

NEW BRUNSWICK KITCHENS

Countertops

Quartz, granite, marble, laminate, butcher block,
and solid surface countertop selection and
installation

26 Expert Answers from Kitchen IQ

newbrunswickkitchens.com/construction-brain

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How much does countertop removal and disposal typically cost in Fredericton or Moncton, and does the material type — laminate, granite, quartz — affect the removal price?

Countertop removal and disposal in Fredericton and Moncton typically costs \$300-\$800 for an average kitchen, with material type significantly affecting the price due to weight, disposal requirements, and labor complexity.

Laminate countertops are the least expensive to remove at \$300-\$500 for a typical kitchen. They're lightweight, cut easily with standard tools, and can go in regular construction dumpsters. Most contractors can remove laminate tops in 2-3 hours with basic hand tools. The main challenge is that laminate is often glued and screwed to particleboard substrate, which can splinter during removal.

Granite removal costs \$500-\$700 due to the material's extreme weight and fragility. Granite slabs weigh 18-20 pounds per square foot, requiring 2-3 workers and specialized equipment to prevent cracking during removal. The stone must be cut into manageable sections using diamond blades, creating silica dust that requires proper ventilation and cleanup. Granite can sometimes be resold if removed intact, which may offset disposal costs, but most removal jobs result in broken pieces that go to construction waste facilities.

Quartz countertops are the most expensive to remove at \$600-\$800 because they're engineered stone that's even heavier than granite (up to 25 pounds per square foot) and contains resins that make cutting more difficult. The engineered nature means quartz has no resale value once removed, and the resin content requires special disposal handling at some facilities.

Additional factors affecting cost in NB include your home's age and layout. Many Fredericton and Moncton homes built in the 1960s-1980s have galley kitchens with narrow doorways, making it challenging to remove large stone slabs intact. Contractors may need to cut countertops into smaller pieces inside the kitchen, increasing labor time and dust control requirements.

Disposal logistics vary between the two cities. Moncton's Westmorland-Albert Solid Waste Corporation accepts construction materials at their facilities, while Fredericton uses the Regional Solid Waste Commission. Both charge tipping fees of \$80-\$120 per ton, which contractors factor into their pricing. Stone materials are heavier, resulting in higher disposal fees than lightweight laminate.

Timing considerations matter in New Brunswick's renovation season. During peak months (May through September), contractors may charge 10-15% more for removal services due to higher demand and busier schedules. Winter removals often cost less, and contractors have more availability for smaller jobs like countertop

removal.

Most kitchen renovation contractors include countertop removal in their overall project quote rather than charging separately. If you're hiring removal as a standalone service, expect to pay the higher end of these ranges. Always verify that the contractor will handle proper disposal and cleanup — some budget quotes exclude debris removal, leaving you responsible for disposal costs.

Professional removal is strongly recommended for granite and quartz due to safety concerns with heavy lifting and dust control. Laminate removal is technically DIY-friendly, but most homeowners find the time and disposal logistics make professional removal worthwhile, especially when factoring in tool rental and dump fees.

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Q2

What is the cost difference between an undermount and a drop-in sink cutout when having countertops fabricated in Saint John or Moncton, and which option is more popular with NB contractors?

Undermount sink cutouts typically cost \$150-300 more than drop-in cutouts at fabricators in Saint John and Moncton, but undermount sinks have become the preferred choice for 70-80% of kitchen renovations in New Brunswick.

The cost difference comes from the additional fabrication work required for undermount installations. Drop-in sinks simply need a hole cut to template specifications — straightforward and quick. Undermount sinks require the fabricator to polish the cut edge to a finished quality since it will be visible, plus they need to drill holes for the mounting clips that secure the sink to the countertop from below. This extra finishing work adds 2-3 hours of labour at most Moncton and Saint John fabrication shops.

Quartz countertops handle both installation methods well, but undermount is particularly popular because the seamless transition from countertop to sink makes cleanup easier — no rim to catch crumbs or water. **Granite**

countertops also work excellently with undermount sinks, though the natural stone requires careful templating to ensure the sink fits perfectly. **Laminate countertops** cannot support undermount sinks due to the exposed particle board core, so drop-in is the only option.

Most NB contractors now recommend undermount sinks for several practical reasons beyond aesthetics. The seamless design prevents water from getting trapped around the sink rim — important in New Brunswick's humid summers when moisture can lead to mold or cabinet damage. Cleaning is significantly easier since you can wipe debris directly from the counter into the sink without navigating around a raised rim. The undermount style also makes the countertop appear larger and more continuous, which helps smaller NB kitchens feel more spacious.

Installation considerations favor undermount sinks in new renovations. The sink gets mounted to the countertop at the fabrication shop, then the entire assembly is installed as one unit. This creates a stronger, more permanent installation than trying to retrofit an undermount sink later. Drop-in sinks can be replaced by homeowners if needed, while undermount sinks require countertop removal for replacement.

For budget-conscious renovations, the \$150-300 additional cost for undermount fabrication is usually worthwhile given the improved functionality and resale value. However, if you're keeping existing laminate countertops and just replacing the sink, drop-in remains your only option. Most Saint John and Moncton fabricators can complete either cutout style within their standard 3-6 week lead time for template-to-installation.

Need help finding a kitchen renovator who can coordinate countertop fabrication with your sink choice? New Brunswick Kitchens can match you with experienced contractors familiar with both installation methods.

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Q3

What countertop materials hold up best on an outdoor kitchen in New Brunswick's climate, and what should I expect to pay installed in Saint John or Bathurst?

Granite and porcelain are your best bets for outdoor kitchen countertops in New Brunswick's harsh climate, while quartz and most other materials will fail within a few years due to freeze-thaw cycles.

For outdoor applications in NB's climate, you're dealing with temperature swings from -25°C in January to +30°C in July, plus freeze-thaw cycles that can destroy non-freeze-resistant materials. Most indoor countertop materials simply aren't engineered for this punishment.

Granite is your most proven outdoor option. Natural granite is quarried from outdoor conditions and handles NB's climate exceptionally well. It's naturally freeze-thaw resistant, won't crack from temperature swings, and the polished surface sheds water effectively during our wet springs and falls. Expect to pay **\$70-\$140 per square foot installed** in Saint John or Bathurst for outdoor-grade granite slabs. The higher end reflects the thicker slabs (1.25" vs 3/4") and premium edge treatments needed for outdoor durability.

Porcelain slabs are the newer premium option gaining popularity in NB outdoor kitchens. These large-format engineered slabs are completely non-porous, freeze-thaw resistant, and available in stunning natural stone looks. Installation requires specialized equipment and expertise, so expect **\$90-\$160 per square foot installed**. The investment pays off with virtually zero maintenance and exceptional durability.

Avoid these materials outdoors in NB: Quartz will crack and discolor from UV exposure and freeze-thaw cycles. Concrete countertops will crack despite sealers. Butcher block will rot in our humid summers and crack in dry winters. Tile grout lines become water infiltration points that freeze and cause cracking.

NB-specific considerations include our 6-month winter season where outdoor kitchens sit unused under snow and ice. Any water infiltration becomes ice expansion that destroys countertops. Maritime humidity in summer means materials must shed moisture effectively to prevent mold and staining.

Installation timing is critical in NB. Schedule outdoor countertop installation between May and September when fabricators can properly seal and finish the installation. Winter installations risk improper curing of adhesives and sealants.

For both Saint John and Bathurst, you'll likely work with fabricators who service the broader region — many outdoor projects require specialized equipment that smaller shops don't carry. Factor in potential travel charges for Bathurst installations, as most major fabricators are based in Saint John, Moncton, or Fredericton.

Practical tip: Design your outdoor kitchen with a slight slope (1/4" per foot) away from any structures to ensure proper drainage. Even the best countertop materials need help shedding water in NB's wet climate.

Need help finding contractors experienced with outdoor kitchen installations? New Brunswick Kitchens can match you with renovators who understand the unique challenges of building outdoor kitchens that survive our Maritime climate.

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What is the best countertop material for avid bakers in New Brunswick who want a dedicated pastry rolling section, and how much does a marble inset or full marble slab cost in Moncton?

Marble is absolutely the best countertop material for serious baking and pastry work. Its naturally cool surface temperature keeps butter from melting during rolling, prevents dough from sticking, and provides the smooth, non-porous surface that pastry chefs prefer for working with delicate doughs.

For avid bakers in New Brunswick, you have two excellent options: a **dedicated marble inset section** within your main countertop or a **full marble slab** for the entire kitchen. A marble inset (typically 24" x 36" or 30" x 48") can be incorporated into quartz, granite, or even laminate countertops, giving you the best of both worlds — a practical, low-maintenance main surface with a dedicated baking zone.

