

Understanding Crackle Glazed Tiles

The history of crackle glazed tiles is steeped in tradition, and was one of the first glazes used by potters when the first ceramics were made. Crackle glazed ceramic tiles grew in popularity during the Victorian and Edwardian eras, and can be found in many buildings from the period, particularly in train stations, grocery store fronts, and bathhouses.



Crackle glazes are created when thicker tile glazes expand during the firing, then shrink when they cool. This causes the glaze to break in places, creating many tiny cracks. These cracks are very small and cannot be felt by touching- instead they appear as a lattice within the glaze of the tile.

For any further queries, advice, or to request samples, please contact us below.

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This gives a time-honoured, authentically vintage effect, that fits perfectly with traditional houses and also more modern, industrial, or natural styles.

However, it is important to understand how to care for crackle glazed tiles.

The cracks in the glaze mean that water will seep through the glaze and into the porous base of the tile- this means that in wet areas, the tiles require sealing with a specialised crackle glaze sealer. This will essentially fill in the cracks in the glaze, and make the tiles more water resistant.

Cutting crackle glaze tiles is often more difficult than cutting a standard glaze and can chip. For straightforward cuts, a score-and-snap cutter may be used, although this does not always give a clean-cut result. It is important to only apply minimal pressure when snapping.

For a cleaner cut, and for difficult cuts, we would advise the use of a water-cooled flat bed tile cutter with a diamond blade. Always cut with the glazed surface facing upwards, and push through the saw slowly to minimise chipping. When wet cutting, it is imperative to seal the tiles before they are cut.

Please note that when used in wet areas such as shower surrounds, wet rooms or as vanity unit splashbacks, these tiles will require resealing over time, typically every two to three years.

It is also important to note that if the tile uses a traditional copper based glaze, it may not be suitable for use in wet areas (see our guide: Understanding Traditional Copper-based glazes)

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