

YOUR GUIDE TO BENCHTOP MATERIALS

With the number of choices available today, looking for a new benchtop can seem overwhelming. But this variety is actually a good thing, and finding the right material for your kitchen isn't altogether difficult once you understand the pros and cons of the various options available. Below are some popular materials currently used.

STONE

Natural stone is a durable and stand-out kitchen material – and for good reason. Granite, slate and others come in a range of colours, and the slabs come in sizes that mean they can be installed without seams. It's definitely a high-end look. Stone is usually treated with a sealer to make it stain resistant, meaning it lasts for upwards of 10 years before requiring resealing. However, it can be quite expensive, meaning it's not a good choice if you're trying to manage a tight budget.



ENGINEERED STONE

Engineered stone is a composite material made of crushed stone bound together by an adhesive, with the two most common stones used being marble and quartz. The most common use for engineered marbles is for indoor flooring and walls, while the quartz based product is used primarily for kitchen countertops. There is a wide range of colours and styles available, and you'll have all the aesthetic and functional advantages of stone itself. Like stone, this is quite a heavy material, so cabinetry needs to be designed to support it – depending on the thickness.

LAMINATE

Laminate tops have been around for some time – think 1960s diner style. This material is made up of kraft paper injected with resins, resulting in a durable surface. You'll see laminate tops in many high-end kitchens thanks to its classy look and durability. Laminate is available in a wide range of colours and patterns and also affordable compared to some of the other options. Laminate makes a great option for benchtops for an array of joinery.



MARBLE

It doesn't get much better than marble if you want something that's timeless and exudes elegance. Marble is perfectly suited to hide light stains. It's also seamless. However, it needs regular sealing to keep it stain resistant.

CONCRETE

A recent design trend, concrete benchtops particularly suit industrial style kitchens. It's expensive, but you can cast concrete into nearly any shape you require. Resistant to damage and heat, concrete also looks interesting. But it can be expensive given the custom nature of the installation process.



TIMBER

Wood is a warm, traditional material. Wood benchtops are commonly made of dense hardwoods. Timber tops are easy to clean, offer a warm finish and can be fixed easily in the future by re-sanding and resealing. While susceptible to water damage over time, it can be protected by occasional resealing. Another alternative to timber is a bamboo benchtop. Bamboo is a fast growing grass and has very tough fibres. New technologies bind the fibres together and use stains to create benchtops that look like timber, but can be tougher and longer lasting than most timbers.



QUARTZ

If you're looking for durability and elegance, quartz is an excellent option. These benchtops are manufactured from natural quartz, which is one of the hardest minerals available. They're also non-porous, meaning wine spills won't be a problem. Cosentino offer a quartz surface called Dekton™. This is what's known as an 'ultracompact surface', and is made up of quartz, glass and porcelain. Dekton has potential for installation in one piece with no cuts and no joints.