Marble inset pricing in Moncton runs \$400-\$800 for a standard 24" x 36" section, including fabrication and installation. The inset sits flush with your main countertop, creating a seamless workspace. Popular choices include Carrara marble (\$15-25/sq ft) or the slightly more durable Calacatta marble (\$25-40/sq ft). Most Moncton fabricators can source and install marble insets — expect 2-3 week lead times.

Full marble slab countertops in Moncton cost \$55-120/sq ft installed, depending on the marble type and edge treatments. Carrara marble (the classic white with gray veining) runs \$55-75/sq ft, while premium varieties like Calacatta or Statuario can reach \$100-120/sq ft. For a typical 10-foot galley kitchen, you're looking at \$2,500-\$5,500 for full marble countertops.

New Brunswick's climate considerations are important with marble. Our humid summers mean you'll need to seal marble countertops every 6-12 months to prevent staining, and the dry winter air from forced heating can cause minor expansion and contraction. However, marble's temperature stability makes it ideal for NB kitchens — it stays naturally cool even during our warmest summer days.

Practical considerations include marble's susceptibility to etching from acidic substances (lemon juice, vinegar, wine), so you'll need cutting boards for food prep. But for rolling pastry, kneading bread, and working with chocolate, nothing beats marble's performance. Many NB bakers choose a marble inset for pastry work while using quartz for the rest of their countertops — giving them durability for daily use and the perfect surface for baking.

Installation timing matters in Moncton — most fabricators are busiest May through September, so book by March for summer installation. Winter installations (November-February) often come with 10-15% savings and better availability.

Need help finding a kitchen renovator who specializes in baker-friendly designs? New Brunswick Kitchens can match you with contractors experienced in creating functional baking spaces throughout the Moncton area.

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Q5

What is the average cost of quartz countertops installed in New Brunswick?

Quartz countertops in New Brunswick cost between \$60 and \$120 per square foot installed, with most homeowners paying \$3,000 to \$6,000 for a typical kitchen. The final price depends on the brand, colour, edge profile, and complexity of your kitchen layout — kitchens with L-shaped or U-shaped counters, cutouts for undermount sinks, and cooktop openings cost more than a simple straight run.

Quartz is the most popular countertop material in NB kitchens right now, and for good reason. It's non-porous, which means it never needs sealing — a real advantage in New Brunswick's humid summers when moisture and mold are constant concerns. Unlike granite, quartz won't absorb spills, harbour bacteria, or require annual maintenance. It's engineered from roughly 93% ground natural quartz mixed with resin binders, giving it consistent colour and pattern that natural stone can't match.

The price range breaks down by tier. **Entry-level quartz** from brands like Silestone's basic colours or Allen + Roth runs \$60 to \$75 per square foot installed. **Mid-range options** from Cambria, Caesarstone, or Silestone's premium lines typically cost \$80 to \$100 per square foot. **Premium and ultra-premium quartz** — including veined marble-look patterns that have become extremely popular — can reach \$100 to \$120 per square foot. Edge profiles also affect price: a basic eased edge is usually included, while ogee, bullnose, or waterfall edges add \$15 to \$30 per linear foot.

Most quartz fabricators in New Brunswick are based in Moncton, Fredericton, or Saint John. If your home is in a more rural area — say Bathurst, Miramichi, or the Acadian Peninsula — expect a delivery surcharge of \$200 to \$500 depending on distance. The fabrication process itself involves a two-visit approach: your fabricator will template your kitchen after the cabinets are fully installed and levelled (never before), then return 3 to 6 weeks later

for installation. This lead time is critical to factor into your renovation schedule.

One thing to know about quartz in NB's climate: while it handles humidity beautifully, it is **not heat-resistant** in the way granite is. Placing a hot pot directly from the stove onto quartz can cause thermal shock and cracking. Always use trivets. This catches some homeowners off guard because quartz looks and feels like stone, but the resin binders are vulnerable to extreme heat.

For a standard 30 to 40 square foot kitchen counter area, budget \$2,400 to \$4,800 for the countertops themselves. Add \$300 to \$800 for sink cutout, undermount sink clips, and plumbing reconnection. Most NB contractors include basic installation in their per-square-foot pricing, but confirm whether demolition and removal of your old countertops is included — some charge \$200 to \$500 extra for removal and disposal.

Get matched with a kitchen renovator for a free estimate on your quartz countertop project through New Brunswick Kitchens.

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Q6

What is the price difference between granite and quartz countertops in NB?

Granite and quartz countertops are priced very similarly in New Brunswick — granite runs \$55 to \$110 per square foot installed while quartz costs \$60 to \$120 per square foot — but the total cost of ownership over time favours quartz due to its zero-maintenance nature. For a typical NB kitchen with 30 to 40 square feet of counter space, you're looking at \$1,650 to \$4,400 for granite versus \$1,800 to \$4,800 for quartz in material and installation costs.

At the entry level, granite can actually be **less expensive** than quartz. Basic granite colours — ubatuba, caledonia, new venetian gold — are quarried in huge volumes and start around \$55 per square foot installed. Entry-level quartz starts slightly higher at \$60 per square foot. At the mid-range and premium levels, the pricing overlaps significantly. A dramatic granite slab with striking veining can cost just as much as a premium Cambria or

Caesarstone quartz at \$100 to \$120 per square foot.

Performance in NB's Climate

This is where the two materials diverge meaningfully for New Brunswick homeowners. **Granite is porous** and requires sealing once or twice a year to prevent staining and bacterial growth. In NB's humid summers, unsealed granite can absorb moisture and promote bacterial growth on food preparation surfaces. Miss a year of sealing and you may find dark stains around the sink area that are difficult or impossible to remove. **Quartz is non-porous** — it never needs sealing, won't absorb moisture, and is inherently resistant to bacteria and mold. In a province where maritime humidity is a constant kitchen concern, this is a significant practical advantage.

On the other hand, granite has one clear advantage: **heat resistance**. You can place a hot pot directly on granite without damage. Quartz contains resin binders that can be damaged by extreme heat — always use trivets with quartz. For homeowners who do a lot of cooking and want the freedom to set hot cookware down without thinking, granite has an edge.

Durability is comparable for both materials. Granite can chip if something heavy is dropped on an edge, and repairs involve filling with colour-matched epoxy — noticeable up close. Quartz is slightly more resistant to chipping but equally vulnerable at edges. Both materials will outlast your kitchen cabinets if properly cared for.

Appearance comes down to personal preference. Granite offers unique natural patterns — no two slabs are identical, which appeals to homeowners who want something truly one-of-a-kind. Quartz offers consistent colour and pattern, which is easier to match across large kitchens or multiple pieces. Modern quartz lines now replicate marble veining so convincingly that many homeowners choose quartz marble-look over actual marble (which stains and etches easily).

Most countertop fabricators in NB are based in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John, and most shops work with both materials. Lead times are similar — 3 to 6 weeks from templating to installation. Rural locations may incur delivery surcharges of \$200 to \$500. When comparing quotes, make sure both include the same edge profile, sink cutout, and installation scope so you're comparing apples to apples. Need help finding a kitchen renovator? New Brunswick Kitchens can match you with local professionals for free estimates.

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What is the best countertop material for a busy NB family kitchen?

Quartz is the best countertop material for a busy New Brunswick family kitchen, offering the ideal combination of durability, low maintenance, and resistance to the stains and scratches that come with daily family use. At \$60 to \$120 per square foot installed, it sits in the mid-to-upper price range but delivers exceptional long-term value because it requires zero sealing, resists bacteria, and handles NB's indoor humidity swings without any special care.

Quartz countertops are engineered from roughly 90 to 94 percent ground natural quartz combined with polymer resins and pigments. This manufacturing process creates a **non-porous surface** that does not absorb spills, grape juice, tomato sauce, or any of the other stain-causing substances that are inevitable in a family kitchen. Unlike granite or marble, you never need to seal quartz. Wipe it down with soap and water or a mild household cleaner, and it stays looking new for 15 to 25 years.

For families with young children, quartz's **scratch and chip resistance** is a major practical advantage. It withstands the impact of dropped dishes, the scrape of ceramic plates, and the general rough handling that a busy kitchen sees daily. It is not indestructible, but it is far more forgiving than granite (which can chip at edges) or laminate (which scratches and peels over time).

How NB's Climate Affects Your Choice

New Brunswick's climate creates specific challenges for countertop materials. Maritime summer humidity can promote mould and bacteria on porous surfaces like granite and butcher block if they are not properly sealed and maintained. In contrast, quartz's non-porous surface resists bacterial growth without any treatment. During winter, forced-air heating drops indoor humidity to 15 to 25 percent, causing natural materials like butcher block to dry out, crack, and split. Quartz is unaffected by these humidity swings.

Butcher block (\$40 to \$70 per square foot installed) is a warm, beautiful option that many families love, but it demands maintenance. It requires oiling every 3 to 6 months, is vulnerable to water damage near the sink and dishwasher, and in NB's humid summers, unsealed areas can develop mould. If you love the look of wood, consider using butcher block on an island or a small prep section and quartz for the perimeter counters, particularly around the sink.

