

Marrakech Design Cement Tiles

Product Description, Installation & Care

About the tiles

Marrakech Design cement tiles are handmade from cement, sand, marble powder, colour pigments and water. Unlike ceramic tiles, they are not kiln-fired but are pressed and then left to dry and cure.

As each tile is handmade, natural variations in colour, shade, size, thickness and surface may occur. Colours can vary both between different production batches and between individual tiles within the same batch. Solid-coloured tiles may have a naturally mottled or varied appearance, while patterned tiles may show slight variations in the outlines of the pattern.

Minor irregularities, marks and small chips along edges or corners are natural characteristics of handmade cement tiles and part of the material's appearance. A single sample can therefore not represent the full variation of a larger tiled surface.

Cement tiles are porous and may also show lighter or chalk-like variations on the surface. Moisture and naturally occurring salts within the material can affect the appearance of the tiles, particularly when they are new. Some of these variations may change or become less visible over time, while others are a natural part of the material's character.

The pattern and colour extend approximately 3–4 mm into the surface layer of the tile and will therefore not disappear through normal wear. Over time, cement tiles develop a natural patina.

We recommend ordering extra tiles to allow for cutting, sorting and selecting the placement of individual tiles. Before installation, lay out several tiles together to assess the overall appearance and distribute natural variations across the surface.

Before installation

Read the entire installation guide before starting the work and provide it to the tiler responsible for the installation.

Check the delivery, quantity, colour and condition of the tiles before installation. If you notice transport damage, cracks or anything else you are unsure about, photograph the tiles and contact Marrakech Design by email before installation. Keep in mind that variations in colour, shade, size and surface are natural characteristics of handmade cement tiles and should be assessed based on the overall appearance of a larger surface.

Open several boxes and mix tiles from different boxes so that variations in colour and appearance are evenly distributed across the surface. We recommend laying out the tiles before installation and deciding on the layout, pattern direction, grout colour and placement of cut tiles before starting the work.

Cement tiles are porous and particularly sensitive to dirt and staining before they have been sealed. Always use clean tools and make sure that hands, shoes and the work area are kept clean during installation.

Choose adhesive, grout and other installation products according to the substrate and intended area of use. Always follow the respective product manufacturer's instructions for mixing, application and drying times.

Cement tiles require care during installation. We therefore recommend that the installation is carried out by a tiler experienced in working with handmade cement tiles.

Installation

The substrate must be stable, clean, dry and level. Any irregularities in the substrate should be corrected before installation begins.

Evenly dampen the back of each tile with water, for example using a spray bottle or roller, before installation. The tiles do not need to be soaked or submerged in water. Adjust the amount of moisture according to the adhesive manufacturer's instructions and make sure there is no standing water on the back of the tile when it is installed.

Apply adhesive to both the substrate and the back of the tile to ensure good contact and coverage. As handmade cement tiles may vary slightly in thickness, the amount of adhesive may need to be adjusted to achieve an even finished surface.

Install one tile at a time and carefully adjust it by hand. Avoid hitting or tapping the tiles into position, as this may cause cracks or damage.

Continuously check the level and alignment of the tiles as well as the direction of the pattern during installation. Mix tiles from several boxes so that natural variations in colour and shade are evenly distributed across the surface.

Allow the adhesive to dry according to the manufacturer's instructions before proceeding to the next stage of installation.

Cutting

Cement tiles can be cut using an angle grinder or a wet saw with a diamond blade. For the cleanest and most even cut possible, we recommend using a wet saw. We recommend making a test cut first and handling cut edges carefully.

Sealing before grouting

Cement tiles are porous and need to be sealed to become resistant to water, dirt and stains. The tiles should be sealed before grouting to protect the surface and reduce the risk of grout and dirt penetrating the material.

Allow the adhesive to dry according to the manufacturer's instructions before sealing. The tiles must be clean and dry. Brush or wipe away cement dust and other loose particles from the surface. If the tiles have become dirty during installation, clean them and allow them to dry completely before applying the sealer.

