

NEW BRUNSWICK KITCHENS



# Kitchen Flooring

Kitchen flooring options including hardwood, LVP, tile, and their performance in NB's climate

16 Expert Answers from Kitchen IQ

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## What is the cost to polish or stain a concrete kitchen floor in Moncton or Fredericton, and how does it compare to installing tile or LVP?

**Polished concrete floors in Moncton and Fredericton typically cost \$8-15 per square foot for basic polishing, or \$12-25 per square foot for decorative staining and polishing.** For a typical 150 square foot kitchen, expect \$1,200-\$3,750 total, making it competitive with premium flooring options while offering unique industrial appeal.

### Concrete Floor Options and Pricing

Basic concrete polishing involves grinding the existing slab smooth and applying a protective sealer. This works well if you have an exposed concrete slab in good condition — common in newer construction or basement kitchens. The process takes 2-3 days and creates a smooth, easy-to-clean surface that's extremely durable.

Decorative concrete staining adds color and visual interest before polishing. Acid stains create variegated, natural-looking patterns in earth tones, while water-based stains offer more uniform colors including blues and greens. The staining process adds \$4-10 per square foot to the base polishing cost, but creates a truly custom look that's impossible to replicate with other flooring materials.

### Comparison with Other Kitchen Flooring

LVP (luxury vinyl plank) runs \$2,000-\$4,000 installed for the same 150 square foot kitchen, making it significantly less expensive than decorative concrete. LVP is also warmer underfoot during New Brunswick's cold winters and completely waterproof — crucial near sinks and dishwashers. However, LVP will need replacement in 10-15 years, while properly maintained concrete lasts decades.

Ceramic or porcelain tile costs \$2,500-\$5,000 installed, similar to decorative concrete pricing. Tile offers more design flexibility and is familiar to most contractors, but concrete provides seamless installation with no grout lines to maintain. Both materials are cold underfoot in winter — consider radiant floor heating (\$3-8 per square foot) with either option.

### New Brunswick Considerations

Concrete floors work exceptionally well in NB's climate because they're unaffected by humidity swings that can cause hardwood to expand and contract. The thermal mass also helps moderate temperature swings in kitchens with large windows or exterior walls.

However, most existing NB homes have wooden subfloors, not concrete slabs. Installing new concrete over wood framing requires significant structural work and isn't practical for most kitchen renovations. Polished concrete is

primarily an option for basement kitchens, new construction, or homes built on slab foundations.

### **Practical Installation Timeline**

Concrete polishing requires the kitchen to be completely empty and inaccessible for 3-5 days. Plan this work before cabinet installation, as the dust and equipment access needs are substantial. Most Moncton and Fredericton contractors who do decorative concrete work primarily in commercial settings — residential concrete polishing specialists are limited, which can affect pricing and scheduling.

### **When to Choose Concrete vs Alternatives**

Choose polished concrete if you love the industrial aesthetic, have an existing concrete slab in good condition, and want a truly unique floor that will last decades. The seamless surface is ideal for wheelchair accessibility and easy maintenance.

Choose LVP for the best combination of comfort, waterproofing, and budget-friendliness in New Brunswick kitchens. Choose tile for traditional appeal with excellent durability and the widest selection of styles and colors.

Need help finding flooring contractors who work with decorative concrete? New Brunswick Kitchens can match you with specialists familiar with all flooring options for your kitchen renovation.

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**Q2**

## **What does a seamless epoxy kitchen floor cost installed in Fredericton NB, and how does it hold up to moisture and traffic?**

**Seamless epoxy kitchen flooring in Fredericton typically costs \$8-15 per square foot installed, making a 150 sq ft kitchen run \$1,200-2,250.** This puts epoxy in the mid-range between luxury vinyl plank (\$2,000-4,000 total) and ceramic tile (\$2,500-5,000 total) for kitchen flooring options.

The pricing varies based on the epoxy system chosen. **Basic single-coat epoxy** runs \$8-10/sq ft and provides decent durability but limited design options. **Multi-coat systems with decorative flakes or metallic effects** cost \$12-15/sq ft and offer superior durability plus custom aesthetics. Most Fredericton contractors recommend the multi-coat approach for kitchens due to the heavy traffic and potential spills.

### **Moisture Performance in New Brunswick Kitchens**

Epoxy excels in New Brunswick's humid maritime climate. The seamless surface creates a complete moisture barrier — no grout lines or seams where water can penetrate like with tile. This makes epoxy particularly valuable around dishwashers, sinks, and refrigerators where minor leaks are common. During New Brunswick's humid summers, epoxy won't absorb moisture or promote mold growth underneath like some flooring materials can.

However, **surface preparation is critical** in older Fredericton homes. Many houses built in the 1960s-1980s have concrete basement slabs that weren't properly vapor-sealed. If moisture wicks up through the concrete, it can cause epoxy to delaminate within 2-3 years. A qualified installer will test for moisture levels and apply appropriate primers or moisture barriers before the epoxy coating.

### **Traffic Durability and Maintenance**

**High-quality epoxy systems handle kitchen traffic exceptionally well** — better than hardwood, comparable to ceramic tile. The surface resists scratches from chair legs, dropped utensils, and pet claws. Unlike tile, there's no grout to stain or crack over time. Most homeowners report the floor looking nearly new after 5-7 years with proper maintenance.

The main durability concern is **impact damage from heavy dropped items** like cast iron pans or appliances during moves. While epoxy won't crack like tile, it can chip or dent, requiring professional repair. Hot items (like a dropped cookie sheet) can also leave permanent marks on lower-grade epoxy systems.

**Maintenance is minimal** — sweep regularly and mop with mild soap. The non-porous surface means spills wipe up easily, and you never need to seal or refinish like with natural stone or hardwood.

