



CONSUMER GUIDE *a homeowner's buying guide*

EUROPEAN
SOLID WOOD WORK TOPS...

PERFECT FOR TODAY'S KITCHENS


CaféCountertops™



TOP QUESTIONS

FROM HOMEOWNERS

Q: *How do I protect my solid wood top from hot pots?*

A: Hot items such as pots and pans, slow cookers and teapots won't "melt" the worktop, but prolonged heat can dry out the moisture in the wood, making that spot more brittle and prone to crack. A hot cup of coffee shouldn't harm anything. Hot pots and pans can be insulated with a simple potholder or trivet, or with optional Heat Rods (see photo above). Place a tin foil shield below slow cookers.

Q: *Can my CafeCountertops® solid wood top get wet?*

A: Yes. The natural wax blend contained within our Hand-Rubbed Oil Finish effectively repels moisture. Many of our custom countertops are installed in sink areas, where ordinary mineral oil would fail. However, spills should be wiped up. Allowing water to stand on the surface for long periods of time is not recommended.

Q: *Will my CafeCountertops® solid wood top stand up to spills?*

A: Food spills such as red wine, ketchup, mustard and alcohol can be wiped clean. However, wood tops are essentially furniture, and shouldn't be exposed to cleaners, solvents and scouring pads that you wouldn't use on other wood furniture.

Q: *I have a lively family. Should I be concerned about scratches?*

A: You shouldn't be afraid to use your wood top. We're not going to tell you that wood won't scratch or dent, especially with heavy use, but hardwood is durable, and with our unique Hand-Rubbed Oil Finish, it's easy to remove scratches and make spot-repairs (see page 4).



Q: *What should I expect in the way of regular cleaning and maintenance?*

A: For daily care, just wipe with a damp cloth. Clean the top once a week with our Gentle Wood Wash or other mild soap. The top does require an easy Oil treatment about once or twice a year, depending on climate and use. Compared to the constant upkeep of tops finished with mineral oil, this is very low maintenance.

Q: *What are some key points that I should consider before purchasing a wood countertop?*

A: Warping, cracking etc. are very rare, but when they do occur, they are almost always caused by improper handling, installation or care. One notable exception is “checks”, which are tiny harmless cracks in countertop edges that typically occur in winter, when central heat systems cause indoor humidity to be more dry. Checks are natural and not a defect in workmanship. They can be left alone or filled with wood filler. Maintaining your home at the correct humidity will help prevent checks.

A: Some woods, including our popular Iroko, are lighter in color when shipped and darken naturally over time. Darker woods may lighten in direct sunlight.

A: Wood shouldn’t be expected to “match” a sample. Wood is an all-natural material that varies in color and pattern.

A: Choose the wood with the appearance you like. All of our hardwoods are durable. Our finish makes most woods moisture resistant. There’s no real scientific evidence that maple is significantly more food-prep-safe than other woods.



(See CafeCountertops' Maintenance Guide for specific details. Answers apply to worktops that have been properly maintained.)



BUYER'S GUIDE

TO WOOD COUNTERTOPS FINISHES

Remember, no wood finish is “bulletproof”. Reasonable care is necessary.

Hand-Rubbed Oil Finish - STANDARD

CafeCountertops' Hand-Rubbed Oil is the best choice for Kitchens. Made from a natural earth-friendly blend of durable plant oils and tough carnauba wax, this exclusive finish is food-prep-safe, but also has very good moisture resistance, stands up to stains and alcohol, and can be spot-repaired. Very low maintenance. This deep-penetrating finish draws out wood's natural beauty with a pleasing natural patina that gets even better with age. We recommend this finish for every application.

Super Top-Coat Finish - SPECIAL ORDER

CafeCountertops' Super Top-Coat Finish can be used for wet bars, bathrooms and areas outside the kitchen. Highly moisture resistant coating-type finish forms a surface film rather than penetrating into the wood. No regular maintenance, but cannot be spot-repaired if scratched. See “Better Clearcoat Finishes” below.