We recommend Natural Finish Stone Sealer for our cement tiles. Shake the product well before use and apply an even coat using a soft cloth. Allow the first coat to cure for at least 12

hours before applying the next coat. Wipe away any visible excess and avoid over-applying the product.

The manufacturer recommends 1–4 coats depending on the absorbency of the surface. For our cement tiles, we generally recommend 2–3 coats before grouting.

Allow the sealer to cure before grouting. Full application instructions and current drying times can be found on the product packaging and should always be followed.

If another sealing product is used, always follow the manufacturer's instructions and make sure that the product is suitable for cement tiles.

Please note: Sealing reduces the absorbency of the tiles but does not prevent grout residue from adhering to the surface. Grout residue must therefore be removed thoroughly and promptly during grouting.

Grouting

Do not begin grouting until both the adhesive and sealer have dried and cured according to the respective manufacturers' instructions.

Use a grout suitable for cement tiles and for the area where the tiles are installed. We recommend choosing a grout colour close to the colour of the back of the tile. Light to medium grey grout is usually a good choice and reduces the risk of discolouration. We advise against dark or coloured grout, as stronger pigments may stain or transfer colour onto the surface of the tiles. Always test the chosen grout on a small area first.

We recommend a grout joint of approximately 1–3 mm. With underfloor heating, we recommend approximately 3–4 mm. As cement tiles are handmade and may vary slightly in size and shape, the grout width may naturally vary slightly across the surface. Consult the responsible tiler regarding the appropriate grout width for the specific project.

Grout small areas at a time and work the grout carefully into the joints. Remove excess grout immediately and clean the surface continuously using a slightly damp sponge, rinsing it frequently in clean water. Do not allow grout or grout residue to dry on the surface of the tiles.

After grouting, the tiles may temporarily appear slightly dull or hazy if grout residue remains on the surface. It is therefore important to clean the tiles carefully throughout the grouting process.

After grouting & choice of finishing treatment

Once grouting is complete and the surface is clean and dry, the cement tiles should receive their final treatment. The recommended treatment depends on where the tiles are installed and their exposure to water and wear.

Showers and other areas exposed to direct water

After grouting, we recommend applying an additional 1–2 coats of Natural Finish Stone Sealer. Satin Finish Surface Wax is not recommended on surfaces regularly exposed to direct water, such as inside a shower.

WC, bathrooms without a shower and other areas not exposed to direct water

After treatment with Natural Finish Stone Sealer, Satin Finish Surface Wax can be applied as additional protection against dirt and wear.

Kitchens, hallways, entrance areas and other areas exposed to higher levels of wear

We recommend Natural Finish Stone Sealer followed by Satin Finish Surface Wax. The wax is applied as a protective topcoat over Natural Finish Stone Sealer and should not be used as a standalone treatment.

Before applying Satin Finish Surface Wax, the surface must be clean, free from dust and grout residue, and have been dry for at least 24 hours. Apply evenly using a soft microfibre cloth or flat applicator and allow the first coat to dry for at least 1 hour before applying additional coats. Avoid over-applying the product.

The product reaches full strength after approximately 3 days. Always follow the complete and current application instructions on the product packaging.

Underfloor heating

Cement tiles can be installed on floors with underfloor heating. When underfloor heating is used, we recommend a grout joint of approximately 3–4 mm to allow for natural movement in the materials.

After installation, the underfloor heating should remain switched off for 10–12 weeks to allow the tiles, adhesive and grout sufficient time to dry and cure. When the underfloor heating is switched on again, the temperature should be increased gradually, starting at a low temperature and then increasing it step by step.

Always follow the instructions provided by the manufacturers of the underfloor heating system, adhesive and grout, and consult the responsible tiler regarding the requirements for the specific substrate and heating system.

Care & cleaning

Cement tiles are a natural and porous material that develops a beautiful patina over time. Regular and gentle cleaning helps preserve the surface and its protective treatment.

For regular cleaning, we recommend Natural Stone and Porcelain Aftercare Cleaner or a mild, pH-neutral soap. Use warm water and a soft mop or cloth and avoid leaving dirt or spills on the surface for extended periods.