### **New Brunswick Installation Considerations**

**Winter installation requires climate control** since epoxy needs temperatures above 10°C to cure properly. Many Fredericton contractors prefer spring through fall installation to avoid heating costs and ensure proper curing. The installation process takes 2-3 days (prep, prime, base coat, topcoat) with 24-48 hours between coats.

**Surface preparation accounts for 60-70% of the total cost** and determines long-term success. This includes grinding the existing floor, filling cracks, and ensuring proper adhesion. Cutting corners on prep work leads to premature failure.

Need help finding an epoxy flooring contractor in the Fredericton area? New Brunswick Kitchens can connect you with experienced installers who understand the specific requirements for New Brunswick's climate and housing conditions.

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Q3

## How much does it cost to install a floor drain in a New Brunswick kitchen, and is it required by code for certain layouts?

**Floor drains are not required by the New Brunswick Building Code for residential kitchens, and installing one typically costs \$1,500-\$4,000 depending on your home's foundation type and existing plumbing layout.**

Floor drains in kitchens are uncommon in New Brunswick residential construction, unlike commercial kitchens where they're mandatory. The NB Building Code doesn't require them for homes, even in kitchens with islands or extensive prep areas. However, some homeowners choose to install them during major renovations for added protection against water damage from dishwasher leaks, sink overflows, or burst supply lines.

**Installation costs vary significantly based on your home's foundation.** In homes with full basements (common in older NB housing stock), installation is more straightforward since plumbers can access the drain lines from below. Expect \$1,500-\$2,500 for the drain, rough-in plumbing, and concrete work. Homes built on crawl spaces or slab foundations face higher costs (\$2,500-\$4,000) due to the need to break through concrete and potentially reroute existing drain lines.

**The process involves several trades and permits.** You'll need a plumbing permit through your municipality (cities) or Regional Service Commission (rural areas), which adds \$75-\$200 to the project. The work requires breaking the existing floor, excavating to reach the main drain line, installing the floor drain and connecting pipe, backfilling and pouring new concrete, then refinishing the floor surface. In older NB homes with galvanized drain lines, this might be an opportunity to upgrade to modern ABS or PVC piping.

**Timing considerations are important in New Brunswick's climate.** This type of work is best done during warmer months (May through September) since it involves concrete work that needs proper curing conditions. If you're planning a full kitchen renovation, coordinate the floor drain installation early in the process, before new flooring goes down.

**Most NB homeowners find better value in other water protection strategies.** Installing a leak detection system (\$300-\$800), ensuring proper caulking around sinks and dishwashers, and choosing waterproof flooring like luxury vinyl plank provides excellent protection at lower cost. If you're concerned about water damage, consider these alternatives first.

**When floor drains make sense:** Homes with finished basements directly below the kitchen, properties prone to flooding, or kitchens with extensive prep areas and multiple sinks. Commercial-style home kitchens with floor-mounted equipment might also benefit.

Need help finding a plumber experienced with residential floor drain installation? New Brunswick Kitchens can match you with local contractors familiar with NB building requirements and foundation types common in Maritime homes.

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## What is the best kitchen flooring for NB's climate?

**Luxury vinyl plank (LVP) is the best overall kitchen flooring choice for New Brunswick's climate, offering the ideal combination of waterproof performance, dimensional stability through humidity swings, comfort underfoot, and affordability at \$2,000 to \$4,000 for a typical kitchen.** It handles the Maritime province's unique challenge — humid summers followed by bone-dry heated winters — better than any other flooring material.

New Brunswick kitchens face a climate cycle that is tough on flooring. Summer humidity regularly pushes indoor moisture levels above 60 percent, while forced-air heating in winter drops indoor humidity to 15 to 25 percent. This constant expansion and contraction wreaks havoc on solid hardwood, which can gap, cup, and crack. It also stresses rigid materials like ceramic tile, where grout can crack at expansion joints if the subfloor moves. LVP is engineered to flex with these seasonal changes without visible damage, making it the most forgiving choice for NB conditions.

### How the Options Compare

**LVP** runs \$2,000 to \$4,000 installed for a typical NB kitchen and is fully waterproof — spills, splashes from the sink, and even a dishwasher leak will not damage it. It is warmer underfoot than tile, which matters during NB's long winters, and it installs quickly as a floating floor over most existing subfloors. Quality brands with a rigid SPC core and a 20-mil wear layer will last 15 to 25 years in a kitchen.

**Porcelain or ceramic tile** at \$2,500 to \$5,000 installed is the most durable option and handles moisture well, but it is cold underfoot from October through April unless you add in-floor radiant heating (\$800 to \$2,000 for a kitchen-sized area). Tile also requires a perfectly level subfloor — many older NB homes have uneven floors that need levelling compound before tile can go down, adding \$500 to \$1,500 to the project. Grout lines need sealing annually in NB's humid climate to prevent mildew.

**Hardwood** at \$3,000 to \$5,000 installed is beautiful but risky in a kitchen. Water damage near the sink and dishwasher is virtually inevitable over time, and NB's humidity swings cause gaps in winter and swelling in summer. Engineered hardwood handles the seasonal movement better than solid but is still not waterproof. If you love the wood look, a high-quality LVP with a realistic wood grain gives you the aesthetic without the maintenance headaches.

**Laminate** is budget-friendly at \$1,500 to \$3,000 but is not waterproof — the MDF core swells permanently if water sits on it, which is a real risk in a kitchen. It is a reasonable choice for a tight budget if you are meticulous about wiping up spills immediately, but LVP is a better long-term investment.

For most New Brunswick homeowners, LVP in the \$4 to \$7 per square foot range (materials only) strikes the right balance. Look for products with an SPC (stone polymer composite) core rather than WPC (wood polymer composite) — SPC is denser, more dimensionally stable, and better suited to NB's temperature extremes. Pair it with a quality underlayment for sound dampening and moisture protection over concrete subfloors. Whether you are in Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, or a rural community, LVP is readily available at local flooring suppliers and most big box retailers.

