

The  
Kitchen  
Issue

# SURFACES

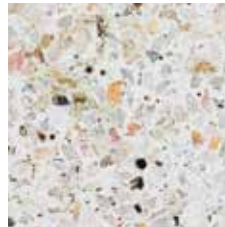
Everything you need to know about countertops and tile.

## Let's Just Lay It All Out...

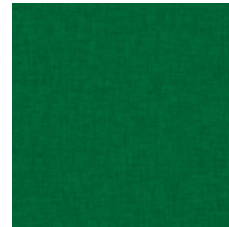
Kitchen counters, walls, and floors are both the backdrop *and* the main event: They take up a lot of visual real estate. The materials and options you choose, whether indestructible composite slabs or handmade tiles, are for utility as much as for style. Read on to see how to make the best decisions 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:** Grothouse, John Boos & Co.

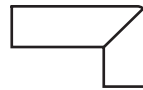


**CONCRETE**  
For a distinctly industrial look, there's concrete, which can be poured to suit or purchased pre-cast. **While obviously durable, concrete stains easily** and is not for perfectionists (but a sealant will minimize this!). Cost-wise, it's cheaper than marble but pricier than laminate. 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

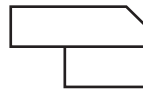


## Your Edge Options

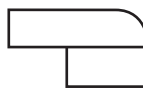
Our favorites are the least complicated.



**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").



1. Forage Terrazzo. [cletile.com](http://cletile.com). 2. Salvia. [ziatile.com](http://ziatile.com). 3. Free Hex. [granadatile.com](http://granadatile.com). 4. Ka-nu. [lunadabaytile.com](http://lunadabaytile.com). 5. Vitruvius. [artistictile.com](http://artistictile.com). 6. Luminous Shine. [akdo.com](http://akdo.com). 7 & 26. Bamako Gradation and Moderne Vertical Stripe. By Laura Gottwald. [nativevile.com](http://nativevile.com). 8. Stonika in Korso. [dekton.cosentino.com](http://dekton.cosentino.com). 9. South Beach. [villalagoontile.com](http://villalagoontile.com). 10. Hex Zellige. [ziatile.com](http://ziatile.com). 11. Stonika in Bergen. [dekton.cosentino.com](http://dekton.cosentino.com). 12. Terrazzo Renata in Aubergine. [annsacks.com](http://annsacks.com). 13. Maison. [nemotile.com](http://nemotile.com). 14. Ivy Ombra. [akdo.com](http://akdo.com). 15. Contourz Fanfare Hex. [lunadabaytile.com](http://lunadabaytile.com). 16. Marble Laurent. [florim.com](http://florim.com). 17. Delta Moon. [ziatile.com](http://ziatile.com). 18. Zaha 16. [tabarka.com](http://tabarka.com). 19. Crackle. [annsacks.com](http://annsacks.com). 20 & 22. Intense White and Airy Concrete. [caesarstoneus.com](http://caesarstoneus.com). 21. Enchanted Rock. [wilsonart.com](http://wilsonart.com). 23. SoftHex. [granadatile.com](http://granadatile.com). 24. Contourz Trifecta. [lunadabaytile.com](http://lunadabaytile.com). 25. Neenish. [walkerzanger.com](http://walkerzanger.com). 27. Next Diagonal Ombra. [akdo.com](http://akdo.com). 28. Pittorica. [ceramicabardelli.com](http://ceramicabardelli.com). 29. Tangier. [ziatile.com](http://ziatile.com). 30. Metropolitan Charleston. [fireclaytile.com](http://fireclaytile.com). 31. Terrazzo Renata in White. [annsacks.com](http://annsacks.com). 32. Confetti Roma. [ceramica.vogue.com](http://ceramica.vogue.com). 33. Laura Ashley Wicker. [tileshop.com](http://tileshop.com).

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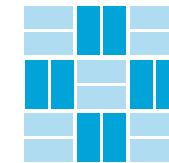
For this Los Angeles kitchen, designer Jenn Feldman chose a tonal grout to blend in with the navy tile, which is set in a smart chevron pattern.

# Tile

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

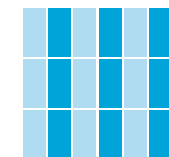
## The Best Basic: Subway

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.

## 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.



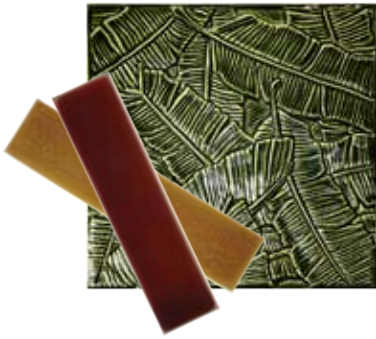
**OVERHAUL A FLOOR**  
If you want to inject more color or pattern into your kitchen, skip hardwood, linoleum, or concrete and go with allover tile on the floor.



**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](http://annsacks.com).



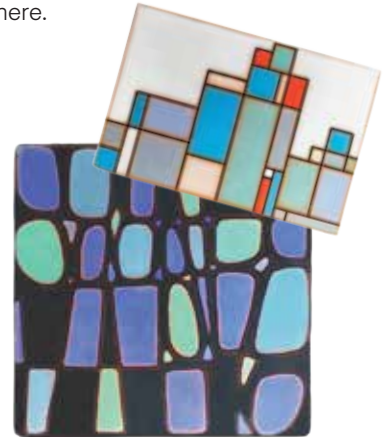
## The Tile Shop

Decor Linked Porcelain.  
\$8/sq. ft. [tileshop.com](http://tileshop.com).



## Nemo

Gouache. Price upon  
request. [nemotile.com](http://nemotile.com).



## Native Tile & Ceramics

Abstract and Case Study. By  
Laura Gottwald. Prices upon  
request. [nativetile.com](http://nativetile.com).



## AKDO

Excalibur Joust in Shining.  
\$62/sq. ft. [akdo.com](http://akdo.com).



## Villa Lagoon Tile

Amalena Meadow.  
\$17/sq. ft. [villalagoontile.com](http://villalagoontile.com).



## Clé

Much Love Me Delft  
in Triangle Texture. By Ruan  
Hoffmann. \$64/sq. ft. Indian  
Saffron Zellge. \$20/sq. ft.  
[cletile.com](http://cletile.com).



## TileBar

Nabi Harlequin in  
Deep Emerald. \$20/sq. ft.  
[tilebar.com](http://tilebar.com).



## Lunada Bay Tile

Contourz Fanfare Hex in  
Sea Salt. Price upon request.  
[lunadabaytile.com](http://lunadabaytile.com).



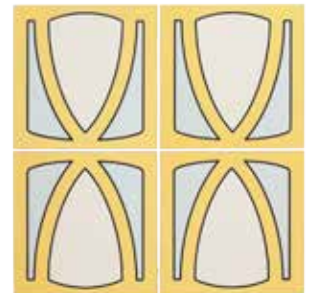
## Atlas Concorde & Ceramica Bardelli

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



## Tabarka Studio

Petite Alliance 20.  
\$298/sq. ft.  
[tabarkastudio.com](http://tabarkastudio.com).



## Fireclay Tile

Metropolitan Los Angeles  
in Yellow Motif. \$30/sq. ft.  
[fireclaytile.com](http://fireclaytile.com).