Laminate (\$20 to \$45 per square foot installed) is the budget-friendly option and has improved dramatically in appearance. Modern laminates convincingly mimic stone and marble patterns. However, laminate is not heat-resistant, and hot pans will scorch it permanently. It can also chip and peel at seams, especially in humid conditions. For a young family on a tight budget, laminate is a solid choice for a kitchen you plan to update again in

8 to 12 years.

Granite (\$55 to \$110 per square foot installed) is the main competitor to quartz. It offers natural beauty, excellent heat resistance, and strong durability. The tradeoff is annual sealing requirements, and NB's climate means you should be diligent about this maintenance. A busy family may find quartz's zero-maintenance advantage worth the slightly higher cost.

Most countertop fabricators in New Brunswick are based in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John. Expect a **3 to 6 week lead time** from templating to installation. Templating happens after cabinets are fully installed and levelled, so coordinate carefully with your contractor to avoid project delays.

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Q8

How do quartz and granite countertops compare for New Brunswick kitchens?

Quartz edges out granite as the better overall choice for most New Brunswick kitchens due to its zero-maintenance surface and superior performance in NB's humidity swings, though granite remains an excellent option for homeowners who prefer natural stone and do not mind annual sealing. Both materials are durable, beautiful, and widely available through fabricators in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John.

Quartz is an engineered stone made from approximately 90 to 94 percent ground natural quartz bound with polymer resins. It costs \$60 to \$120 per square foot installed in New Brunswick. Its defining advantage is that it is **completely non-porous**, meaning it never needs sealing, does not absorb stains, and resists bacterial growth. In a province where summer humidity can push indoor moisture levels high enough to promote mould on porous surfaces, quartz's sealed composition is a significant practical benefit. It is available in a vast range of colours and patterns, including convincing marble and concrete looks that are difficult to distinguish from natural stone.

Granite is a natural stone quarried from the earth, with each slab being unique. It costs \$55 to \$110 per square foot installed in New Brunswick. Granite is **naturally heat-resistant**, which means you can set a hot pan directly on it without damage. This is granite's single biggest functional advantage over quartz, which can be damaged by temperatures above 150 degrees Celsius. However, granite is porous and requires sealing once a year to prevent stain absorption. In NB's humid summers, an unsealed or poorly sealed granite counter can absorb moisture, and dark spots or bacterial growth can develop over time.

Performance in NB's Climate

New Brunswick kitchens experience significant environmental variation throughout the year. Summer humidity levels indoors can reach 60 to 70 percent, while forced-air heating in winter drops humidity to 15 to 25 percent.

Quartz is unaffected by these swings because its resin binder makes it dimensionally stable. Granite is also largely stable, but the sealant on granite can break down faster in conditions where humidity fluctuates, requiring more attentive annual resealing to maintain protection.

For kitchens on **exterior walls**, which see the greatest temperature variation, both materials perform well structurally. Neither will crack or warp from NB's temperature range. The difference remains in the maintenance: quartz needs only soap and water year-round, while granite needs annual sealing to perform at its best.

Practical Comparison

Durability is comparable for daily use. Both resist scratches from normal kitchen activity, though neither should be used as a cutting board surface. Granite is slightly more prone to chipping at edges and around sink cutouts because it is a natural material with internal grain lines that create stress points. Quartz's uniform composition makes it more consistent in edge strength.

Appearance is where personal preference matters most. Granite offers one-of-a-kind natural patterns with depth and movement that engineered stone cannot perfectly replicate. If you value the uniqueness of natural stone and enjoy knowing that no other kitchen has the exact same slab, granite wins this category. Quartz offers more predictable, consistent patterns and a wider colour range, which makes it easier to match to a specific design vision.

Resale value is essentially equal. Both quartz and granite are considered premium countertop materials in the New Brunswick real estate market, and either will be viewed favourably by buyers compared to laminate or solid surface options.

Lead times are similar at 3 to 6 weeks from templating to installation for both materials. Templating must be done after cabinets are fully installed and levelled. Most NB fabricators stock popular quartz colours but order granite slabs to specification, so selecting a granite slab in person at the fabricator's yard is recommended to ensure you

are happy with the specific natural pattern.

The bottom line: choose quartz if you want a maintenance-free surface that handles NB's climate without any attention. Choose granite if you love natural stone's unique beauty and are willing to seal it annually. Either is a strong investment in your NB kitchen.

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Q9

Are butcher block countertops practical for NB's humidity levels?

Butcher block countertops can work in New Brunswick kitchens, but they require consistent maintenance and careful placement to survive our Maritime humidity swings. The fundamental challenge is that NB homes experience summer humidity levels that can push above 70% indoors, then plummet to 15-25% in winter when forced-air heating dries everything out. Wood is hygroscopic — it absorbs and releases moisture with these swings — and that means butcher block will expand in summer and contract in winter, potentially developing cracks, warping, or separated seams over time.

The practical reality is that butcher block performs best as an accent surface rather than a full kitchen countertop in NB. Many Fredericton and Moncton homeowners install butcher block on an island or a baking station while using quartz or solid surface on perimeter counters near the sink and dishwasher. This approach gives you the warmth and beauty of natural wood where it matters most, without exposing it to the areas where water exposure is constant. If you do use butcher block near a sink, expect to refinish that section every 2-3 years rather than the typical 5-year cycle.

Maintenance in NB's Climate

Keeping butcher block healthy here means oiling every 3-4 months with food-grade mineral oil or a mineral oil and beeswax blend. In winter, when your heating system strips humidity from the air, you may need to oil more frequently — every 6-8 weeks — to prevent drying and cracking. A whole-house humidifier set to maintain 35-45% indoor humidity during heating season helps protect not just your countertops but also your cabinets and hardwood flooring.

Always wipe up standing water immediately. Butcher block that sits wet for even 30 minutes can develop dark stains and, in NB's summer humidity, mold can establish underneath if moisture penetrates the finish. Seal the underside and all cut edges during installation — this step is often skipped but critical in our climate to prevent moisture from wicking up through the substrate.

Cost and Sourcing

Budget \$40-70 per square foot installed for quality butcher block in New Brunswick. Maple and birch are the most popular species, with maple being harder and more moisture-resistant. Some NB woodworkers craft custom butcher block from locally sourced hardwoods, which can be a beautiful option that supports local trades. Lead times for custom pieces run 3-6 weeks from local shops, mostly based in Moncton and Fredericton.

For homeowners who love the wood look but want something lower-maintenance, consider a wood-look laminate countertop at \$20-45 per square foot installed. Modern laminate patterns are remarkably realistic, completely waterproof on the surface, and handle NB's humidity swings without any oiling or special care. If you want the real thing, commit to the maintenance schedule and keep it away from high-moisture zones.

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What are the best quartz countertop brands available in New Brunswick?

Several major quartz brands are available through New Brunswick fabricators, with **Caesarstone**, **Silestone**, **Cambria**, and **MSI** being the most commonly stocked across the province. The brand you choose matters less than the fabricator who installs it — a skilled installer with a mid-range quartz will outperform a sloppy install with a premium brand every time.

Caesarstone is widely regarded as one of the original engineered quartz manufacturers and remains popular in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John showrooms. Their slabs offer excellent colour consistency and a strong warranty. Expect to pay \$70-110 per square foot installed in NB. **Silestone**, made by Cosentino, is another top-tier option that includes built-in antimicrobial protection — a genuine feature, not just marketing — and runs \$65-105 per square foot installed. **Cambria** is a premium American-made brand known for its bold patterns and lifetime warranty; pricing in NB tends toward \$80-120 per square foot installed, making it the most expensive mainstream option.

For homeowners watching their budget, **MSI Q Quartz** and **Allen + Roth** (available at big box stores) offer solid quality at \$60-85 per square foot installed. These mid-range brands have improved dramatically in recent years, with patterns that rival premium options. The main differences at the lower price points are slightly thinner slabs (2 cm vs 3 cm), fewer colour options, and shorter warranties.

What Actually Matters in NB

Regardless of brand, all quality engineered quartz performs nearly identically in New Brunswick's climate. Quartz is non-porous, so it handles our Maritime summer humidity without absorbing moisture or growing mold — a significant advantage over granite or marble. It doesn't need sealing, and it won't crack from the temperature and humidity swings between NB's hot summers and dry heated winters the way natural stone occasionally can along existing fissures.

The fabricator and installer are where your money really goes. In NB, most quartz fabrication shops are concentrated in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John. If you live in Bathurst, Miramichi, or a rural area, expect delivery surcharges of \$200-500 depending on distance. Always visit the fabricator's slab yard to see your actual slab — quartz colours and patterns vary between production lots, and photos online rarely capture the true appearance.