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Q5

## How does luxury vinyl plank compare to hardwood for NB kitchens?

For New Brunswick kitchens, luxury vinyl plank outperforms hardwood in nearly every practical measure — it is waterproof, dimensionally stable through NB's extreme humidity swings, and costs 30 to 50 percent less, making it the stronger choice for a room that sees water, spills, and heavy foot traffic daily. Hardwood remains beautiful and adds resale appeal, but its vulnerabilities are magnified in a kitchen environment and in NB's Maritime climate.

The most significant difference is **water resistance**. A kitchen is the highest-moisture room after the bathroom — splashes around the sink, drips from the dishwasher door, ice cubes that hit the floor and melt, and the occasional pot that boils over. Quality LVP with an SPC core is 100 percent waterproof. Water can sit on it indefinitely without damage. Hardwood, whether solid or engineered, absorbs moisture through seams and end joints. In a kitchen, it is not a question of whether water damage will happen — it is when. Cupping, staining, and finish deterioration around the sink area are common within three to five years, even with diligent cleanup.

New Brunswick's climate adds a second layer of stress. **Summer humidity of 60 percent or higher causes hardwood to swell**, while winter heating drops indoor humidity to 15 to 25 percent, causing hardwood to shrink and gaps to appear between boards. Over a full year, solid hardwood in an NB home can move enough to show visible gaps in winter and tight, slightly cupped boards in summer. Engineered hardwood handles this better

because its layered construction resists expansion, but it still is not waterproof. LVP is engineered specifically for dimensional stability and does not react meaningfully to these humidity swings.

## Cost Comparison

**LVP** for a typical NB kitchen (100 to 150 square feet) runs \$2,000 to \$4,000 installed. Materials cost \$3 to \$7 per square foot for quality SPC-core products with a 20-mil wear layer. Installation is faster because LVP floats over most existing subfloors with minimal prep, and it clicks together without adhesive or nails.

**Hardwood** for the same kitchen runs \$3,000 to \$5,000 installed. Solid hardwood requires nailing to a plywood subfloor, and engineered hardwood can be floated, glued, or nailed. Refinishing costs \$3 to \$5 per square foot when the finish wears — typically every 7 to 10 years in a kitchen — while LVP simply gets replaced when it reaches end of life.

Where hardwood wins is in **feel, character, and perceived value**. Nothing quite matches the warmth and authenticity of real wood underfoot. Hardwood floors can be refinished multiple times, extending their life to 50 years or more in a living room. However, that advantage is diminished in a kitchen where water exposure limits the practical lifespan. Hardwood also adds slightly more to resale value, though today's buyers increasingly accept quality LVP, especially when it means the kitchen floor is in perfect condition rather than showing water damage.

If you are set on the hardwood look, a quality LVP with embossed-in-register texturing is remarkably realistic. Many homeowners in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John are choosing LVP that mimics wide-plank oak or walnut — it looks authentic, performs better in the kitchen, and costs less to install. Save the real hardwood for your living room, hallways, and bedrooms where water exposure is minimal, and let LVP handle the kitchen where practicality matters most.

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Q6

## Is tile flooring practical for NB kitchen renovations?

**Tile flooring is absolutely practical for NB kitchen renovations — porcelain and ceramic tile are among the most durable and moisture-resistant flooring options available, lasting 25 to 50 years with proper installation.** The main trade-offs in New Brunswick are that tile is cold underfoot during our long winters, it requires a perfectly level subfloor, and installation costs are higher than alternatives like LVP.

Porcelain tile is the better choice over ceramic for a kitchen. It has a water absorption rate below 0.5 percent, making it nearly impervious to NB's summer humidity and any kitchen spills or leaks. Ceramic tile is adequate but absorbs slightly more moisture, which matters in a high-use kitchen. For a typical NB kitchen of 100 to 150 square feet, expect to pay **\$2,500 to \$5,000 installed** for quality porcelain tile, including materials, thinset, grout, and labour. The tile itself ranges from \$3 to \$12 per square foot, with installation labour adding \$6 to \$12 per square foot — NB labour rates are about 15 to 20 percent lower than Ontario, keeping costs manageable.

The biggest practical concern with tile in New Brunswick is **cold underfoot from October through April**. When your kitchen floor feels like a slab of ice on a January morning in Fredericton, you will wish you had considered in-floor radiant heating. Electric radiant heat mats installed beneath the tile add \$800 to \$2,000 for a kitchen-sized area and cost roughly \$30 to \$60 per month to operate during winter. This is a decision you need to make before the tile goes down — you cannot add it later without removing the floor. If radiant heat is not in the budget, thick kitchen mats in work areas help, but they are a compromise.

## Subfloor Requirements

Tile is unforgiving of subfloor imperfections. Any flex or unevenness causes tiles to crack and grout to fail. Older NB homes — and there are many with original 1960s to 1980s construction — often have plywood subfloors that are too thin, uneven, or have excessive deflection for tile. Your installer may need to add a layer of cement board (like Ditra or HardieBacker) or pour self-levelling compound, which adds \$500 to \$1,500 to the project. This is not optional — skipping proper subfloor prep is the number one reason tile installations fail.

Grout maintenance is another consideration. In NB's humid summers, grout in kitchen floors can develop mildew if not properly sealed. Use an epoxy grout or apply a quality grout sealer annually to prevent moisture penetration and staining. Epoxy grout costs slightly more but is virtually maintenance-free and resists staining from kitchen spills.

Tile also has practical advantages that suit NB kitchens well. It handles the humidity swings between summer and winter without expanding or contracting. It is completely waterproof at the tile surface. It resists scratches, dents, and heat. A hot pot dropped on tile will not melt or deform it the way it would damage LVP or laminate.