Other common wood tops finishes include:

- **Mineral oil** is food-prep-safe, but has poor resistance to water, dirt and grime. Mineral oil is non-drying, so the surface can have a “wet” feel.
- **Better Clearcoat Finishes**, including our Super Top-Coat finish and competing products which often have “Dura” in the name, are very moisture resistant and require no annual maintenance, but only moderately scratch-resistant, and total refinishing is the only fix when scratched. *Not* food-prep-safe (see page 4). The surface film can have an artificial look which lacks the patina and depth of color of our Hand Rubbed Oil Finish.
- **“Tung” Oil Finishes** and **Danish Oil Finishes** can be very different from one another. Two leading drawbacks are that they are not generally food prep safe, can have poor scratch resistance and may be prone to yellowing over time.
- **“Water-locking” Finishes** are similar to Tung and Danish oils and typically have similar drawbacks.
- **“Butcher Block Oils”** contain beeswax, which gives some moisture protection, but soft beeswax isn't particularly durable and tends to trap dirt and grime.
- **Lacquers and Varnishes** are not durable and should not be used on a wood worktop. Water rings typically occur on lacquer-finished furniture.



OILING

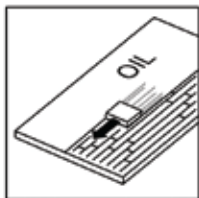
Oil does for wood countertops what lotion does for skin. Dried wood becomes brittle and loses strength. Wood maintained with regular oilings can virtually last forever.

What is 'Food-Prep Safe'?

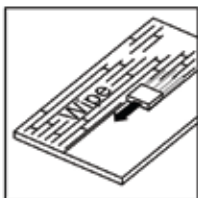
University studies in America and Europe have proven that *lignin*, the central element of wood, contains certain properties which are anti-bacterial and capable of destroying food-borne bacteria. This only works for wood countertops if the right finish is chosen.

- **Food-Prep Safe:** A finish that protects the wood without interfering with its naturally antibacterial properties, and therefore is suitable for chopping areas. CafeCountertops' Hand-Rubbed Oil Finish is food-prep safe.
- **Food-Safe:** food won't absorb toxins from contact with the finish itself, but this type of finish blocks wood's natural antibacterial ability and can harbor bacteria in cuts, and therefore is not suitable for chopping areas. CafeCountertops' Super Top-Coat finish is food-safe.

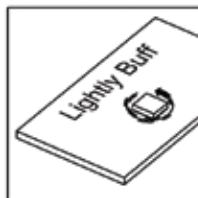
OILING—EASY AS 1-2-3-4



1. APPLY OIL

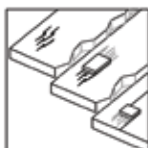


2. LET DRY



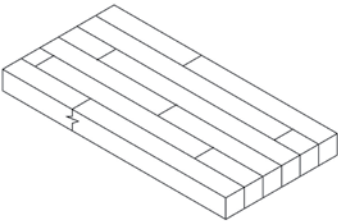
3. WIPE

4. LIGHTLY BUFF

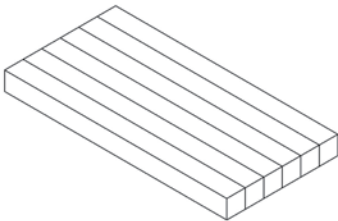


Remove scratches by sanding prior to oiling.

CAFÉCOUNTERTOPS® EXCLUSIVE
EURO-STAR CONSTRUCTION

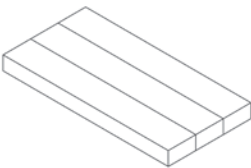


Euro-Star: Enormously strong!
Our Best Seller. In Northern Europe, solid wood countertops are very popular. Scandinavian design and engineering make Euro-Star a smart option that is longer, stronger, more warp-and-crack-resistant, and generally superior to any other wood top available in North America.
Stave width 1-5/8" \$