Avoid acidic or strong cleaning products, such as vinegar, bleach and limescale removers, as these can affect both the surface of the cement tiles and their protective treatment. This also applies to sealed and wax-treated tiles.

For stains or more ingrained dirt, Stone & Tile Intensive Cleaner can be used. Always follow the product instructions and preferably test the product on a small, less visible area first.

Surfaces treated with Satin Finish Surface Wax may need to be refreshed over time as the protective layer begins to wear.

Ongoing maintenance

The protective treatment of cement tiles needs to be maintained over time. How often this is required depends on where the tiles are installed, how much the surface is used and how frequently it is cleaned.

Natural Finish Stone Sealer can be reapplied when the tiles begin to absorb water or dirt more easily and the surface no longer feels as well protected.

On surfaces treated with Satin Finish Surface Wax, the wax can be refreshed when the surface begins to look or feel worn. The surface must be clean and dry before applying a new coat.

For heavier wear, or if older layers of Satin Finish Surface Wax need to be removed, Stone & Tile Intensive Cleaner can be used. The tiles can then be treated again with Natural Finish Stone Sealer, followed by Satin Finish Surface Wax where this finishing treatment is suitable. Always follow the application instructions for each product.

Important to consider

Always inspect the tiles before installation. If you notice any damage or anything else you are unsure about, contact Marrakech Design before the tiles are installed.

Marrakech Design cannot be held responsible for damage or changes resulting from incorrect installation, unsuitable substrates, or the use of products or methods that are not suitable for cement tiles.

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for adhesive, grout, sealer and any other products used during installation. If you are unsure, we recommend consulting the responsible tiler or contacting Marrakech Design before continuing with the installation.

This guide provides general recommendations for our cement tiles. Site-specific conditions and product instructions should always be assessed by the person responsible for the installation.

Questions regarding the workmanship of an installed surface should also be addressed to the responsible tiler.

Frequently asked questions during installation

Can the tiles be sealed before installation?

Yes. The tiles can be treated with Natural Finish Stone Sealer before installation. It is important to allow the sealer to cure properly and to make sure that the tiles are completely dry before placing them back in their boxes or installing them. Always follow the product's current application and drying instructions.

The tiles have become dirty during installation – what should I do?

Clean the tiles before sealing or applying any further treatment. For light dirt, warm water and a soft sponge can be used. For more ingrained dirt, Stone & Tile Intensive Cleaner can be used. The tiles must be completely dry before the sealer is applied.

The tiles look darker or mottled after installation – is this normal?

Yes. Moisture from the installation process can temporarily affect the colour and appearance of cement tiles. As cement tiles are porous, they may need time to dry completely. Wait until the tiles are dry before assessing their final colour or proceeding with sealing.

There is a grey or dull haze on the tiles after grouting – what should I do?

This may be grout residue remaining on the surface. It is therefore important to clean the tiles continuously during grouting and not allow grout to dry on the surface. If a haze has already developed, it should be removed before applying any further finishing treatment.

A tile has a stain that cannot be removed with normal cleaning – what can I do?

If a stain has penetrated the tile, the surface can in some cases be carefully wet-sanded using fine waterproof sandpaper, approximately 400–600 grit, together with clean water. Always test on a small area first and work carefully. After sanding, clean the tile, allow it to dry thoroughly and then reseal it.

Can I use dark or coloured grout?

We advise against dark and coloured grout because the pigments may discolour the porous cement tile. We generally recommend a light to medium grey grout, preferably close to the colour of the back of the tile. If another grout colour is desired, always test it on a small area first.

Do I need to seal the tiles again after grouting?

Yes. After grouting, the tiles should receive a finishing treatment according to the recommendations for the specific area. On surfaces exposed to direct water, use Natural Finish Stone Sealer. On suitable dry surfaces, Natural Finish Stone Sealer can be complemented with Satin Finish Surface Wax.

A tile cracked during installation – can I still use it?

A cracked tile should normally be replaced before continuing with the installation. Do not try to press or tap a tile into place if it is not sitting correctly. Instead, lift the tile and adjust the amount of adhesive.