For NB homeowners who want a long-lasting, premium kitchen floor and are willing to invest in proper installation and in-floor heating, tile is an excellent choice. Pair it with a slip-resistant textured finish rated R10 or higher for kitchen safety, and choose a larger format tile (12x24 or larger) to minimize grout lines. If budget is a concern or

you want a warmer floor without the added cost of radiant heat, LVP offers similar moisture protection at a lower price point.

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## Can I install heated floors in my NB kitchen and what does it cost?

**Yes, heated floors are an excellent upgrade for NB kitchens and cost \$800 to \$2,500 installed for a typical kitchen, depending on the system type and floor covering.** Given New Brunswick's winters — where temperatures regularly drop to minus 15 to minus 25 degrees Celsius and the heating season runs from October through April — radiant floor heat transforms a kitchen from a cold-footed workspace into the most comfortable room in the house.

There are two main types of radiant floor heating for kitchens. **Electric radiant heat mats** are by far the most common for kitchen renovations because they are thin (3 to 5 millimetres), install directly under tile or LVP, and do not require raising the floor height significantly. The mats cost \$8 to \$15 per square foot for materials, and installation adds \$5 to \$10 per square foot. For a 100-square-foot kitchen, that puts total cost at \$1,300 to \$2,500. **Hydronic (water-based) systems** circulate warm water through tubing embedded in the subfloor and are more energy-efficient for whole-house heating, but they cost \$15 to \$25 per square foot installed and are rarely practical for a single-room kitchen retrofit — they make more sense during new construction or a major whole-house renovation.

Electric mats work best under **porcelain or ceramic tile**, which conducts heat efficiently and holds warmth. This is the classic combination and the one most NB installers recommend. You can also install electric mats under **LVP**, but you need to choose an LVP product rated for use with radiant heat and keep the thermostat at or below 28 degrees Celsius to avoid damaging the vinyl. Hardwood over radiant heat is risky in NB — the combination of heat from below and dry winter air from above accelerates shrinkage and cracking.

### Installation Timing and Requirements

The critical point is that **heated floors must be planned before your flooring goes down** — they cannot be added after the fact without tearing up the floor. During a kitchen renovation, the electric mat is laid over a clean, level subfloor after any cement board or levelling compound is applied, connected to a dedicated thermostat and electrical circuit, then covered with thinset and tile (or appropriate underlayment and LVP).

Electrical requirements include a **dedicated 15- or 20-amp circuit** for the floor heating system and a wall-mounted thermostat with a floor sensor. The thermostat allows you to program heating schedules — for example, warming the floor before you wake up and turning it down while you are at work. A programmable thermostat keeps operating costs manageable, typically **\$30 to \$60 per month** during the heating season for a kitchen-sized area in NB, depending on your electricity rate and how many hours per day the system runs.

This work requires an **electrical permit and inspection** in New Brunswick because you are adding a new circuit. The permit costs \$75 to \$150 through your municipality or RSC, and inspection ensures the mat is properly installed without damage and the circuit is correctly wired. Many flooring installers in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John are experienced with radiant heat installation, but the electrical connection should be done by a licensed electrician.

For NB homeowners renovating their kitchen, heated floors are one of those upgrades that pays off in daily comfort every single winter. If you are already installing tile — which is cold underfoot by nature — adding radiant heat is a natural complement that adds relatively modest cost when done during the renovation rather than as a standalone project later.

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Q8

## Should I replace kitchen flooring before or after cabinets?

**In most NB kitchen renovations, flooring should go down after the cabinets are installed, not before.** This is the standard practice among professional kitchen renovators in Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, and across the province, and it avoids several costly problems while saving you money on materials.

The primary reason is **material savings and practical installation**. Cabinets cover roughly 25 to 35 percent of your kitchen's floor area. If you install flooring first, you are paying for materials and labour under areas that will never be seen. On a 150-square-foot kitchen, that is 40 to 50 square feet of wasted flooring — which at \$5 to \$8 per square foot for quality LVP or \$10 to \$20 per square foot for porcelain tile translates to \$200 to \$1,000 in unnecessary cost. More importantly, placing heavy cabinets on top of a floating floor like LVP or laminate pins the floor down and prevents it from expanding and contracting naturally, which leads to buckling, peaking at seams, and premature failure.

This is especially relevant in New Brunswick's climate, where indoor humidity swings from over 60 percent in summer to as low as 15 percent in winter. **Floating floors need room to move with these seasonal changes.** If 500 pounds of cabinets and granite countertops are sitting on top of the floor, that movement is restricted, and the floor will eventually show damage. Installing cabinets directly on the subfloor and running the flooring up to the cabinet toe kicks gives the floor its full expansion gap.

## When Flooring Goes Down First

There are exceptions where flooring-first makes sense. **Tile floors that are mortared to the subfloor** do not float and are not affected by cabinet weight, so tile can go down before or after cabinets — though after is still more cost-effective. If you are doing a cosmetic kitchen refresh and keeping the existing cabinets in place, your only option is to install flooring around them. And if you are planning to change the cabinet layout in the future, having continuous flooring underneath gives you flexibility.

The cabinets-first approach does require careful attention to **height planning**. Your cabinets, countertops, and appliances are all designed around specific heights. Standard base cabinets are 34.5 inches tall, and with a countertop, total height reaches 36 inches. If your flooring adds three-eighths of an inch (typical for LVP), the cabinets sit three-eighths of an inch lower than they would on top of the floor. This matters most for your dishwasher — it slides under the countertop, and if the countertop is too low because the cabinets are on the subfloor while the adjacent floor is higher, the dishwasher may not fit. Your installer can shim the cabinets up to the finished floor height or adjust the dishwasher legs.

The correct installation sequence for a full NB kitchen renovation is: demolition, any structural or subfloor work, rough-in plumbing and electrical, cabinet installation and levelling, countertop templating and installation, then flooring, followed by backsplash, trim, and final connections. Your kitchen renovator will coordinate this sequence — it is one of the reasons professional installation matters, because getting the order wrong creates problems that are expensive to fix.