When comparing quotes, make sure each includes the same edge profile, cutouts for sinks and cooktops, and the same slab thickness. A 3 cm slab costs 20-30% more than 2 cm but gives a more substantial look and eliminates the need for a built-up edge. Get at least three quotes from NB fabricators — pricing varies 25-35% for identical

materials and scope.

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Q11

How long do quartz countertops last compared to granite in NB?

Both quartz and granite countertops will easily last 25-30 years or more in a New Brunswick kitchen, often outliving the cabinets and appliances around them. In terms of pure durability, the two materials are remarkably close, but their maintenance requirements and how they handle NB's specific climate conditions differ in meaningful ways.

Quartz is an engineered stone — roughly 93% ground natural quartz bound with polymer resins. Because it's non-porous, it never needs sealing and won't absorb moisture during NB's humid summers. It resists staining from coffee, wine, and cooking oils without any special treatment. The resin binders do have one vulnerability: direct heat. Setting a hot pot straight from the stove onto quartz can cause thermal shock and potentially discolour or crack the resin. Always use trivets. In terms of longevity, quartz maintains its appearance with virtually zero maintenance for decades — most manufacturers offer 15-25 year warranties, but the actual lifespan exceeds that significantly.

Granite is a natural stone that's incredibly hard and heat-resistant — you can set a hot pan directly on it without damage, which is a genuine advantage for busy kitchens. However, granite is porous and requires sealing once a year to prevent staining and moisture absorption. In New Brunswick's climate, this annual sealing is especially important: summer humidity can drive moisture into unsealed granite, and the dry winter air that follows can cause that trapped moisture to create micro-fissures over many heating cycles. A well-maintained granite countertop will last a lifetime, but a neglected one can develop permanent staining and dull spots within 5-10 years.

The NB Climate Factor

New Brunswick's extreme humidity swings give quartz a practical edge in longevity with less effort. Granite owners in Moncton or Saint John who stay on top of annual sealing will have countertops that look gorgeous for 30+ years. But many homeowners forget or skip sealing, and that's where granite starts showing its age faster than quartz. If you're the type who prefers a "set it and forget it" surface, quartz is the better choice for NB homes.

Both materials can chip if struck hard on an edge or corner, and both can be repaired by a professional. Quartz repairs tend to be slightly more visible because matching the engineered pattern is harder than filling a chip in uniform granite. Repair costs in NB run \$150-400 per chip for either material.

From a resale perspective, both quartz and granite add strong value to NB homes. Quartz has become the more popular choice among buyers in the Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John markets over the past five years, but granite remains a respected premium surface. At \$60-120 per square foot installed for quartz and \$55-110 for granite, the pricing in New Brunswick is comparable — your choice should come down to maintenance preference and heat habits rather than longevity concerns.

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Q12

What edge profiles are most popular for kitchen countertops in NB?

The eased (straight) edge and beveled edge are the most popular countertop profiles in New Brunswick kitchens, chosen for their clean lines and timeless appearance. Edge profile is one of those details that seems minor but significantly affects how your kitchen looks and feels — and some profiles cost more than others because of the fabrication time involved.

The **eased edge** is a simple flat edge with slightly rounded corners to remove sharpness. It's the standard profile included in most NB fabricator quotes at no extra charge, works with every kitchen style from traditional to modern, and is the easiest to clean since there are no grooves or curves where crumbs collect. The **beveled edge** adds a subtle 45-degree cut along the top, creating a thin line of visual interest. It's also typically included or adds only \$5-10 per linear foot.

For homeowners wanting more character, the **half bullnose** (also called a demi-bullnose) rounds over the top edge while leaving the bottom flat, creating a softer look that works beautifully in transitional and traditional NB kitchens. This profile usually adds \$10-15 per linear foot over the standard eased edge. The **full bullnose** rounds both top and bottom into a complete half-circle — it's a classic look common in older Saint John and Fredericton homes with traditional cabinetry, adding \$15-25 per linear foot.

Profiles to Consider Carefully

The **ogee edge** features an S-shaped curve that gives a very ornate, traditional look. It was extremely popular in the early 2000s but has fallen out of fashion in most NB kitchens. If you're planning to sell within 5-10 years, the ogee can date your kitchen. It also adds \$20-30 per linear foot and creates grooves that collect crumbs and grime. The **waterfall edge**, where the countertop material continues down the side of an island to the floor, is a dramatic modern statement that's gaining popularity in higher-end Moncton and Fredericton renovations. Budget an additional \$1,500-3,500 for a waterfall end panel on an island, depending on the material.

For families with young children, avoid sharp square edges — the eased edge with its slightly rounded corners or the half bullnose are much safer options. For quartz and granite countertops fabricated in NB, most shops can produce any standard profile, but specialty profiles like mitered edges or chiseled edges may have longer lead times or require shops with specific CNC equipment. Always ask your fabricator to show you physical samples of each edge profile in your chosen material before committing — photos don't capture how the edge catches light. Most NB fabricators include one or two basic profiles in their standard per-square-foot pricing and charge extra for premium profiles, so clarify edge costs when comparing quotes.

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Can I install laminate countertops myself in my NB kitchen?

Yes, laminate countertops are one of the few countertop types that a confident DIYer can install, and they're a practical budget-friendly choice for NB kitchens at \$20-45 per square foot for materials. Pre-formed (post-formed) laminate countertops from big box stores come with the backsplash already curved into the slab, making them the most DIY-friendly option. Custom laminate with square edges or no integrated backsplash is slightly more complex but still manageable.

The basic process involves measuring carefully, cutting the countertop to length with a circular saw (using a fine-tooth blade, cutting from the back side to prevent chipping the laminate face), making cutouts for the sink, and securing the countertop to the cabinet base with screws from underneath. Where two sections meet at a corner, you'll need to use draw bolts (also called miter bolts) to pull the joint tight, and apply colour-matched laminate seam filler to make the joint water-resistant.

Where NB's Climate Creates Challenges

The critical detail for New Brunswick installations is sealing every seam and the sink cutout edges with waterproof silicone. Laminate countertops have a particleboard or MDF core that will swell and disintegrate if water penetrates the laminate surface — and in NB's humid summers, even moisture vapour can cause problems at unsealed edges over time. Apply a generous bead of 100% silicone around the sink cutout before dropping in the sink, and seal the backsplash joint where the countertop meets the wall. This is the step most DIYers rush through, and it's the one that causes the most failures.

For the sink cutout, you'll need a jigsaw with a clean-cutting laminate blade. Drill a starter hole inside the cutout line, then cut carefully following your traced template. Take your time here — a botched sink cutout on a laminate countertop is essentially unrepairable, and you'll need to buy a new section.

When to Call a Professional

DIY works well for straight runs and simple L-shapes with one miter joint. If your kitchen has multiple corners, curved walls, or unusual angles, the cuts become much more demanding and a professional installer at \$300-600 for labour alone is a worthwhile investment. Also, if your cabinets aren't level — common in older NB homes with settled foundations — the countertop will need shimming and scribing to the wall, which takes experience to get right.

If your project involves any plumbing changes (moving the sink location, adding a dishwasher connection) or electrical work (adding an outlet for a garburator), those portions require permits and licensed tradespeople in New

Brunswick regardless of whether you install the countertop yourself. Budget \$20-45 per square foot for materials if doing it yourself, versus \$35-65 per square foot fully installed by a professional in the NB market. The savings are real but only if you have the tools, patience, and a helper — laminate countertops are awkward and fragile to maneuver, especially 8-foot sections through doorways of older NB homes.

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Q14

How do I choose between light and dark countertops for my NB kitchen?

Your choice between light and dark countertops should be driven by your kitchen's natural light levels, cabinet colour, and how much maintenance you're willing to handle daily. There's no universally "right" answer, but New Brunswick's climate and housing stock create some practical considerations that should influence your decision.

Light countertops (whites, creams, light greys, pale marble-look quartz) make kitchens feel larger and brighter — a genuine advantage in NB where winter days are short and many older homes have smaller kitchen windows. If your kitchen faces north or has limited natural light, a light countertop paired with lighter cabinets can transform the space from cave-like to welcoming. Light countertops also show less dust, which is helpful during NB's dry winter months when forced-air heating circulates fine particles. The downside: light surfaces show stains more readily, particularly from coffee, red wine, and turmeric. In a quartz surface this is less of an issue since stains wipe off the non-porous surface, but in granite or marble, a stain on a light background is more visible if sealing lapses.

Dark countertops (blacks, deep browns, charcoal, dark quartz patterns) create dramatic contrast against white or light-coloured cabinets — a look that remains popular in Moncton and Fredericton kitchen renovations. Dark surfaces hide stains beautifully but show every crumb, water spot, and smudge of dust. If you have a busy family kitchen, dark countertops mean wiping down after every meal to keep them looking clean. Hard water spots are also more visible on dark surfaces, and New Brunswick's water hardness varies by municipality — Saint John's water supply, for instance, can leave noticeable mineral deposits on dark polished surfaces.

