

SALTILLO TERRACOTTA TILE - INSTALLATION ROADMAP

Saltillo terracotta tiles show variation in shade and color; these tiles will not be identical piece to piece. This is a result of the handmade process and the nature of terra cotta. Mixing tiles from different boxes during setting is suggested to produce a beautiful and natural appearance. Details that can be seen in a close-up, will be subtle when installation is completed. If properly installed, Saltillo terracotta tiles will result in a beautiful, durable, easy to maintain surface that can be enjoyed for many years.

PLEASE CONFIRM that your tile is pre-sealed. Though pre-sealed tiles do not require further sealing, using a conventional “grout release” will increase the efficiency of grout application. It is always recommended to apply a grout test on a loose piece of tile prior to full grout application. If you have purchased a “distressed” Saltillo terracotta tile, identifiable by a heavy textured, pitted surface, note that grout will adhere as a permanent fixture to the surface texture. Consider the above when selecting your grout color.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Flexible tile adhesive, suitable for natural stone
- Flexible grout, we recommend [Mapei Ultracolor Plus FA](#)
- Water-cooled tile saw
- 3/4" Grout trowel
- 1/8" to 1/2" thick tile spacers

CARE AND INSPECTION

- 1) Handle cases of tile with care. Keep all boxes upright. Do not drop cases of tile. Prior to installation, store material in a dry area. Moisture or dampness can cause tiles to stain.
- 2) Inspect your order carefully. Clay Imports will not be responsible for material that has been cut or installed. Throughout the installation process and handling of the tile, be careful not to damage the finished surface, edges and corners of the tiles.
- 3) Saltillo terracotta tile, as a product of clay and natural materials, is subjected to color and shade variations and it is recommended to mix the tiles from the different cases.
- 4) Saltillo terracotta tile is a clay-based product and may have clay residue on the surface. Before starting the installation, it is highly recommended to clean all tiles with a clean cloth to remove any residue and get a clean tile surface. Please be aware that our tile is a handmade product. Due to this process, variations in size, shade, irregular edges and the appearance of fine cracks are inherent to this product and can vary from piece to piece. The size tolerance for this product is 1/2". Prior to installation, we advise a blending of the tiles to create a more aesthetic appearance.

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INSTALLATION

- 1) Glue the tiles on a flat, dry surface with a high quality, flexible tile adhesive. Use a trowel with recesses of 10-20 mm (1/2 - 3/4in). Ensure that the adhesive is applied to the entire surface of the back of the tile. Depending on the desired look, grout joint spacers up to 3/4" can be used. The minimum spacing recommended is 1/16". Remove excess glue from between tiles quickly. Glue will require at least 24 hours to dry properly.
- 2) Clean the tile surface with water after bonding using a sponge and / or cloth. Wring the sponge every time while cleaning the floor. Avoid getting tiles too wet as this may affect later steps. Allow the floor to dry completely.
- 3) The tiles should be thoroughly cleaned prior to grouting. After the tiles are clean and dry, apply 1 to 2 coats of grout release to the tile surface.
- 4) Grout should be applied to the tile within 1 hour of applying grout release. Always apply grout to a loose sample tile prior to full application. Pigments from some grouts can penetrate the surface of tile and result in permanent staining. **WE ADVISE AGAINST USING BLACK GROUT.** Once you have confirmed that the grout is suitable, begin applying to the surface. Only apply small sections of no greater than 6 square feet at a time. Grout should be cleaned from the surface with a damp sponge. Grout should not dry on the tile surface for longer than 10 minutes. For best results, wipe away excess grout at an angle to the tile lines. Continue cleaning until only a mild residue remains on the surface. Caution not to remove too much grout from the surface joints. Allow 24 hours for grout to dry.
- 5) Following grout application, clean the tile surface thoroughly with a damp cloth. Clean the surface until all grout residue has been removed.
- 6) Once the installed tile is completely dry, 1 to 2 coats of [Saltillo tile Mexican ole sealer](#) can be applied to the surface. Saltillo tile Mexican ole sealer will reduce the overall required maintenance of your surface.
- 7) Maintain your tiles periodically, recommended once a week, with soap and water.

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FINAL THOUGHTS

- Please be sure to read all instructions on the products used.
- For safety purposes, always work in a well-ventilated area. Mixing tiles from different boxes leads to the best results.
- During a renovation, covering the floor with a breathable foil for best results. Avoid the use of plastic or cardboard (non-breathable materials).
- Avoid cleaning agents that contain acids.
- If you are uncertain about what steps to take for your installation, feel free to contact Clay Imports where we can provide our expertise on next steps required.