

# THE GRANITE GAME

**A Guide To Avoiding Common  
Granite Buying Mistakes**

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# CONTENTS

**Welcome ..... 3**

**The 7 Critical Questions You Must Ask BEFORE choosing a supplier..... 4**

1. Can you view the granite slab(s) before work gets started? ..... 4

2. How Many Parties Are Involved in Your Granite Purchase? ..... 5

3. BEWARE Price Per Square Foot Sales Pitch. What other hidden costs/risks are involved? ..... 6

4. How current are the fabrication techniques being used? ..... 7

5. Is the granite sealed before or at installation? ..... 7

6. What are the seam standards? ..... 7

**Granite Basics ..... 8**

**Granite Myths..... 10**

## A Guide To Avoiding Common Granite Buying Mistakes

# WELCOME

Hello and Welcome. We believe in educating over selling. If you choose to become a client that's great!

As winners of the Consumers Choice Award 4 years running and with decades of experience we feel the best way forward for buyers and sellers is to educate consumers on how to make purchasing granite as stress free as possible while ensuring they receive value and a finished product they will appreciate for years to come. To that end we have prepared this brief book that contains critical information that will greatly benefit anyone considering a granite purchase.



Should you have any further questions we are happy to help!

**207 Colonnade Road South**

**Ottawa, ON K2E 7K3**

**T: 613-228-2667 F: 613-224-2266**

[info@ottawagraniteshop.ca](mailto:info@ottawagraniteshop.ca)

<http://ottawagraniteshop.ca/>

The Granite Shoppe Inc. also known as The Granite Shop maintains the largest and most modern showroom and on site production facility in the greater Ottawa region. Our business is comprised of two divisions, one serving the public and the other servicing home builders and contractors.

We provide a unique combination of the latest in technology while also staffing veteran skilled Granite Craftsmen with more than 20 years of experience allowing us to serve high volume home builders and the general public while delivering a custom finished product and service beyond compare.

From showroom to delivery we do NOT use any pushy commission salespeople or sub-contractors. Everyone you deal with is a long standing full time dedicated team member of The Granite Shop. We all understand that we are here to serve and educate and that when we do that properly the sales just take care of themselves.



## THE 7 CRITICAL QUESTIONS YOU MUST ASK BEFORE CHOOSING A SUPPLIER

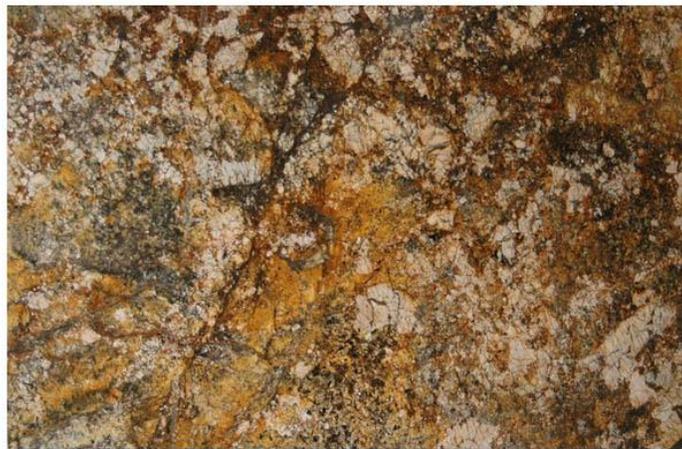
### 1. CAN YOU VIEW THE GRANITE SLAB(S) BEFORE WORK GETS STARTED?

Not viewing the full slab is the #1 cause of disappointment among granite buyers! Receiving a final product that does not look like what you expected can be extremely disheartening.

Most granite suppliers do two things that can cause you to be unhappy with the finished product.

They ask you to choose from a small swatch that could not possibly give you an accurate idea of the finished product or they send you to a showroom like ours that houses a vast selection of full sized slabs and they tell you to choose a type and that they can get you the same one from the same supplier BUT think about that for a second. It is IMPOSSIBLE to find two identical slabs of granite!

Granite is a rock pulled out of the ground, and no two pieces are identical. That means when you're looking at a sample of granite you're not seeing a true representation of what your granite countertop or vanity will look like. See below how much swatches from the same slab can vary.



Both Swatches Below Taken From Slab Above



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## 2. HOW MANY PARTIES ARE INVOLVED IN YOUR GRANITE PURCHASE?

Ever heard the old saying “Too many cooks in the kitchen spoil the soup.”? One consequence of this shift towards trying to make price per square foot the sole focus of buying granite is how the project is managed and who is involved. Trying to cut costs at the expense of having one provider in charge from start to finish can cause major issues.