Practical Guidelines for NB Kitchens

The most timeless approach is to create contrast between your cabinets and countertops. Dark cabinets pair beautifully with light countertops, and light or white cabinets look stunning with medium-to-dark counters. Going monochromatic (dark cabinets with dark countertops, or white on white) can work but requires careful attention to texture and pattern variation to avoid a flat, bland appearance.

Consider the resale factor if you plan to sell within 5-10 years. In New Brunswick's real estate market, white and light grey quartz countertops with subtle veining are currently the strongest sellers — they photograph well for listings and appeal to the broadest range of buyers. Very dark or very bold countertop choices are more polarizing. That said, if this is your forever home, choose what makes you happy.

A useful test before committing: borrow or buy large samples of your top choices and live with them on your existing counters for a week. View them in morning light, evening light, and under your kitchen's artificial lighting. NB's long winter evenings mean you'll see your countertops under artificial light for many months of the year, and some colours shift dramatically under LED versus incandescent bulbs. Most NB fabricators and big box stores will provide or lend large samples at no charge.

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Q15

What is the turnaround time for quartz countertop fabrication in Moncton?

Expect 3-6 weeks from templating to installation for quartz countertops fabricated in Moncton, with the typical timeline running closer to 4 weeks during normal demand periods. This timeline has several stages, and understanding each one helps you plan your kitchen renovation schedule and avoid costly delays.

The process begins with **slab selection** — visiting the fabricator's yard to choose your specific slab. Most Moncton fabricators stock 50-200 slabs across various brands and colours, but if you want a specific colour or pattern that isn't in stock, ordering a slab adds 1-3 weeks to the timeline. Once your cabinets are fully installed and levelled, the

fabricator sends a **templater** to laser-measure or create physical templates of your countertop layout. This visit takes 1-2 hours and must happen after cabinet installation is complete — never before, as even small shifts in cabinet position mean the countertop won't fit properly.

After templating, **fabrication** takes 5-10 business days in most Moncton shops. The slab is cut to your template dimensions, edge profiles are machined, sink and cooktop cutouts are made, and the surface is polished. Quality shops will photograph the finished pieces and confirm details before scheduling installation. **Installation** itself typically takes 2-4 hours for a standard kitchen and involves setting the slabs, making seams, installing undermount sinks, and applying silicone.

Seasonal Variations

During peak renovation season (May through October), Moncton fabricators are significantly busier, and the templating-to-installation window can stretch to 5-6 weeks. If you're planning a summer kitchen renovation, have your fabricator lined up and your slab selected before cabinets go in so templating can happen the day after cabinet installation is complete. During the quieter winter months (November through March), turnaround times often shrink to 2-3 weeks, and some shops offer 10-15% discounts to keep their crews busy.

If you're located outside Moncton — in Fredericton, Saint John, Miramichi, or rural areas — add 3-7 days for scheduling the templating visit and the installation trip. Most Moncton fabricators batch their out-of-town work, sending templaters and installers on specific days rather than making individual trips. Delivery surcharges of \$200-500 are common for locations more than an hour from the fabrication shop.

Planning tip: Order your quartz slab and confirm your fabricator as soon as you finalize your kitchen design, even before demolition begins. The worst bottleneck in NB kitchen renovations is waiting for countertops after cabinets are in — your kitchen is unusable during this gap, and extending it from 3 weeks to 6 weeks because you didn't plan ahead is a frustrating and avoidable delay. Get at least three quotes from Moncton-area fabricators and ask each about their current backlog before committing.

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Do marble countertops work in NB kitchens or are they too high maintenance?

Marble countertops are beautiful but genuinely high-maintenance, and New Brunswick's climate adds extra challenges that make them impractical for most busy family kitchens. If you're set on marble, going in with clear expectations about what you're committing to will prevent regret.

Marble is a soft, porous natural stone that etches (develops dull spots) when it contacts anything acidic — lemon juice, tomato sauce, vinegar, wine, even some cleaning products. These etch marks aren't stains that can be wiped away; they're chemical reactions that dissolve the polished surface. In a working kitchen where you're cooking daily, etching is inevitable. Some homeowners embrace this as "patina" that gives the marble character. Others find it maddening. You need to honestly assess which camp you'll fall into before spending \$80-150 per square foot installed in the NB market.

Beyond etching, marble requires sealing every 6-12 months to resist staining. In New Brunswick's humid summers, an unsealed marble surface can absorb moisture and develop dark spots or, worse, encourage mold growth in micro-pores. During our dry heated winters, the stone loses moisture and can develop hairline cracks along natural veining over many heating cycles. This isn't guaranteed, but it's a known risk with marble in climates that swing between humid and very dry as dramatically as ours does.

Where Marble Can Work

Marble makes an excellent accent surface rather than a primary countertop. A marble pastry slab (marble stays naturally cool, which is perfect for rolling dough) set into an island with quartz surrounding it gives you the beauty of marble where it's most useful, without exposing the entire kitchen surface to daily abuse. This approach costs far less than full marble countertops and limits your maintenance to a small area.

If you want the marble look across your full kitchen, **marble-look quartz** has become remarkably convincing. Brands like Caesarstone and Silestone offer veined white patterns that capture marble's elegance with none of its maintenance demands — no sealing, no etching, no staining, and complete resistance to NB's humidity swings. At \$60-120 per square foot installed, marble-look quartz costs the same or less than real marble and will look pristine for decades.

The Honest Assessment

For a kitchen that sees daily cooking, real marble is a luxury choice that demands constant vigilance. Professional honing (to even out etch marks) costs \$300-600 and needs doing every 2-3 years. If you have a second prep kitchen or a light-use kitchen where the marble primarily serves as a visual statement, it can be stunning. For a

working kitchen in an NB home where you're feeding a family, quartz or granite will serve you far better with a fraction of the upkeep. Many Moncton and Fredericton homeowners who installed marble five years ago have told their renovators they'd choose quartz if they could do it again.

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Q17

How do solid surface countertops compare to quartz for NB homes?

Solid surface countertops (like Corian) and quartz are both excellent choices for New Brunswick kitchens, but they excel in different areas — solid surface wins on seamless appearance and repairability, while quartz wins on hardness, heat resistance, and scratch resistance. Understanding the trade-offs helps you pick the right material for how you actually use your kitchen.

Solid surface is made from acrylic or polyester resins blended with mineral fillers. Its standout advantage is that seams can be chemically bonded and sanded invisible, creating a truly seamless countertop that wraps around corners and integrates sinks without any visible joints. In NB's humid summers, this seamlessness eliminates the seam gaps where moisture can penetrate — a genuine practical benefit. Solid surface is also repairable: scratches and minor burns can be sanded out by a professional, restoring the surface to like-new condition. Budget \$50-90 per square foot installed in New Brunswick.

The downsides are real, though. Solid surface scratches more easily than quartz — you'll see cutting marks if you slice directly on the surface, and abrasive cleaners will dull the finish. It's also less heat-resistant: setting a hot pan directly on solid surface can scorch or crack it, and the damage, while repairable, requires a professional visit at \$150-300. Solid surface has a more uniform, manufactured appearance that some homeowners find less appealing than quartz's natural stone look.

Quartz (engineered stone) is significantly harder than solid surface — it resists scratches from everyday kitchen use and maintains its polished finish for decades without professional refinishing. It handles NB's humidity swings without any concern since it's non-porous, and it comes in a broader range of patterns, including convincing marble

and granite looks. At \$60-120 per square foot installed in NB, quartz runs slightly more expensive than solid surface, but the gap narrows at the mid-range.

Quartz seams are visible, though a skilled fabricator minimizes them to thin lines that most people won't notice. Unlike solid surface, quartz cannot be repaired on-site — a chip or crack typically requires the affected section to be replaced, which can cost \$500-1,500 depending on the extent.

Which Suits Your NB Kitchen Better?

Choose **solid surface** if you want an integrated seamless sink (particularly useful in NB where moisture management matters), if you have an unusually shaped kitchen with many angles, or if you prefer the ability to sand out damage rather than live with it. Solid surface is also the better choice for rental properties or cottages where repairability matters more than luxury appearance.

Choose **quartz** if you want the look and feel of natural stone, if you cook frequently and need a surface that resists scratches from daily use, or if you're renovating with resale in mind — quartz currently carries stronger resale value in the Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John markets. Both materials handle NB's climate without sealing or special maintenance, making either one a smart, low-maintenance upgrade over laminate or natural stone.

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Q18

What countertop material is most stain-resistant for cooking families?

Quartz is the most stain-resistant countertop material readily available in New Brunswick, making it the top choice for families who cook frequently and don't want to worry about spills. Because quartz is engineered with polymer resins binding the stone particles, it's completely non-porous — liquids can't penetrate the surface, so stains from coffee, red wine, beet juice, turmeric, and cooking oils wipe clean with soap and water even if left sitting for hours.

