, soapstone is composed of talc. For thousands of years soapstone has been used for woodstoves and sculptures. It has also been used to fashion smoking pipes, amulets, and molds for casting soft metals such as silver. Your soapstone countertops can be left bare, or, we recommend applying oil to its surface on a regular basis. It will darken over time naturally and should be sealed once a year just like granite.

Our professionals will be glad to answer all of your questions related to the varied options in stone. Please call or come by for a tour!

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