There is nothing worse than being in the middle of a project where everyone is pointing the finger if something goes wrong. The Granite Shop takes care of the project from start to finish and we have great relationships with the home builders in and around Ottawa. Our installers are long time experienced and trusted full time employees. We do ALL the fabrication in house at our state of the art facility using our own full time experienced fabricators. Your granite will get to your site in our trucks and will be installed by our employees.

Since the installers will be in your home you want to make sure they are someone you can trust. Ask the granite provider you are considering working with if the installers are real full time employees or sub-contractors. You can just imagine the extra layer of problems that might arise if sub contractors are being used and something goes wrong. Ask if background checks have been done. Are they insured? Who is responsible for any on site damage or issues related to installation?



If you’ve never dealt with granite you probably wouldn’t know to ask these questions, and therefore, you’d be leaving yourself vulnerable to an unpleasant experience. The Granite Shop maintains the highest rating with the Better Business Bureau and even though this industry is unregulated, we want to hold ourselves and others in the business to the highest standards. We’re happy to answer any of these questions for our customers...all you have to do is ask!

### 3. BEWARE PRICE PER SQUARE FOOT SALES PITCH. WHAT OTHER HIDDEN COSTS/RISKS ARE INVOLVED?

It is a sad reflection on our industry that this point has to be included. In the past few years advertising methods for selling granite have sunk to new lows following trends in such industries as car sales. Price per square foot headlines in ads are getting lower and lower yet oddly the cost of buying, transporting and delivering a great product has increased. How is this possible?

Simple. Bait and switch tactics and a laundry list of hidden fees are being used to pad the final price. There is also a churn and burn mentality that has struck our industry. There is real cost to providing proper project management, customer service, follow up calls and taking responsibility for mistakes. These areas are the first to be abandoned when competing solely on price. Repeat offenders drive a company's reputation until the wheels fall off then set up shop under a different name. If you are really lucky and everything goes just right you may save a few bucks by going the route of discount these granite providers.

Here is what we are willing to say about our pricing and approach. WE LOOK EXPENSIVE! We have a beautiful large showroom, a state of the art on site manufacturing facility and great full time staff. Do we really cost more than the other guy? It depends. If you are referring to a company that will go out of business in 3 years and not service clients issues then we are probably are slightly more expensive. The real truth is we charge the lowest rates possible that allow our customers to get incredible value and a stress free experience while ensuring that we will be here to serve them for years to come.

We ask you to ignore the hype around this price per square foot nonsense and consider the following:

- We own our own building so the fancy showroom does not cost us what you might think.
- We have our own production facility and investment in equipment makes us efficient and the go to choice for many Ottawa custom builders.
- We save on advertising due to an incredible repeat and referral business
- We do significant volume.
- And finally we have won the Consumers Choice Award 4 years running. If we were not competitive in all aspects of our business this simply would not happen.

## 4. HOW CURRENT ARE THE FABRICATION TECHNIQUES BEING USED?

Ask how the job will proceed and how the granite will be fabricated. At The Granite Shop our facility is on site and we are happy to give you a tour! We are using state of the art equipment with some of our machines worth in excess of \$250,000 USD each.

Ask how will they measure (a.k.a. template) your job? Is it done manually or with lasers? When it comes to fabrication, are CNC machines used or is cutting done by hand? Don't fall for the "We do everything here by hand" sales pitch as though this would somehow create a better product.

To get the most precise, highest quality job, you really want the latest in fabrication techniques to be used. When it comes to most other home goods (for example furniture) handmade is a bonus, but in terms of granite countertops and vanities it can definitely be a disadvantage. Having said that the final finish needs to be handled by quality granite craftsmen that will make sure everything is perfect. Our Craftsmen have decades of experience.

## 5. IS THE GRANITE SEALED BEFORE OR AT INSTALLATION?

If the answer to this question is "no", it doesn't mean you need to find someone else to make your granite countertop or vanity. You simply need to get an answer to this question so you know if you need to seal the countertop yourself. Sealing the granite is something you'll need to do periodically. Ask the company you're working with for care instructions. Ask them if they have a maintenance program.

## 6. WHAT ARE THE SEAM STANDARDS?

If you're getting a granite countertop there's a pretty good chance you're going to have a seam. A seam is where two pieces of granite are joined together. Ask the company you're dealing with what their seam standards are. Typically this will be a range not a precise measurement. You can measure that range out (go with the biggest possible number) and see if it's something you're okay with and/or shop the numbers around. Call other companies and ask about their seam standards.