This non-porous quality is particularly valuable in New Brunswick's climate. During our humid summers, porous materials like granite and marble can absorb moisture and cooking liquids more readily, making stains harder to remove and potentially fostering bacterial growth in the stone's micro-pores. Quartz eliminates this concern entirely. There's no sealing schedule to maintain, no special cleaning products needed, and no anxiety when your kids spill grape juice on the counter. At \$60-120 per square foot installed in the NB market, quartz delivers this worry-free performance at a competitive price point.

Solid surface (Corian) is the runner-up for stain resistance. It's also non-porous and handles most kitchen stains easily. For stubborn marks, you can use a mild abrasive pad to buff them out — something you cannot do with quartz's polished finish. The trade-off is that solid surface scratches more easily, so you'll see cutting marks and wear patterns over time. It runs \$50-90 per square foot installed in NB.

Granite performs well against stains when properly sealed, but it requires annual sealing to maintain that protection. Skip a year of sealing and you'll find that coffee and oil can soak into the stone and leave permanent marks. For busy families who may forget the sealing schedule, granite is a riskier choice than quartz. **Laminate** at \$20-45 per square foot is surprisingly stain-resistant on the surface itself — the plastic laminate layer repels most kitchen stains — but if liquid gets into a seam or chip, the particleboard core swells and the damage is permanent.

Best Practices for Cooking Families

Even with quartz's excellent stain resistance, a few habits will keep your counters looking new for decades. Use cutting boards rather than cutting directly on the surface — quartz resists stains but can show knife scratches over time. Clean up acidic spills (lemon, vinegar) promptly, not because they'll stain, but because prolonged contact with some quartz brands can cause very slight dulling of the finish. Avoid abrasive cleaners like Comet or steel wool, which can scratch the polished surface and make future stains more likely to stick in the micro-scratches.

For families with young children, quartz has the added benefit of being certified food-safe and hygienic by NSF International — bacteria, mold, and mildew cannot colonize the non-porous surface the way they can with natural stone or butcher block. In New Brunswick homes where kitchen humidity can spike during summer, this hygienic quality is more than a selling point — it's a practical health benefit.

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What countertop material works best around a farmhouse sink?

Quartz is the best countertop material to pair with a farmhouse (apron-front) sink in New Brunswick kitchens because it is non-porous, waterproof at the seam, and does not require the annual sealing that natural stone needs — critical given the heavy water exposure around a farmhouse sink's front apron.

Granite is a close second for its heat resistance, and solid surface (Corian-style) offers seamless integration, but each has trade-offs worth understanding.

A farmhouse sink creates unique demands on the countertop material because of how it is installed. Unlike a standard drop-in or undermount sink, a farmhouse sink's front apron extends past the cabinet face, and the countertop must be **precisely cut to fit tightly around three sides** of the sink opening. Any gap between the countertop and the sink rim becomes a place where water pools, seeps, and causes damage — making material choice and fabrication quality both critical.

Quartz (\$60–\$120 per square foot installed in NB) is the top choice because it is engineered to be completely non-porous. Water cannot penetrate the surface or the cut edge, so even if the seal between the quartz and the sink is not perfect, moisture will not cause staining, swelling, or deterioration. In New Brunswick's humid summers, this is especially important — a porous countertop material around a farmhouse sink in a Maritime kitchen is a recipe for mold growth at the seam. Most NB fabricators in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John have extensive experience templating for farmhouse sinks, but always confirm before signing a contract.

Granite (\$55–\$110 per square foot installed) is a strong option if you prefer natural stone. It handles the heat from pots pulled directly from the stove — something quartz cannot do as well, since extreme heat can discolour quartz. However, granite is porous and requires **annual sealing** to maintain its water resistance. Around a farmhouse sink where water is constantly splashing, a missed sealing year can lead to dark water stains in the stone that are difficult or impossible to remove.

Solid surface materials like Corian (\$50–\$90 per square foot installed) offer a unique advantage: the countertop and sink can be fabricated as a single seamless piece, eliminating the seam entirely. An integrated solid surface farmhouse sink with matching countertop looks sleek and has zero risk of water infiltration at the joint. The downside is that solid surface scratches more easily than quartz or granite and is not heat-resistant — setting a hot pan directly on it will cause damage.

Materials to Avoid

Butcher block (\$40–\$70 per square foot) is a poor choice directly around a farmhouse sink, especially in NB. The constant water exposure at the sink edge causes wood to swell, darken, and eventually rot, even with diligent oiling

every 3–6 months. NB's summer humidity accelerates this deterioration. If you love the look, use butcher block on an island or secondary counter and choose quartz or solid surface around the sink.

Laminate (\$20–\$45 per square foot) is also risky around a farmhouse sink. Water that penetrates the seam between the laminate and the sink will cause the MDF or particleboard substrate to swell irreversibly. Laminate can work with careful installation and silicone sealing, but it is not the ideal pairing for the farmhouse style.

Budget \$3,000–\$6,000 for a quartz or granite countertop in a typical NB kitchen with a farmhouse sink cutout. The farmhouse sink itself adds \$500–\$2,000 for the fixture plus \$300–\$800 for the modified cabinet base that supports its weight — farmhouse sinks are significantly heavier than standard sinks, especially fireclay and cast iron models.

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Q20

How thick should my kitchen countertops be for a modern look?

For a modern kitchen look, choose countertops that are either ultra-thin (12–20mm / roughly 1/2 to 3/4 inch) for a sleek European aesthetic, or the standard 3cm (1-1/4 inch) with a clean square edge — both read as contemporary. The traditional 2cm (3/4 inch) slab with a built-up ogee or bullnose edge is what gives kitchens a dated, early-2000s appearance.

The **3cm (1-1/4 inch) thickness** is the current standard in New Brunswick for quartz and granite countertops and is the most popular choice for modern kitchens. At this thickness, the slab is strong enough to span standard cabinet widths without additional support, and a **simple square edge or eased edge** (slightly rounded for safety) creates the crisp, minimal profile that defines modern kitchen design. This thickness with a clean edge works beautifully with waterfall edges on islands — where the countertop continues vertically down the side of the island to the floor — which is one of the defining features of contemporary kitchen design. Expect to pay \$60–\$120 per square foot installed for quartz and \$55–\$110 for granite at 3cm thickness in New Brunswick.

Ultra-thin countertops (12mm or 20mm) are gaining popularity in high-end NB kitchen renovations. Brands like Dekton, Neolith, and some quartz manufacturers offer large-format thin slabs that create a razor-sharp profile reminiscent of European design. These require careful installation — they are more fragile during handling and typically need a substrate or steel reinforcement beneath unsupported spans like sink cutouts. The material cost is comparable to standard quartz, but installation labour runs 15–25% higher due to the specialized handling. Budget \$75–\$140 per square foot installed for a thin-profile countertop.

Conversely, a **thick, chunky countertop** (5–6cm or even 8cm) can also read as modern in the right context — especially raw concrete, honed stone, or a thick butcher block island in an industrial-style kitchen. This look is less common in New Brunswick but makes a dramatic statement in open-concept kitchen designs.

Edge Profiles That Define the Era

The edge profile matters as much as thickness for achieving a modern look. **Square edges and mitered edges** are modern. **Ogee, dupont, and heavily bevelled edges** are traditional and will make even a new countertop look dated. A **waterfall edge** — where the countertop material wraps over the end of an island and runs to the floor — is the most contemporary statement you can make, but it uses significantly more material (add \$1,000–\$3,000 to your island countertop cost).

For NB homeowners renovating in the \$25,000–\$45,000 mid-range, the best value for a modern look is a **3cm quartz slab with a simple square edge** on perimeter counters and a **waterfall end on the island** if budget allows. This combination accounts for the majority of modern kitchen renovations happening in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John right now.

One practical note: if your existing NB kitchen has 2cm countertops and you are replacing them with 3cm, check that your cabinet boxes are level and sturdy enough to support the additional weight. Quartz at 3cm weighs approximately 20–25 pounds per square foot — a typical kitchen's worth of countertop weighs 400–600 pounds total. Older cabinets in NB homes from the 1970s–1990s may need reinforcement or shimming before the new countertop is templated and installed.

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Can I put new countertops on existing cabinets in my NB kitchen?

Yes, you absolutely can install new countertops on existing cabinets — and it is one of the smartest, most cost-effective kitchen upgrades available to New Brunswick homeowners. As long as your current cabinet boxes are structurally sound, level, and securely fastened to the walls, new countertops can transform the look of your kitchen for \$2,000–\$6,000 instead of the \$25,000–\$45,000 a full renovation would cost.

