



10 questions to ask **before** you buy countertops.

Stone countertops are a once-every-few-decades purchase, and most of the things that go wrong are decided before anything is cut. Ask any fabricator these ten questions and you'll hear, very quickly, whether your kitchen is in good hands.

01 Natural stone or engineered quartz — and why?

Granite shrugs off hot pans but wants a yearly re-seal. Quartz never needs sealing and resists stains, but wants a trivet under hot cookware. Marble is beautiful and will patina in a kitchen no matter what anyone promises. A good fabricator asks how you actually cook before recommending anything.

Good answer: a question back about how you live, not a pitch for whatever is in stock.

02 Can I see and approve the actual slab, not a sample?

A 3-inch sample can't show you the movement, veining and color shifts in a full slab. Stone is natural; two slabs of the same name can look like different products.

Good answer: "Come to the yard and tag your slabs before we cut."

03 Who actually fabricates the stone — you, or a subcontractor?

Many countertop sellers broker the work out. That means nobody you've met owns the schedule, the quality, or the mistakes. When the showroom, shop and installers are one company, there's one accountable name on the whole job.

Good answer: "Our own shop, our own crews." Bonus points if you can visit the shop.

04 How and when do you template?

A precise digital template after your base cabinets are set is what makes counters fit tight to walls that are never quite straight. The sink, faucet and stove should be on site at template time, and templating 1-2 weeks before install keeps your project moving.

Good answer: digital templating, with a checklist of what must be on site that day.

05 Will I approve the layout before you cut?

For stone with movement, where each cut lands on the slab decides how the finished kitchen looks. A layout session, where you see your countertop pieces mapped on your actual slab, is the difference between veining that flows and veining that collides at a seam.

Good answer: "Yes, you'll approve the layout in our shop before anything is cut."

06 Where will the seams be?

Every kitchen over a certain size has seams. What matters is whether they're planned: away from sink cutouts and high-stress spots, positioned where the eye doesn't land, and tight enough that you have to hunt for them.

Good answer: a drawing showing seam placement before you sign, not a surprise on install day.

07 What's included in the quote, and what costs extra?

Edge profiles, sink cutouts, faucet holes, backsplash, sealing, old countertop removal, disposal. A real quote spells out every line so the number you sign is the number you pay.

Good answer: a written quote with every option itemized, before any deposit.

08 What's the honest timeline from template to install?

Ask for the whole chain: template, layout, fabrication, install, and what could stretch each step. Then ask what happens if the date slips. Vague answers now become open-ended waits later, usually with your kitchen already torn out.

Good answer: a specific week, a two-hour arrival window, and a typical 2-8 hour install day.

09 What does your guarantee actually cover?

The manufacturer warranties the material. Who stands behind the fabrication and the install: the seams, the fit, the caulking, the sink mount? Get it in plain words.

Good answer: "All our work is guaranteed," from a company old enough for that to mean something.

10 What happens on install day, and what do you need from me?

Someone who can make decisions should be home. The crew installs the sink; your plumber connects it a few hours later, once the adhesive sets. Knowing the choreography ahead of time turns install day from stressful to boring, and boring is what you want.

Good answer: they tell you the plan before you ask, including the plumber timing.

Ask us all ten. We like these questions.

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