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## What is the most waterproof kitchen flooring option for NB homes?

**Porcelain tile is the most waterproof kitchen flooring available — it has a water absorption rate below 0.5 percent and is essentially impervious to moisture in any form.** Close behind is luxury vinyl plank (LVP) with an SPC core, which is 100 percent waterproof at the plank level. Both are excellent choices for New Brunswick kitchens, where Maritime humidity, seasonal moisture swings, and the daily reality of kitchen spills demand a floor that can handle water without damage.

The distinction between these two comes down to what "waterproof" means in practice. **Porcelain tile** is waterproof at every layer — the tile itself, when properly installed with quality thinset and sealed grout, creates a continuous waterproof surface. Even if water penetrates a grout line, the tile will not be damaged. This makes porcelain the best choice for homeowners who want absolute, long-term water protection — it is the same material used in commercial kitchens and bathrooms where constant water exposure is expected. In NB, porcelain tile runs \$2,500 to \$5,000 installed for a typical kitchen.

**LVP with an SPC (stone polymer composite) core** is waterproof at the plank surface and core — water will not cause swelling, warping, or deterioration even with prolonged exposure. However, LVP is a floating floor with seams between planks. While quality LVP has tight-locking click systems that resist water penetration, a significant flood or standing water could potentially seep between seams and reach the subfloor underneath. For everyday kitchen use — splashes, spills, a leaking dishwasher caught within hours — SPC-core LVP performs perfectly. It costs \$2,000 to \$4,000 installed, making it the more affordable waterproof option.

### What to Avoid in Wet Kitchens

**Laminate flooring** is the most common mistake NB homeowners make when looking for an affordable kitchen floor. Despite marketing claims, laminate is not waterproof. Its MDF core swells permanently when exposed to water, and the damage is irreversible — you cannot dry it out or repair it. In a kitchen where spills happen daily and dishwasher leaks are a matter of time, laminate is a poor long-term choice.

**Solid hardwood** is beautiful but absorbs water readily through seams and end grain. In NB's humid summers, it swells; in dry heated winters, it shrinks and gaps appear. Around the sink and dishwasher — the highest-risk areas — hardwood will show water staining and finish deterioration within a few years. **Engineered hardwood** is more stable but still not waterproof — its top veneer can be damaged by standing water.

For maximum waterproof protection in an NB kitchen, consider a **belt-and-suspenders approach**: porcelain tile or SPC-core LVP on the surface, with a waterproof membrane or underlayment beneath. Products like Schluter Ditra under tile or a vapour-barrier underlayment under LVP add a second line of defence, particularly important if your

kitchen is on a concrete slab (common in NB basements and some bungalow construction) where moisture can migrate up from below.

If you are choosing between the two top options, the decision often comes down to comfort and budget. LVP is warmer underfoot during NB winters, softer to stand on during long cooking sessions, and less expensive. Porcelain tile is harder, colder (unless you add in-floor radiant heat at \$800 to \$2,000), more durable over decades, and offers the highest possible water resistance. Both are excellent choices for New Brunswick kitchens — either one will handle the Maritime climate and daily kitchen demands without issues.

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## How much does kitchen flooring replacement cost in New Brunswick?

**Kitchen flooring replacement in New Brunswick typically costs between \$2,000 and \$5,000 for most kitchens, depending on the material you choose and the size of the space.** The average NB kitchen is roughly 100 to 150 square feet of floor area, and material costs vary significantly from budget-friendly luxury vinyl plank to premium porcelain tile.

**Luxury vinyl plank (LVP)** is currently the most popular kitchen flooring choice in New Brunswick, running \$2,000 to \$4,000 installed. It handles the province's humidity swings beautifully — it won't swell in humid Maritime summers or shrink in dry heated winters. LVP is also completely waterproof, which matters enormously in a kitchen where spills, splashes, and the occasional dishwasher leak are inevitable. **Ceramic or porcelain tile** costs \$2,500 to \$5,000 installed and offers exceptional durability, but tile is cold underfoot during NB winters unless you add in-floor radiant heating, which adds \$1,500 to \$3,000 to the project. **Hardwood flooring** runs \$3,000 to \$5,000 installed and looks stunning, but it is genuinely vulnerable to water damage near sinks and dishwashers — most experienced NB kitchen renovators will steer you toward LVP instead.

Beyond the material itself, several factors affect your total flooring cost. If your existing subfloor is uneven — common in older NB homes built in the 1960s through 1980s — you may need levelling compound applied before new flooring can go down, adding \$500 to \$1,500. Removing and disposing of old flooring, especially if it involves vinyl tiles that could contain asbestos (found in many pre-1980 NB homes), requires proper abatement and disposal, which can add \$1,000 to \$2,000. Baseboards, transitions, and underlayment are additional line items that contractors sometimes list separately, so always confirm what is included in your quote.

### Timing and Savings

If your kitchen flooring project is flexible on timing, booking during the quieter months of November through March can save you 10 to 15 percent on labour, since NB contractors are less booked during winter. That said, if you are replacing flooring as part of a larger kitchen renovation, the flooring typically goes in after cabinets are installed but before final trim, so your timeline will be dictated by the overall project schedule.

For the best value, get at least three quotes from local contractors in your area — whether you are in Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, or a more rural part of the province. NB pricing can vary 30 to 40 percent between contractors for the same scope of work, so comparison shopping pays off. Labour rates in New Brunswick run 15 to 20 percent below Ontario and BC, which means your flooring dollar goes further here. Most straightforward kitchen flooring replacements take two to three days once materials are on site, and a skilled installer can have you walking on your new floors within a week of starting.

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Q11

## What flooring works best with radiant heat in NB kitchens?

**Porcelain and ceramic tile are the best flooring options for radiant heat in New Brunswick kitchens, thanks to their excellent thermal conductivity and ability to handle the temperature cycling without warping or degrading.** Tile transfers heat efficiently from the radiant system to the room surface, making your kitchen floor warm and comfortable during NB's long winters.