This approach works best when your existing cabinets are in good condition but visually outdated. Many NB homes built in the 1970s through 1990s have solid hardwood or plywood cabinet boxes that are still perfectly functional — it is the doors, hardware, and countertops that look tired. Replacing just the countertops (and optionally refacing the doors for \$5,000–\$12,000) can make a kitchen look completely new.

What to Check Before Ordering

Structural integrity is the first assessment. Open all your cabinets and check for water damage, soft spots in the wood, delaminating particleboard, or signs of mold — especially under the sink and near the dishwasher. In New Brunswick's humid Maritime climate, older cabinets in kitchens with poor ventilation or past plumbing leaks may have moisture damage that is not visible from the outside. If cabinet boxes are compromised, new countertops on a weak foundation will eventually sag, shift, or crack at seams.

Level and plumb is the second requirement. Your countertop fabricator will template the new countertop based on the exact dimensions and level of your existing cabinets. If cabinets have settled, shifted, or were never properly levelled during the original installation, the installer will need to shim them before templating — this adds \$200–\$500 but is essential. A countertop installed on unlevel cabinets will have visible gaps, uneven overhangs, and potential stress points that lead to cracking, especially in stone and quartz.

Layout compatibility is the third consideration. New countertops on existing cabinets only work if you are keeping the same kitchen layout. If you want to move the sink, add an island, or change the configuration, the cabinet layout must change too, which goes beyond a simple countertop swap. However, you can change the countertop material, colour, edge profile, and even add features like an undermount sink (replacing a drop-in) as long as the cabinet positions stay the same.

For material options, **quartz** (\$60–\$120 per square foot installed) and **granite** (\$55–\$110 per square foot) are the most popular upgrades in NB. Both add significant value to the kitchen and are templated to fit your exact cabinet layout after the old countertops are removed. **Laminate** (\$20–\$45 per square foot) is a budget-friendly alternative that has improved dramatically in appearance — modern laminate with square edges and realistic stone or wood patterns looks far better than the laminate of 20 years ago.

The process typically takes **one to two weeks** from template to installation. After you select your material and colour at a fabrication shop (most NB fabricators are in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John), a technician visits your home to laser-template the existing cabinets. Fabrication takes 3–6 weeks for quartz and granite. On installation day, the old countertops are removed and new ones installed in 3–6 hours. Your kitchen is without countertops for that single day only if your fabricator templates before removal — ask about this scheduling approach.

Budget an additional \$300–\$600 for **sink and faucet reconnection** if your plumber needs to adapt existing plumbing to a new undermount sink configuration. If you are switching from a drop-in to an undermount sink, the cabinet beneath may need a waterproof coating applied to the cut edge — your installer should handle this as part of the job.

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What are the most scratch-resistant countertop options for NB kitchens?

Quartz and granite are the most scratch-resistant countertop options for New Brunswick kitchens, with both scoring a 7 on the Mohs hardness scale — meaning only materials harder than steel can leave a mark. For busy NB households where the kitchen sees heavy daily use, choosing a surface that can withstand years of cutting, sliding, and general wear is a smart investment.

Quartz (engineered stone) is the most popular countertop material in NB right now, running \$60-\$120 per square foot installed. Its scratch resistance comes from the 90-93% ground natural quartz mixed with resin binders. It handles everything from dragging cast iron pans to accidental knife slips without showing damage. Quartz is also non-porous, which means it never needs sealing — a real advantage in New Brunswick's Maritime humidity where porous surfaces can harbour mould and bacteria. The main weakness is heat: quartz resin can scorch if you place a hot pot directly on the surface, so trivets are a must.

Granite is a close second at \$55-\$110 per square foot installed. As a natural stone, granite is extremely hard and also handles heat better than quartz. You can set a hot pan directly on granite without damage. The trade-off is that granite is porous and requires annual sealing to prevent staining — something NB homeowners should schedule every fall before the dry winter heating season when the stone is most vulnerable to absorbing spills. Darker granites (absolute black, uba tuba) tend to be denser and more scratch-resistant than lighter colours.

Other Options Worth Considering

Solid surface (Corian) at \$50-\$90 per square foot offers moderate scratch resistance — it will scratch more easily than quartz or granite, but fine scratches can be buffed out with a Scotch-Brite pad. This reparability makes it a practical choice for families with young children. **Porcelain slab countertops** are a newer option gaining traction in Moncton and Fredericton showrooms. They score even higher than quartz on hardness tests and resist both scratches and heat, though they run \$80-\$140 per square foot and are more prone to chipping at the edges.

On the other end of the spectrum, **laminates** (\$20-\$45 per square foot) and **butcher block** (\$40-\$70 per square foot) are the least scratch-resistant. Laminate shows cuts and scratches permanently, while butcher block dents and scratches easily — though many homeowners appreciate the lived-in patina. Butcher block also requires oiling every 3-6 months, and in NB's humid summers, it can harbour moisture near sinks.

For the best combination of scratch resistance, low maintenance, and value in the NB market, quartz is the standout winner. Most NB fabricators are based in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John, with lead times of 3-6 weeks from template to installation. If you are in a rural area, expect a small delivery surcharge. Regardless of which material you choose, always use a cutting board — even on quartz and granite. While these surfaces resist

scratches, your knives will dull quickly cutting directly on stone.

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Q23

How do leathered granite countertops compare to polished for NB kitchens?

Leathered granite offers a matte, textured finish that hides fingerprints and water spots far better than polished granite — making it an excellent practical choice for busy New Brunswick kitchens. The finish you choose affects not just appearance but also daily maintenance, durability, and how the stone performs in NB's Maritime climate.

Polished granite is the traditional choice. The high-gloss mirror finish is achieved by mechanically buffing the stone to a smooth, reflective surface. It looks stunning and makes colours and veining pop, but it shows every fingerprint, water droplet, and crumb. In NB kitchens where cooking involves a lot of Maritime comfort food — chowders, stews, fiddlehead prep — polished granite demands frequent wiping to stay looking clean. The smooth surface is slightly easier to seal because there are fewer pores exposed, and annual sealing is straightforward.

Leathered granite (sometimes called "brushed") has a subtle texture created by running diamond-tipped brushes over the surface. The result is a soft, slightly dimpled finish that retains the stone's natural colour while eliminating the glossy sheen. This texture is a game-changer for daily life: fingerprints, smudges, and water marks are virtually invisible. Spills sit on the surface rather than spreading, giving you more time to wipe them up. The tactile quality feels warm and inviting, which pairs beautifully with the cozy, rustic kitchen aesthetic many NB homeowners are drawn to.

Key Differences for NB Homeowners

Maintenance is where leathered granite requires more attention. The textured surface has slightly more exposed pores than polished, which means it needs more thorough sealing — typically twice per year rather than once. In NB's humid summers, unsealed pores in leathered granite can absorb moisture and potentially harbour bacteria

near food prep areas. Make sure to seal before the humid season in May and again before the dry heating season in October.

Cost is comparable between the two finishes. Granite runs \$55-\$110 per square foot installed in New Brunswick regardless of finish, though leathered may add \$5-\$10 per square foot at some fabricators because the finishing process takes more time. Most fabricators in Moncton, Saint John, and Fredericton offer both finishes, but leathered options may have slightly longer lead times since fewer slabs come pre-finished — your fabricator may need to leather the slab in-house.

Colour matters when choosing between finishes. Darker granites (black pearl, steel grey, absolute black) look dramatic in leathered finish because the texture creates subtle light-and-shadow effects. Lighter granites lose some of their sparkle and depth without the polish, so if you have chosen a light-coloured granite like colonial white or river white, polished typically showcases the stone better.

For NB kitchens that see heavy daily use, leathered granite is the more forgiving choice. It hides the evidence of a lived-in kitchen while still delivering the durability and heat resistance that make granite a top-tier countertop material. Just stay disciplined about sealing twice a year, and it will serve you beautifully for decades.

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Q24

How do I choose between quartz brands like Caesarstone and Cambria in NB?

Caesarstone and Cambria are both premium quartz brands with excellent durability and warranties, but they differ in price, colour selection, origin, and availability in New Brunswick — so the best choice depends on your design preferences, budget, and which slabs your local fabricator stocks. Both are engineered from roughly 90-93% natural quartz bound with polymer resins, making them non-porous, stain-resistant, and ideal for NB's Maritime climate where humidity and moisture resistance matter.

Caesarstone is an Israeli-founded brand that has been in the quartz market since 1987 — one of the original engineered quartz manufacturers. Their strengths include a massive colour library with over 80 colours and finishes, including some of the most realistic marble-look patterns on the market. They pioneered natural-look veining that mimics Calacatta and Carrara marble, which is hugely popular in NB kitchens right now. Caesarstone offers a **25-year residential warranty** covering manufacturing defects. Price-wise in New Brunswick, Caesarstone typically runs \$60-\$100 per square foot installed, depending on the specific colour and your fabricator's pricing. It is widely stocked by NB fabricators in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John.

