

THE TILE EMPORIUM

**Your Guide to
Natural Stone Tiles**





A Brief Guide to Travertine

If you've ever visited Rome's Colosseum, you'll have come across travertine. Favoured by the Romans, the building material is typically used when constructing temples and amphitheatres. In our Brief Guide, we discuss where the material comes from and how to care for it effectively at home.

Where is it from?

Travertine is a sedimentary stone that is often confused for limestone. However, while the material may be derived from limestone, the main difference between the two is in their structure; when travertine is formed, hot water leaks through the stone, which causes holes and voids to form. In general, travertine is mainly mined from countries like Turkey, Italy and Mexico.

How is it produced?

Once the travertine blocks have been inspected and selected by experts for their colour and quality, they are then transported from the quarry to a factory. Specialist equipment is then used to cut the blocks into appropriate sizes, before they're thinned to create easier-to-install tiles.

How can it be identified?

One of travertine's most unique characteristics is the natural, aged appearance it has due to the pits and voids present on its surface. While most of these voids will be filled with resin at the source, it's fairly common for them to open up through general wear and tear, so it's also possible to fill them with grout or resin at home.

What are its benefits?

Travertine is incredibly durable, which makes it the ideal choice for both floors and walls.

How do you keep it looking great?

In order to keep your stones looking as if they'd just been laid, you should think about protecting them using a specialist substance.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Do you offer a choice of finishes?

Travertine comes available filled or unfilled, and has four major finishes. These include: polished, honed, brushed and tumbled.

Why do you need to seal travertine tiles?

Since travertine is naturally porous, sealant is required to prevent liquid from penetrating the stone. In doing so, this prevents staining, which helps the stone retain its natural beauty.

How should travertine tiles be sealed?

Once laid, travertine tiles need to be sealed using grouting to prevent staining. Once this has been done, we'd recommend using a residue remover to clean the tiles. Leave this for 10 minutes, then use an emulsifying pad to remove any grout residue.

We'd then recommend protecting your travertine using a specialist protector – apply this using a roller and allow each coat you use to dry thoroughly. When it comes to cleaning your tiles, avoid using highly acidic or alkaline household cleaners, since they could damage the sealer used.

Do travertine stones vary naturally?

Put simply – yes, they do. Depending on the mineral compounds and organic impurities that penetrate the stone, travertine can vary in its colour, ranging from ivory and beige to gold and walnut.



A Brief Guide to Marble

Commonly used in architecture since the Roman times, marble is known for its stunning veins and colour combinations. In our Brief Guide, we discuss where the material comes from and how to care for it effectively at home.

Where is it from?

Marble is quarried throughout Europe and Asia. When limestone in these continents become exposed to high temperatures and pressures, the calcite contained within the limestone recrystallises. When this happens, calcite crystals form, which then go on to create a much denser material, known as marble. The swirls and veins that marble's appearance is known for are typically caused by various mineral impurities. These impurities are why marble varies so much in terms of the colour combinations you find.

How is it produced?

Once marble has been quarried into blocks, it is then transported to a factory where it is cut into slabs. These slabs are then eventually cut into tiles.

What are its benefits?

Despite being susceptible to acidic fluids, marble is an extremely durable material. Especially in drier climates, it is both hardwearing and beautifully enduring.

How do you keep it looking great?

In order to keep your stones looking as if they'd just been laid, you should think about protecting them using a specialist substance. Feel free to contact a member of our team if you would like any help or advice on this.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Do you offer a choice of finishes?

Marble can be polished or honed, depending on whether you'd like either a gloss or matt finish.

Why do you need to seal marble tiles?

Marble needs to be sealed due to its sensitivity to wet conditions.

How should marble tiles be sealed?

Once laid, marble tiles need to be sealed using grouting to prevent staining. Once this has been done, we'd recommend using a residue remover to clean the tiles. Leave this for 10 minutes, then use an emulsifying pad to remove any grout residue.

It's then vital to protect your marble tiles using a specialist protector – apply this using a roller and allow each coat you use to dry thoroughly. When it comes to cleaning your tiles, avoid using highly acidic or alkaline household cleaners, since they could damage the sealer used.

Does marble vary naturally?

Put simply – yes, they do. Due to the natural impurities and the type of marble quarried, the material varies considerably from block to block. We'd therefore recommend dry laying your tiles prior to fitting them, to ensure you like the variation.



A Brief Guide to Slate

Used heavily throughout the UK back in the 19th century, slate is known for its versatility and durability. In our Brief Guide, we discuss where the material comes from and how to care for it effectively at home.

How is it formed?

Slate is formed from an original shale-type sedimentary rock composed of clay or volcanic ash. It is fine-grained, and has an appearance which features natural marks and tones. From coppery rust to deep black, no two pieces of slate are alike – it is highly unique.

Where is it from?

Multi-colour slate is quarried in the Indian area known as Kund, located in between Jaipur and the Taj Mahal in Agra. It can also be quarried from other areas of India, as well as Brazil.

How is it produced?

Slate blocks are chosen for their colour and quality by experts. They are then taken to a factory where the blocks are split along the visible layers to produce thinner slabs. These are then cut using a specialist machine before being calibrated to give a definitive top and bottom to each tile. This, in turn, makes laying easier.

What are its benefits?