Radiant floor heating is an especially smart investment in New Brunswick kitchens because the province sees five to six months of cold weather, and kitchens with exterior walls or floors above unheated crawl spaces can feel bitterly cold underfoot. The system works by running warm water through PEX tubing (hydronic) or electric heating cables embedded in thin-set or self-levelling compound beneath the finished floor. The key to making it work well is choosing a flooring material that conducts heat effectively rather than insulating against it.

**Porcelain and ceramic tile** are the gold standard for radiant heat. They conduct heat better than any other common kitchen flooring material, and they are completely unaffected by the repeated heating and cooling cycles. Porcelain tile installed over radiant heat in an NB kitchen costs roughly \$3,500 to \$6,500, including the radiant system itself (electric mat systems run \$1,500 to \$3,000 for a typical kitchen, while hydronic systems cost \$3,000 to \$6,000 or more). **Natural stone** such as slate or marble also works excellently with radiant heat, though it runs higher at \$4,000 to \$7,000 installed with the heating system.

**Engineered hardwood** can work with radiant heat if the manufacturer specifically rates it for that application. Solid hardwood is generally not recommended — the heat cycling causes excessive expansion and contraction, leading to gaps, cupping, and squeaking. In NB's climate, where indoor humidity already swings dramatically between humid summers and dry heated winters, adding radiant heat beneath solid hardwood is a recipe for problems.

### What About LVP?

**Luxury vinyl plank** can be used over radiant heat, but with important caveats. The floor temperature must stay below 27°C (80°F), and you need to choose a product the manufacturer explicitly approves for radiant heat use. LVP does not conduct heat as efficiently as tile, so the system works harder and you lose some energy efficiency. That said, many NB homeowners choose LVP with electric radiant mats as a cost-effective compromise — the total installed cost runs \$3,500 to \$5,500.

When installing radiant heat in an NB kitchen, make sure your contractor accounts for proper insulation beneath the heating system. In homes with unheated basements or crawl spaces — extremely common in New Brunswick — without insulation underneath, you will lose a significant amount of heat downward rather than up into the kitchen. Also confirm that your electrical panel can handle the additional load, especially in older NB homes with 60-amp service that already struggle to power a modern kitchen.

A licensed flooring installer experienced with radiant heat systems will ensure proper installation. Getting matched with the right professional through New Brunswick Kitchens can save you the headache of trial and error.

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**Q12**

## How do I match my kitchen flooring to cabinets and countertops?

**The key to matching kitchen flooring with cabinets and countertops is choosing complementary — not identical — tones, and using the principle of contrast to create visual depth.** A kitchen where everything is the same shade of medium brown or grey looks flat and dated. Instead, pair light with medium, or medium with dark, and let one element be the anchor while others play supporting roles.

Start with your **cabinets as the anchor**, since they occupy the most visual space in a kitchen. If you are installing white or light-toned cabinets (the most popular choice in New Brunswick right now), you have the most flexibility — a medium-toned wood-look LVP floor (\$2,000–\$4,000) in warm oak or walnut creates a beautiful contrast, and nearly any countertop colour from white quartz to dark granite will work. If your cabinets are a dark finish like espresso or navy, lighter flooring prevents the room from feeling closed in — especially important in NB's older

homes where kitchens tend to be smaller and may lack large windows.

For **countertops**, choose a material and colour that bridges the floor and cabinets rather than matching either one exactly. With white cabinets and medium wood-tone flooring, a quartz countertop (\$60–\$120 per square foot installed) with subtle veining in grey, gold, or warm taupe ties the palette together. With dark cabinets and light flooring, a lighter countertop — white marble-look quartz or light granite — keeps the upper half of the kitchen from feeling heavy.

## Undertones Are Everything

The most common mistake NB homeowners make is mixing warm and cool undertones without realizing it. A grey LVP floor with blue undertones will clash with cabinets that have yellow or orange undertones, even if both look neutral on their own. Before committing, **bring physical samples of your cabinet door finish, countertop material, and flooring together** and view them in your kitchen's actual lighting — both natural daylight and your evening artificial lights. Lighting in NB kitchens varies significantly from bright south-facing rooms to north-facing kitchens that get muted light much of the year.

A safe approach that works in nearly every NB kitchen: pick one **warm neutral** (wood-tone flooring, warm-white cabinets, or a beige-veined countertop) and one **cool neutral** (grey flooring, pure white cabinets, or a grey-toned quartz), then let the third element bridge the two. This prevents the space from feeling either too cold or too yellow.

For flooring material specifically, **LVP is the most versatile choice** in New Brunswick because it comes in an enormous range of wood tones and stone looks, handles the province's humidity swings without expanding or contracting, and is waterproof near the sink and dishwasher. Hardwood is beautiful but vulnerable to water damage, and tile can feel cold underfoot during NB's long winters unless you add in-floor heating (\$800–\$2,000 for a kitchen-sized zone).

When planning your renovation budget, order all three major finish samples — flooring, cabinet doors, and countertop — before committing to any single one. Most NB countertop fabricators in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John offer sample chips at no charge, and flooring retailers provide sample planks you can take home.

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## What are the most durable kitchen flooring options for pet owners in NB?

**Luxury vinyl plank (LVP) with a wear layer of 20 mil or thicker is the most durable and practical kitchen flooring for pet owners in New Brunswick, combining scratch resistance, waterproof performance, and comfort underfoot.** It handles everything pets throw at it — claws, water bowl spills, muddy paw prints, and the occasional accident — while standing up to NB's humidity swings between humid summers and dry heated winters.