Cambria is the only major quartz brand manufactured entirely in the United States (Minnesota), which some homeowners prefer for quality control and supply chain reliability. Cambria's colour selection is equally impressive, with over 150 designs, and they are known for particularly bold, high-contrast veining patterns. Cambria offers a **lifetime residential warranty** — the strongest in the industry — covering defects in material and workmanship for as long as you own the home. Cambria tends to price \$5-\$20 per square foot higher than Caesarstone in the NB market, typically \$70-\$120 per square foot installed. Availability can be slightly more limited at smaller NB fabricators since Cambria controls its distribution more tightly.

Other Brands Worth Considering

Do not overlook other reputable quartz brands available in New Brunswick. **Silestone** (by Cosentino, Spain) offers built-in antimicrobial protection and a strong 25-year warranty, priced similarly to Caesarstone. **Hanstone** and **LG Viatera** are Korean-manufactured brands that offer excellent quality at a slightly lower price point (\$55-\$90 per square foot installed) and are increasingly popular with NB fabricators. Your fabricator may also carry **MSI Quartz** or **Allen + oth** branded quartz at the entry-level end (\$50-\$75 per square foot installed).

How to Decide

The most practical approach for NB homeowners is to start with your **fabricator, not the brand**. Visit quartz fabricators in Moncton, Fredericton, or Saint John and look at actual slabs in person — photos and samples never fully capture how a pattern looks at full scale. Ask your fabricator which brands they stock in their yard versus which they would need to special order. A slab in stock avoids 2-4 weeks of additional lead time. Standard quartz lead times in NB are already 3-6 weeks from template to installation.

Consider your **edge profile** preferences. Both Caesarstone and Cambria can be fabricated with any edge profile (beveled, bullnose, ogee, waterfall), but your fabricator's skill and equipment matter more than the brand for edge quality. Ask to see examples of finished edges in your preferred profile.

For NB's climate specifically, both brands perform identically — non-porous, no sealing required, resistant to Maritime humidity, and unaffected by the dry winter air that troubles solid wood and natural stone. Your decision

should come down to which colour and pattern you love, which brand your fabricator works with most confidently, and your budget. Getting quotes from 2-3 NB fabricators will reveal how pricing varies — it is common to see 20-30% price differences for the same slab between fabricators.

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What are the best low-maintenance countertop options for NB cottage kitchens?

Quartz and solid surface (Corian-type) countertops are the two best low-maintenance options for NB cottage kitchens, since both resist moisture, require no sealing, and stand up to the seasonal temperature and humidity swings that cottage kitchens endure. The key concern for cottage countertops is that many NB cottages sit unheated through winter, which rules out several materials that can't handle freeze-thaw cycles or extreme humidity variation.

Quartz countertops (\$60-\$120 per square foot installed) are the top overall choice. They're non-porous, so they never need sealing, won't absorb spills or harbour bacteria, and resist staining from coffee, wine, and cooking oils. For a cottage kitchen, the non-porous surface is especially valuable because cottages often sit closed up for weeks or months — a porous surface like granite or marble can absorb odours and moisture during those humid NB summers when the cottage is shut up. Quartz handles NB's Maritime humidity without any special care. The one caution: quartz can be damaged by extreme heat, so always use trivets under hot pots and pans from the stove.

However, if your cottage is **unheated in winter**, you need to confirm with your fabricator that the specific quartz brand you're choosing is rated for temperature extremes. Most quartz manufacturers void warranties for unheated or unconditioned spaces because the resin binders can crack in freeze-thaw conditions. If your cottage drops below freezing for extended periods, this is a real concern.

Alternatives for Unheated Cottages

Solid surface countertops (Corian, Staron, and similar brands) at \$50-\$90 per square foot installed are an excellent cottage choice. They're non-porous, seamless (the sink can be integrated with no seams to trap grime), and minor scratches can be sanded out with fine-grit sandpaper. Solid surface handles temperature swings better than quartz because it has more flexibility in the material. It's also lighter than quartz or granite, which can matter if your cottage has an older or lighter-duty cabinet structure.

Laminate countertops (\$20-\$45 per square foot installed) are the most budget-friendly low-maintenance option and work surprisingly well in cottage kitchens. Modern laminate has come a long way — high-pressure laminate (HPL) resists staining, is easy to clean, and handles temperature and humidity changes without issue. It won't crack in an unheated cottage. The trade-off is durability against scratches and heat damage, and seams around sinks can allow water infiltration over time. For a seasonal cottage where you want maximum value, laminate is hard to beat.

Butcher block (\$40-\$70 per square foot installed) is popular for the warm, rustic cottage aesthetic, but it's high-maintenance in NB's climate. It requires oiling every 3-6 months, is susceptible to water damage near sinks, and the humidity swings between closed-up humid summers and dry winters cause expansion, contraction, and

potential cracking. If you love the look, consider butcher block on an island or prep area only, with a more durable surface near the sink.

Granite (\$55-\$110 per square foot installed) is naturally heat-resistant and incredibly durable, but it does require annual sealing to prevent staining — a maintenance step that's easy to forget at a cottage you visit intermittently. In an unheated cottage, granite's natural stone composition handles freeze-thaw better than quartz, making it viable for three-season properties.

For most NB cottage kitchens, the sweet spot is **solid surface for unheated cottages** or **quartz for year-round heated cottages**. Most quartz and granite fabricators are based in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John, so cottage locations in more rural areas like the Acadian Peninsula, Fundy coast, or upper Saint John River valley may see delivery surcharges of \$200-\$500. Plan for 3-6 week fabrication lead times, and remember that templating happens after cabinets are fully installed and levelled.

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How do I repair a crack or chip in laminate countertops in my NB kitchen?

Small chips and cracks in laminate countertops can be repaired at home using laminate repair paste or a colour-matched seam filler, costing \$10-\$30 in materials and taking about 30 minutes to complete. This is a solid DIY fix that can extend the life of your countertop by several years, buying time before a full replacement.

For **chips** (where a piece of the laminate surface has broken away), the best product is a laminate repair paste, available at most NB hardware stores and building supply outlets. These come in a range of colours you can mix to match your countertop. Clean the chipped area thoroughly with rubbing alcohol to remove grease and debris. Apply the repair paste with the included applicator or a small putty knife, slightly overfilling the chip. Let it cure for the time specified on the product (usually 24 hours), then carefully sand flush with 400-grit sandpaper followed by 600-grit for a smooth finish. The repair won't be invisible, but it will be smooth, sealed, and far less noticeable than a raw

chip.

For **cracks** in the laminate surface, the approach depends on the severity. Hairline cracks that haven't lifted the laminate can be sealed with a thin application of clear or colour-matched seam filler, which prevents moisture from getting underneath. This is critical in NB kitchens — once water infiltrates beneath laminate through a crack, the particleboard substrate swells and the surrounding laminate begins to lift and bubble. NB's Maritime summer humidity accelerates this damage if the crack is left unsealed, especially near sinks and dishwashers.

When the Laminate Has Lifted

If the crack has caused the laminate to lift or bubble away from the substrate, you need to re-adhere it before sealing. Apply contact cement (available at any NB hardware store) to both the underside of the lifted laminate and the exposed substrate using a small brush or toothpick. Let both surfaces dry until tacky (15-20 minutes), then press the laminate firmly back down. Use a J-roller or a rolling pin wrapped in a towel to apply even pressure from the centre outward. Place a heavy, flat object (books, a cast iron pan) on the area for 24 hours while the cement fully bonds.

For cracks along the **front edge** or at the seam where the backsplash meets the counter surface, apply a bead of colour-matched caulk designed for kitchen use. These areas take the most abuse and see the most moisture exposure in NB kitchens. A clean caulk line seals the crack and provides a flexible joint that moves with the normal expansion and contraction caused by NB's seasonal temperature and humidity changes.

When Repair Isn't Enough

If the particleboard substrate beneath the laminate has already swollen from moisture infiltration, no surface repair will hold long-term. You can test this by pressing on the damaged area — if the surface feels soft or spongy, the substrate is compromised. At that point, you're looking at either replacing the affected section of countertop or, if the damage is widespread, replacing the entire countertop. Laminate countertop replacement in NB runs \$20-\$45 per square foot installed, making it the most budget-friendly full replacement option.

For countertops near the end of their lifespan with multiple chips and cracks, a cosmetic fix buys time while you plan and budget for a replacement. Many NB homeowners repair existing laminate countertops to get through to their planned renovation date, especially when booking a contractor 3-6 months out. If you're planning a full kitchen renovation, a \$15 repair kit is a smart stopgap rather than spending on a new countertop you'll replace anyway.

All of these repairs are well within DIY territory — no permits, no special tools, and no need to hire a professional. Just make sure any cracks near the sink or dishwasher are sealed promptly to prevent moisture damage to the substrate.

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