Due to its thin layers, slate can be brittle in its natural form. However, once it has been fitted, it becomes a highly robust and durable material. Plus, when its sealed and maintained properly, it is known to last for years and years.

How do you keep it looking great?

In order to keep your stones looking as if they'd just been laid, you should think about protecting them using a specialist substance. Feel free to contact a member of our team if you would like any help or advice on this.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Do you offer a choice of finishes?

Having a natural riven finish is by far the most popular style of slate, but you can also have it brushed, tumbled or honed.

Why do you need to seal slate tiles?

Slate should be sealed following installation to improve both stain resistance and durability.

How should slate tiles be sealed?

Before grouting your slate tiles, you should clean them with warm soapy water to remove general dirt from the riven areas. Once this has been done, grout your tiles and wait 24 hours.

Once 24 hours has passed and the stones are completely dry, follow the instructions on how to install your protector.

Does slate vary naturally?

Slate is its naturally occurring, meaning its colour tones and shading vary from tile to tile. Prior to fitting, you should think about dry laying your tiles to ensure you're happy with the variation.



A Brief Guide to Limestone

Highly durable and widely used throughout ancient Egypt, limestone is an ideal choice of stone in the home. In our Brief Guide to Limestone, we discuss where the material comes from and how to care for it effectively at home.

How is it formed?

Limestone is formed by layers of organisms that have been deposited and compacted over millions of years. This includes the skeletal fragments of coral, forams and molluscs, among others. Because of this, the material can be quarried from various countries around the world, including the UK, Egypt, Turkey and India.

How is it produced?

Limestone is quarried and transported in large blocks before being cut using factory machinery. The desired finish (i.e. honed, tumbled) is then added to give the look and feel you're after.

How can it be identified?

Practical, warm and versatile are the words often used to describe limestone. However, its charm comes from the various fossils that can be found contained within each piece.

What are its benefits?

Limestone is hardwearing, durable, practical and suitable for use across a large variety of areas. Thanks to its durability, it can also be used both internally and externally.

How do you keep it looking great?

In order to keep your stones looking as if they'd just been laid, you should think about protecting them using a specialist substance. Feel free to contact a member of our team if you would like any help or advice on this.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Do you offer a choice of finishes?

Limestone most commonly comes in a tumbled finish – an aged look with a softened aesthetic. However, it can also come with a brushed texture, or polished.

Why do you need to seal limestone tiles?

Limestone is a porous stone, so it should be sealed to prevent staining and improve its durability. In order to ensure maximum coverage, it should be sealed at least three times prior to installing its protection.

How should limestone tiles be sealed?

Once laid, limestone tiles need to be sealed using grouting to prevent staining. Once this has been done, we'd recommend using a residue remover to clean the tiles. Leave this for 10 minutes, then use an emulsifying pad to remove any grout residue.

We'd then recommend protecting your limestone using a specialist protector – apply this using a roller and allow each coat you use to dry thoroughly. When it comes to cleaning your tiles, avoid using highly acidic or alkaline household cleaners, since they could damage the sealer used.

Does limestone vary naturally?

Since limestone is comprised of natural fossils and organisms, they can each vary fairly substantially. We would therefore recommend dry laying your tiles to ensure you're happy with the variation.



A Brief Guide to Split Face Mosaics

The popularity of Split Face Mosaics has increased dramatically over the past few years, and they are fast becoming one of the trendiest wall tiles you can have. In our Brief Guide, we discuss how they are made and how you can care for them effectively at home.

How are they formed?

Split face mosaics are made using natural slate or stone. They consist of multiple layered strips of either slate or stone which are fixed together and arranged in a staggered, multi-levelled design.

What are their benefits?

Split face mosaics are not only extremely practical and hardwearing, but they instantly add character to a room thanks to their bold, sophisticated appearance.

How do you keep them looking great?

One of the best things about split face mosaic tiles is how easy they are to maintain and look after. With the correct care and maintenance, they should last a lifetime but, in order to ensure this is the case, you should protect them using a specialist substance.

Feel free to contact a member of our team if you would like any help or advice on this.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Do you offer a choice of finishes?

Split face mosaics come in a range of styles, structures and finishes. Slate is often one of the most popular options, but you can also get them made from Quartzite or natural stone, depending on the look and colour you are after.

Why do you need to seal split face mosaic tiles?

Since all stone tiles are naturally porous, it's important to seal them prior to installation to improve their resistance against stains. This also ensures they maintain their versatility.

How should split face mosaic tiles be sealed?

Before grouting your tiles, you should clean them with warm soapy water to remove general dirt from the riven areas. Once this has been done, grout your tiles and wait 24 hours.

Once 24 hours has passed and the tiles are completely dry, follow the instructions on how to install your protector. This will protect them from staining and ensure they can withstand the demands of modern-day living.

THE TILE EMPORIUM

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We are a small, family-run business that specialises in the supply and installation of high quality stone tiles. Our depth of knowledge on the different varieties of stone means that we can provide you with invaluable advice and guidance, and our installation expertise ensures any tiling work will be carried out to an extremely high standard. Our team consists of professional craftsmen with years of practical experience behind them. There is no other high street retail shop that can offer both superb product knowledge as well as a professional fitting team.

“

A superb job of laying our limestone floor, considered cuts & grout lines to main traffic areas etc. Very friendly & courteous. Fully deserves top rating.

”

Trudie RH17

**Contact our team
of friendly tile
experts today**

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