LVP (\$2,000–\$4,000 for a typical NB kitchen) is the top recommendation for several reasons. The **wear layer thickness** is the critical spec: a 12-mil wear layer handles light residential use, but pet owners should look for **20-mil or higher** to resist scratching from dog and cat claws. Premium LVP with a 28-mil wear layer costs more but can withstand large-breed dogs without showing wear patterns. The waterproof core means spills from water bowls, pet accidents, and wet paws from NB's rain and snow will not damage the floor — unlike hardwood, which swells, stains, and cups when exposed to moisture.

LVP also performs well in New Brunswick's climate because it is **dimensionally stable across temperature and humidity changes**. Where hardwood expands in humid Maritime summers and contracts in dry forced-air-heated winters (causing gaps between planks), LVP stays flat and tight year-round. This matters in kitchens on exterior walls where temperature variation is most pronounced.

**Porcelain tile** (\$2,500–\$5,000 installed) is the second most durable option for pet owners. Porcelain is harder than LVP and virtually impossible for pet claws to scratch. It is also waterproof and handles NB's humidity without issue. The downsides are that it feels cold underfoot during New Brunswick's six-month heating season (in-floor radiant heating adds \$800–\$2,000 for a kitchen zone), it is hard on aging pet joints, and dropped items shatter. Textured or matte-finish porcelain is best — polished porcelain becomes slippery when wet, which is a hazard for pets running on smooth surfaces.

**Engineered hardwood** (\$3,000–\$5,000) is a step down in durability for pet owners. While it looks beautiful, even the hardest species (hickory, maple, white oak) will show scratching from dog claws within a few years. If you love the look of wood but have pets, choose an LVP with a realistic wood-grain texture instead — modern products are nearly indistinguishable from real hardwood.

### Flooring to Avoid with Pets

**Solid hardwood** is the worst choice for pet owners in NB — it scratches easily, absorbs moisture from accidents and water bowls, and the seasonal humidity swings cause significant expansion and contraction that opens gaps where pet hair and debris collect. **Laminate flooring** (not to be confused with LVP) has a photographic wear layer that chips and peels when scratched, and its MDF core swells irreversibly if moisture penetrates a seam —

common with pet water bowls. **Natural stone** like slate or marble scratches and stains, and polished stone is dangerously slippery for pets.

For installation, ensure your contractor uses a **waterproof underlayment** and clicks or glues all seams tightly. In NB homes with concrete slab foundations or basements with any history of moisture, a vapour barrier beneath the LVP is essential. Budget \$200–\$500 extra for proper underlayment and moisture preparation.

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Q14

## How do I choose between porcelain and ceramic tile for my NB kitchen floor?

**Porcelain tile is the better choice for New Brunswick kitchen floors in almost every situation — it is denser, more water-resistant, and more durable than ceramic tile, which matters significantly in NB's humid Maritime climate.** Ceramic tile is a reasonable budget alternative for low-traffic kitchens, but the price difference is often small enough that porcelain makes more sense for the long term.

The fundamental difference is **density and water absorption**. Porcelain tile is fired at higher temperatures (1,200–1,400°C vs 1,000–1,100°C for ceramic), which creates a denser body with a water absorption rate below 0.5%. Ceramic tile absorbs 3–7% of its weight in water. In a New Brunswick kitchen where summer humidity regularly exceeds 70%, spills are frequent near the sink and dishwasher, and moisture from wet boots in a connected mudroom can migrate across the floor, porcelain's near-impermeability is a real advantage. Ceramic tile in NB kitchens can absorb moisture over years, leading to staining, grout deterioration, and in severe cases, cracking during freeze-thaw cycles if the kitchen is in an unheated seasonal property.

**Porcelain is also harder and more scratch-resistant.** It rates 5–7 on the Mohs hardness scale versus 3–5 for most ceramic tiles. For kitchen floors that see chair legs sliding, dropped utensils, and heavy foot traffic, this translates to a floor that looks good for 20–30 years rather than showing wear in 10–15. Porcelain tile that is through-body (colour extends through the entire tile, not just the surface glaze) hides chips and edge damage better

than glazed ceramic.

## Cost Comparison in NB

The installed cost difference is smaller than most homeowners expect. **Ceramic tile** runs \$2,500–\$4,000 installed for a typical NB kitchen (100–150 square feet), while **porcelain tile** runs \$3,000–\$5,000 installed. The tile material itself may cost \$2–\$5 more per square foot for porcelain, but the real cost driver is labour — porcelain is harder to cut and requires diamond wet saws, so installation labour is slightly higher. For a difference of \$500–\$1,000 over an entire kitchen floor, porcelain's superior performance is worth the investment in most cases.

Both tile types require **professional installation** for a lasting result. Kitchen floors must be perfectly level — lippage (uneven tile edges) is both a tripping hazard and an aesthetic problem. In older NB homes, the subfloor often needs levelling compound (\$200–\$500) before tile can be installed. Your installer should also apply a **crack isolation membrane** over wood subfloors to prevent seasonal wood movement from telegraphing through to the tile and grout.

One significant drawback of both porcelain and ceramic in New Brunswick is **cold underfoot** during the province's long heating season from October through April. In-floor radiant heating (\$800–\$2,000 for a kitchen zone) solves this beautifully and pairs perfectly with tile's thermal conductivity — tile actually transmits radiant heat better than any other flooring type. If radiant heat is not in your budget, area rugs in front of the sink and stove help, though they partially defeat the purpose of choosing tile for its water resistance.

For **grout**, choose an epoxy grout rather than cement-based grout in NB kitchens. Epoxy grout costs more (\$3–\$5 per linear foot vs \$1–\$2 for cement grout) but it is waterproof, stain-resistant, and will not discolour from NB's humidity and kitchen grease. Cement grout in a Maritime climate kitchen will need sealing annually and typically discolours within 3–5 years.

