



The
Kitchen
Issue

SURFACES

Everything you need to know about countertops and tile.

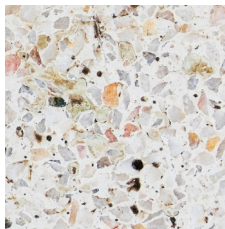
Let's Just Lay It All Out...

Kitchen counters, walls, and floors are both the backdrop *and* the main event: They take up a lot of visual real estate. The materials and options you choose, whether indestructible composite slabs or handmade tiles, are for utility as much as for style. Read on to see how to make the best decisions for your space and budget (and to get the scoop on these beauties laid before you).

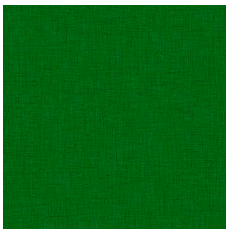
By Hadley Mendelsohn

Countertops

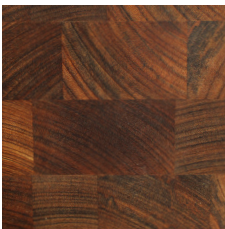
Choosing the material that suits your cooking style is the first step to a functional kitchen. This is, after all, where the magic happens.



QUARTZ
Best for the low-fuss cook, quartz requires no sealing or polishing and has double the impact resistance of natural stone, but it's still a bit sensitive to heat, so **hot cookware shouldn't be set directly on it.** It's a blend of natural stone and synthetic resins.
Where to buy it: Caesarstone, Cambria, Silestone.



LAMINATE
This nonporous acrylic comes in endless looks, so it's ideal for those who want to go wild with colors and patterns. **"It can shape itself into any design concept,"** says Gerri Chmiel of Formica. New technology has made it tougher, but laminate is still a budget option.
Where to buy it: Corian, Formica, Wilsonart.



BUTCHER BLOCK
Calling all minimalists: **Food can be prepped directly on the surface** of a butcher-block counter. An occasional oiling is worth it if you love the warm, rustic look. Use a special finish to make the surface more water- and heat-resistant.
Where to buy it: Boos & Co.

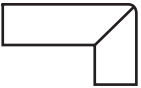


CONCRETE
For a distinctly industrial look, there's concrete, which can be poured to suit or purchased pre-cast. **While obviously durable, concrete stains easily** and is not for perfectionists (but a sealant will minimize this!). Cost-wise, it's cheaper than marble but pricier than laminate.
Where to buy it: Visit [concretenetwork.com](#) to find a supplier.

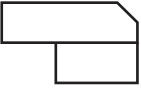


Your Edge Options

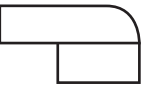
Our favorites are the least complicated.



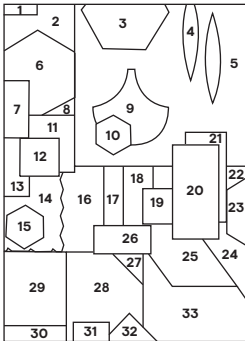
Miter
Two beveled slabs create an angular waterfall effect around the edge.



Bevel
A 45-degree slice makes for a nice middle ground between sharp and round.



Half-Bullnose
The smoothest transition (and yes, it's just a fancy way to say "rounded top").



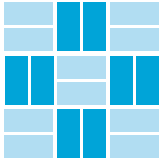
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Tile

There's a reason it's the most popular backsplash: Tile is tough and adds tons of texture and color.

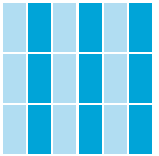
The Best Basic: Subway

Available for as little as \$1 per square foot, this classic option is still a huge favorite. And it's versatile: Just swap up the pattern.



Basket Weave
Stack two horizontal tiles next to two vertical tiles for a geometric twist.

Offset Diagonal
Classic but not boring, this tilted stack will give your kitchen a whole new angle.



Vertical Stack Bond
Surprisingly unexpected for being such a simple deviation from the horizontal norm.



For this Los Angeles kitchen, designer Jenn Feldman chose a tonal grout to blend in with the navy tile, which is set in a smart chevron pattern.

Get the Right Grout

White is the most obvious choice, but "there's an entire grout spectrum out there," says Jake Rodehuth-Harrison of ETC.etera. Take your pick.



White
The go-to grout color, bright white will stand out against everything but white tile.



Neutral
For grout that disappears, use a neutral that complements the tile pattern.



