

Does a travertine table top need to be sealed and how do I clean it?

Q. I have a travertine dining room table. What should I do to seal it and how should I clean it?

A. Regarding sealing travertine, check first to see if sealing is required. Begin by spilling some clean fresh water on it and leave it for 30 minutes. Next wipe it away. If it darkens the stone (indicating that it is absorbing), then it should be sealed. Contact your professional stone and tile restoration contractor or if you need a PRO, [contact us](#). On the other hand, if after 30 minutes the stone does not get darker, and the water just beads up, there is no need to seal it (it is not absorbing anything anyway).

If you get white marks on your table, they are not stains, they are etchings. No sealer, regardless of how good it claims to be, can prevent them or cover them. They are lighter in color and indicate that some of the stone has been eaten away by the acid. No sealer on the market will prevent the chemical reaction between acid (vinegar, wine, citric juices) and calcium (which makes up travertine). Your only prevention is to put on a wax, but then it is not food safe and is toxic. You are best leaving it natural and caring for it using a stone safe cleaner and a stone polish. See our free, downloadable [Stone and Tile Care Guide](#) for more information on caring for your stone.

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