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Q15

## How do I transition kitchen flooring between rooms in my NB home?

**The best way to transition kitchen flooring between rooms in your NB home depends on whether the flooring types and heights match.** When the kitchen floor meets a different material in an adjacent hallway, dining room, or living area, a well-executed transition keeps the look clean, prevents tripping hazards, and accounts for the expansion and contraction that NB's seasonal humidity swings cause in flooring materials.

If you are installing the same flooring type continuously from the kitchen into adjoining rooms, such as running LVP throughout the main floor, you may not need a transition strip at all. Continuous flooring creates a seamless, modern look and makes smaller NB homes feel more spacious. However, most LVP manufacturers require a transition strip or expansion break in doorways for any continuous run exceeding 30 to 40 feet (check your specific product's installation guide). This is especially important in New Brunswick because indoor humidity swings from 15 to 25 percent in winter up to 60 percent or more in summer cause LVP to expand and contract. Without proper expansion gaps, the flooring can buckle or develop ridges.

When transitioning between two different flooring materials, such as kitchen LVP meeting hallway hardwood or living room carpet, a **T-molding transition strip** is the standard solution. T-moldings work when both floors are at the same height and create a clean bridge between the two materials. They cost \$3 to \$10 per linear foot for quality aluminum or colour-matched strips, and a typical doorway is 30 to 36 inches wide. For transitions where one floor is higher than the other, use a **reducer strip** that ramps down from the higher surface to the lower one, eliminating the trip hazard.

For kitchen tile transitioning to LVP or hardwood, a **Schluter strip** or similar metal edge profile provides a clean, durable transition. These aluminum or stainless steel strips are installed during tile installation with one edge embedded under the tile and the other edge finishing neatly against the adjacent flooring. They cost \$5 to \$15 per linear foot and give a professional result that lasts.

### Placement and Installation Tips

Place the transition directly under the door when it is closed, centred in the doorway. This is the visually cleanest position and ensures the transition is partially hidden when the door is shut. If there is no door, centre the strip in the opening.

In older NB homes, subfloor heights between rooms are sometimes uneven due to additions, settled floors, or different subfloor materials (plywood in one room, original plank subfloor in another). Before installing any transition, check that both floor surfaces are level at the meeting point. If there is a significant height difference beyond what a reducer strip can handle (more than about half an inch), the subfloor in the lower room may need to be built up with plywood or levelling compound, adding \$200 to \$500 to the project.

For the cleanest result, have your flooring installer handle the transitions as part of the overall kitchen flooring project. Professional installation of transitions typically runs \$50 to \$150 per doorway including materials, and ensures the expansion gaps, adhesion, and height matching are done correctly. If you are installing kitchen flooring as part of a larger renovation, get matched with a kitchen renovator through New Brunswick Kitchens for free.

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## What is the best underlayment for kitchen LVP flooring in NB?

The best underlayment for kitchen LVP flooring in New Brunswick is a closed-cell foam or cross-linked polyethylene (XLPE) underlayment with an attached vapour barrier, typically 1.5 mm to 2 mm thick. This combination handles NB's seasonal humidity swings, provides moisture protection on concrete and older subfloors, and adds enough cushion for comfort without compromising the click-lock connection.

Before choosing an underlayment, check your LVP product specifications. Many LVP planks sold in NB already come with a pre-attached underlayment pad on the bottom of each plank. If your LVP has this attached pad, do not add a separate underlayment on top of it. Doubling up underlayment creates too much cushion, which causes the click-lock joints to flex, separate, and eventually fail. If your LVP has an attached pad, you may still need a standalone vapour barrier (6-mil polyethylene sheeting) over concrete subfloors, but skip the foam underlayment.

For LVP without a pre-attached pad, a quality underlayment serves three purposes in an NB kitchen: moisture protection, sound dampening, and minor subfloor imperfection correction.

### Moisture Protection

This is the most critical function in New Brunswick. NB's humidity swings from 15 to 25 percent in winter to 60 percent or more in summer, and concrete basement or slab subfloors transmit ground moisture year-round. A vapour barrier underlayment prevents moisture from migrating up through the subfloor and attacking the LVP core from below. Even on plywood subfloors in above-grade kitchens, a vapour barrier is good insurance in NB's Maritime climate. Look for underlayment products with an integrated 6-mil poly vapour barrier, or lay separate 6-mil poly sheeting before placing the foam underlayment.

On concrete subfloors, always do a moisture test before installing LVP. Tape a 2-foot square of plastic sheeting to the concrete and leave it for 48 to 72 hours. If moisture collects under the plastic, you have a vapour transmission issue that a standard underlayment alone may not solve. You may need a more robust moisture mitigation system before proceeding.

### Recommended Products and Costs

Popular underlayment choices available at NB building supply stores include **Floor Muffler** (XLPE, excellent moisture barrier, \$0.35 to \$0.55 per square foot), **QuietWalk** (recycled fibre with vapour barrier, \$0.50 to \$0.75 per square foot), and basic **cross-linked poly foam** (\$0.15 to \$0.30 per square foot). For a typical NB kitchen of 100 to 150 square feet, underlayment costs run \$25 to \$100 for the material itself.

Avoid cork underlayment in NB kitchens. While cork offers excellent sound dampening, it absorbs moisture and can develop mold in NB's humid summers, especially in lower-level kitchens or homes without air conditioning. Also avoid thick, spongy underlayments marketed for comfort. Anything thicker than 2 mm under LVP causes excessive flex in the joints.

When installing the underlayment, overlap the vapour barrier seams by at least 6 inches and tape them with moisture-barrier tape. Run the underlayment up the wall edges by half an inch, which gets hidden behind the baseboard. On plywood subfloors, make sure the subfloor is clean, dry, and level within 3/16 of an inch over 10 feet. Any high spots or dips beyond this tolerance should be sanded down or filled with floor levelling compound (\$30 to \$80 per bag) before the underlayment goes down. Proper subfloor preparation is the foundation of a long-lasting LVP kitchen floor in any NB home.

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