## GRANITE BASICS

Granite. It's the most popular natural countertop surface for kitchens and baths in North America. And for good reason—it's durable, easy to maintain, and beautiful. It's also a relatively simple upgrade in an old kitchen that will add value to your home should you choose to sell it.

**What is granite?** It is a natural, sturdy stone that is more durable than marble.

**What makes it so popular?** The fact that it is more durable than marble makes it a good choice for kitchen counters. And because granite comes in a wide range of colors, it appeals to most people. In fact, granite is the most sought-after choice of countertop material. The color choices of black pearl and absolute black are widely popular among consumers for use in the bathroom and kitchen, on floors and walls and counters as well.

**What are its primary characteristics?** It comes in a wide range of colors, and a wide range of edge treatments are also available. Compared to marble, it offers a more uniform pattern and is more sturdy.

**What are its pros?** It is durable, acid-resistant, moisture-resistant and scratch-resistant. Also, it comes in a wide range of colors.

**Its cons?** If not treated properly it could absorb oils, and the lighter colors show stains.

**Why is it so expensive?** That is a common misconception. Granite is actually inexpensive compared to many other alternatives. Marble, for example, is higher in price, especially due to certain kinds not being readily available. Since marble prices have increased, customers have come to prefer granite.

**A Guide To Avoiding Common Granite Buying Mistakes**

**How much does it cost?** The cost of raw granite can range anywhere from \$10 to \$170 per square foot. Fabrication and installation costs vary between \$30 and \$100 per square foot. The basic elements beyond service that reflect on the price include the thickness of the slab, the type of edge treatment, whether or not a backsplash of the same material will be included, and the color of granite (blue being the most expensive).

**What are its installation requirements?** First the cabinets have to be installed in order for a granite countertop to be templated for a proper fit pre-installation. Once the template is made, the granite is cut to fit and should be installed by a pro to ensure it is level. After installation, granite needs to be sealed. The right sealer can make granite oil resistant, too.

## GRANITE MYTHS

Every day in our showroom we field concerns and questions about granite that frankly are complete myths. We are not sure how they got started but to set the record straight here are the top 10 granite myths that we see pop up in conversation.



1. **Granite is absorbent.** Granite qualifies as impervious to water and is actually less absorbent than some solid surface (plastic) products.
2. **Granite stains easily.** Granite is resistant to stains. Generally any liquid spilled on a granite top, if wiped up within a few minutes, will not stain. However even water can soak into a granite countertop and leave a dark coloured spot but this will evaporate in minutes. Liquids that do not evaporate, such as oils will cause stains if left to soak into the stone.
3. **Stains in granite are permanent.** Most stains can be removed. Even oil stains can usually be removed using a poultice or paste that will draw out the oil from the stone.
4. **Granite will lose its polish over the years.** While this may be true of marble, granite will shine for years just as if it was brand new. Granite is highly scratch resistant and will not show wear from daily use.
5. **Granite requires a lot of maintenance.** Routine cleaning with a mild soap and water is all that is generally required. Once a year, a re-application of a penetrating sealer should be performed, which only takes about 15 minutes- less time than scouring a solid surface countertop with a cleanser to remove scratches. Never use abrasive cleaners.
6. **Heat will cause granite to chip and crack.** Granite is heat resistant and can withstand the heat of hot pots and pans without damage. Impact from a heavy object may chip granite but heat from anything short of a blow torch will not affect your countertop.

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7. **Dark coloured granites are harder than light coloured granites.** Granites are composed of a variety of minerals, each of which has specific performance properties. The hardest mineral commonly found in granite is quartz, which is normally a somewhat translucent, white to gray colour mineral. The larger the crystals, the weaker the stone.
8. **Granite's tiny pores and fissures harbor bacteria.** Bacteria are found everywhere. If it is on a granite top, then it can also be found on a laminate or solid surface top. Use an anti-bacterial soap to wash your countertop if you are concerned.
9. **Granite and marble are essentially the same.** Besides the fact that they are both natural stones and can be polished, they are otherwise very different. Marble is generally a calcious stone, formed from oceanic deposits and then compressed under pressure (metamorphosed). Granite, however, is an igneous rock, essentially molten magma, which is cooled and then hardened below the earth's surface.
10. **Granite is expensive.** Granite is usually competitively priced compared to other high-end surfacing materials. You will be amazed when you compare the price of granite to other popularly famed "luxury surfaces".



207 Colonnade Road South  
Ottawa, ON K2E 7K3  
T: 613-228-2667 F: 613-224-2266  
[info@ottawagraniteshop.ca](mailto:info@ottawagraniteshop.ca)  
<http://ottawagraniteshop.ca/>