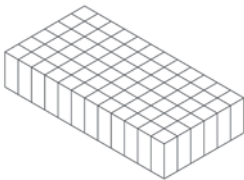


Euro-Plank: CaféCountertops' newest plank-style (full-stave) product. Available in 40mm/1-1/2" thickness, in Black Walnut and Iroko only. Wood may contain more natural variation. Maximum 10 ft. length.
Stave width 3"-4" \$\$

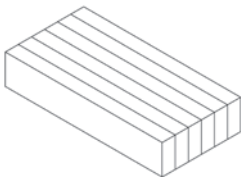
Available by special order, in select woods only:



Custom Wide Plank
Stave width 5"-8"
\$\$\$



Custom End-Grain
Minimum 2 3/8" thickness
\$\$\$\$\$



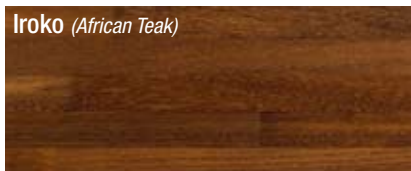
Custom Edge-Grain Plank
Stave width 1-5/8"
\$\$\$

Made in U.S.A. with European technology.



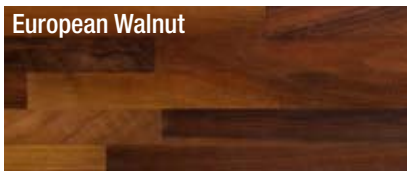
STANDARD WOODS

Iroko (*African Teak*)



Newly-fabricated Iroko has strong golden highlights which darken over time.

European Walnut

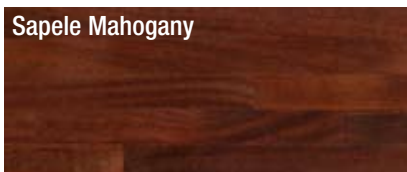


Expect strong color variation, with a heavy contrast of color tones

Black Walnut



Sapele Mahogany



European Beech



Teak



Also available, in 40mm Euro-Star only:

Chocolate Beech, European Cherry, Black Cherry, Elm, Jatoba, European Maple, European Oak, Zebrano. See larger wood photos at www.cafecountertops.com.

Wenge

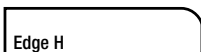


Wood is an all-natural material that should be expected to vary in color and pattern.

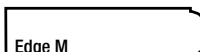
Edge A



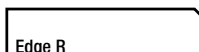
Edge H



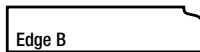
Edge M



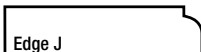
Edge R



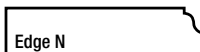
Edge B



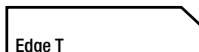
Edge J



Edge N



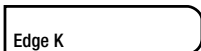
Edge T



Edge E



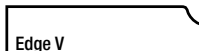
Edge K



Edge Q



Edge V





CAFÉCOUNTERTOPS®

AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SMART CHOICE.

Environmental and social consciousness isn't a trend in Europe; it's a way of life. CaféCountertops sources wood from sustainably-managed forests. Our unique 'Euro-Star' construction makes use of shorter lengths of lumber that would be otherwise discarded as waste (pre-industrial recycling). Our Hand-Rubbed Oil Finish is solvent-free, VOC2010-Compliant and EN71-3 Certified (Food- and Toy-safe).



Our kind of "green" is real and practical. We focus on waste reduction. We do not offer endangered or protected wood species. We do not offer bamboo, which is a grass suspended in a chemical resin. We offer reclaimed wood by special order, but please consider that old barns and factories are hardly food-safe environments.

"We love our kitchen and especially the beautiful counter top on our island. I oil it regularly so it still looks gorgeous after 7 years of hard use."

"We're still enjoying our island top so very much! It's always the topic of conversation when we have people over."

"If I were to do another kitchen remodel, I would most definitely use wood for the countertops. My wood countertops are very durable."

"The wood countertop in our wet bar still looks brand new, like the day it was installed; and we do quite a lot of entertaining."


CaféCountertops™
www.cafecountertops.com

*CaféCountertops™ Solid Wood Worktops
are sold through Authorized Dealers.*