Dark
Inkier pigments can contrast or blend in—and are easier to keep clean than light ones.



Color
To embolden plain tile, pick a bold hue—green! rose!—for an unexpected twist.

Beyond the Backsplash

Three genius ways to get a little more tile into your kitchen.



COVER A COUNTER
Companies like DTile (which makes curved tiles for edges) are bringing this back. Upside: retro look! Downside: re-grouting.



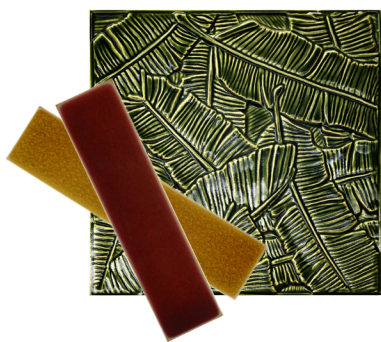
OVERHAUL A FLOOR
If you want to inject more color or pattern into your kitchen, skip hardwood, linoleum, or concrete and go with allover tile on the floor.



HIDE A HOOD
No bulky appliances here! With tiles stretching seamlessly from wall to wall, the hood blends right in for a clean aesthetic.

Take It to the Next Level

Why play it safe? There's no shortage of colorful, textural tile options out there.



Ann Sacks

Banana Leaf in Vert.
\$77/sq. ft. Crackle in Amber
and Mahogany. \$38/sq. ft.
annsacks.com.



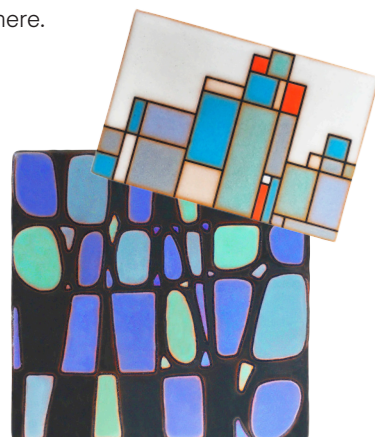
The Tile Shop

Decor Linked Porcelain.
\$8/sq. ft. tileshop.com.



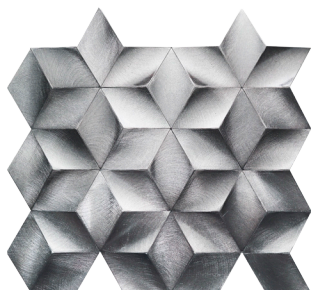
Nemo

Gouache. Price upon
request. nemotile.com.



Native Tile & Ceramics

Abstract and Case Study. By
Laura Gottwald. Prices upon
request. nativetile.com.



AKDO

Excalibur Joust in Shining.
\$62/sq. ft. akdo.com.



Villa Lagoon Tile

Amalena Meadow.
\$17/sq. ft. villalagoontile.com.



Clé

Much Love Me Delft
in Triangle Texture. By Ruan
Hoffmann. \$64/sq. ft. Indian
Saffron Zellge. \$20/sq. ft.
cletile.com.



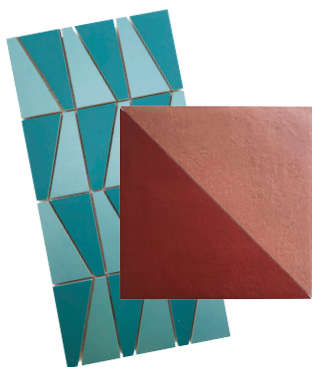
TileBar

Nabi Harlequin in
Deep Emerald. \$20/sq. ft.
tilebar.com.



Lunada Bay Tile

Contourz Fanfare Hex in
Sea Salt. Price upon request.
lunadabaytile.com.



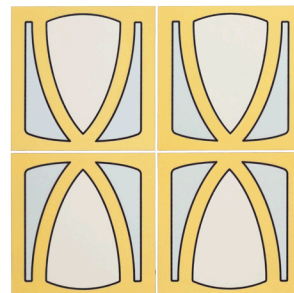
Atlas Concorde & Ceramica Bardelli

Arkshade Gemstone. By Atlas Con-
corde. atlasconcorde.com. Pittorica.
By Ceramica Bardelli. [ceramica
bardelli.com/en](http://ceramica
bardelli.com/en). Prices upon request.



Tabarka Studio

Petite Alliance 20.
\$298/sq. ft.
tabarkastudio.com.



Fireclay Tile

Metropolitan Los Angeles
in Yellow Motif. \$30/sq. ft.
fireclaytile.com.