

SOAPSTONE

Soapstone is a natural material, a metamorphic rock that is composed primarily of talc with varying amounts of chlorite, micas, amphiboles, carbonates and other minerals. Soapstone was formed millions of years ago under intense heat and pressure. Soapstone started out in a molten state deep within the earth and because it has an unusually stable composition, soapstone can comfortably withstands fire and dramatic changes in temperature. It has been known for centuries for its ability to retain heat (for example, all of our original hearthstones in the farmhouse are made of soapstone). Other natural stones, such as granite and marble also hold and radiate heat, but only soapstone has the added benefit of being able to withstand direct flames indefinitely. Soapstone is often used for pizza ovens.

The fact that soapstone is composed primarily of talc makes it a soft stone (it is often used for carvings),and also makes it: nonporous, nonabsorbent, have a low electrical conductivity, heat resistant, have a high specific heat capacity, and resistant to acids and alkalis.

Since it is nonporous it is naturally antibacterial and stain resistant. It is an inert material that is impervious to chemicals, acids, and heat. You can place cookware from the stove top, or oven, directly on soapstone without damage. Soapstone is the only natural stone that does not need a *chemical sealer* since it is siliceous, meaning it is unaffected and unharmed by acids in things like lemon juice, wine, vinegar, etc. It does not "etch" like marble. It is easy to clean, needing no special cleaning products.

That said, since soapstone is a rock, its mineral composition can vary depending upon the parent rock and the conditions of the metamorphic environment. *That means that soapstone can vary from quarry to quarry, and even within a single rock.*

Cleaning Soapstone: You can clean your **soapstone** after the mineral oil treatment using any household cleanser such as Ajax or Comet. Wiping **soapstone** with soap and water works just fine. A **soapstone** sink will stand up to any mild cleaner.