

# How to Decide Whether to Buy Real Leather or Faux Leather

Let's say you're choosing between real and synthetic leather for a wall tile installation. You are well aware by now that real leather comes with a higher price tag. But how do you decide which type of leather is really better?

Is there a significant enough difference between the two that one is clearly the better option?

Buyers struggle with this question all the time.

On the one hand, with authentic leather you are getting the real deal. That said, we know that faux leather is a more affordable alternative.

So when is it best to go with leather made from rawhide versus synthetic leather made by a machine? Of course, the answers will differ among industries, projects, businesses, and property owners. But hopefully I can help you arrive at a decision that works for your needs.

First, we need to determine what the material should accomplish for your project.

## What Can You Achieve with Real Leather?

The reason you are choosing leather for your installation, is that you want to create a space that has unique character and a luxurious feel. With that in mind, here are some benefits that real leather can provide for you.

### **Real leather can communicate timelessness and prestige**

Leather tanning is an ancient art, and in our world of machine mass production and throwaway materials, leather connects us to a time when craftsmanship was king.

With leather incorporated into your interior design, you are going to evoke the values people associate with it: luxury, endurance, and commitment to quality.

### **Real leather can offer remarkable qualities that make your space more inviting and memorable**

It has been said, "nature creates, never duplicates." This principle is crucial to the leather tanning industry.

People who buy natural leather want to avoid the pedestrian regularity of plastics and let the material speak for itself. Because tanners respect nature's individual signatures on the animal hide - including growth marks, fat wrinkles, hair whorls, vein etchings, and color variations - no two pieces are the same.

In addition, there is nothing more memorable than the scent and feel of real leather.

As an animal-derived material, leather is soft and flexible yet tough and durable. Remarkably, it becomes more comfortable *and* stronger as it ages.

In other words, the qualities we appreciate most in real leather only become more pronounced with time.

### **Real leather can tell your story and show the unique character of your space**

Not only is leather unique in and of itself, but it also will gradually adapt itself to its surroundings. For instance, areas of the surface that have had more contact with the environment will become more supple and develop an attractive patina.

This means your leather will age gracefully, become more comfortable, and an even richer depth of color and variety of texture will emerge over time.

## **Why People Buy Faux Leather**

With so much value attributed to real leather, not to mention the rising demand for natural materials in the interior design industry, you might assume that's all anyone really needs.

But, actually, faux leather is in high demand.

Part of the reason people choose faux leather is because it has a similar look and feel to authentic leather, while being more affordable.

In addition:

### **People will pay for faux leather if short-term damage is a concern**

A larger investment can mean a greater risk of loss if damage occurs. For instance, if real leather is exposed to constant sunlight, the color may fade. Animal hide is also porous, so liquid spills can quickly soak into the material if not wiped up right away, or even stain if the leather is not protected.

### **People want more color options**

Real leather can be dyed into many different colors without compromising its unique texture. However, faux leather tends to be available in an even wider spectrum of fade-resistant colors to suit virtually every style and taste.

### **People want animal-friendly alternatives**

Some people prefer artificial leather simply because no animals are harmed in the process.

With machine-made leather, you will also get a consistency in color and texture that won't change over time.

## **When You Should *Never* Use Faux Leather**

There are no hard and fast rules, because there can always be exceptions and everyone has their own personal preference.

That being said, here are some general suggestions for when faux leather should *not* be used:

### **Faux leather shouldn't be used as a long-term investment**

Many people want to know how long leather will last. The answer is, real leather can last decades if treated well. Faux leather, on the other hand, has about a third of the lifespan of authentic leather.

It also won't develop lustre or become more soft and comfortable like real leather. But, instead, faux leather looks more worn out as it ages - like most fabrics.

### **Faux leather shouldn't be treated roughly**

Synthetic leather will crack and split much easier than real leather. Faux leather is also thin compared to real leather, so it's best to avoid exposing it to constant impact or rough treatment.

## **The Bottom Line**

People often worry about this issue of real versus faux leather and whether paying more for authentic material is worth it. And yes, it comes down to personal judgment.

With real leather it is important to be aware of how the hide is tanned and treated and which type you're buying. Full grain is always going to be the highest-quality leather. But the good news is that high-quality leather can be found on both sides, whether cowhide, calf, bison, or synthetic.

## **Here's How to Find the Right Leather Tile Solution for Your Next Project**

If you're interested in taking the next step with choosing the best leather for a truly unique installation, you should check out our Leather Tiles. You can get started today with expert consultation plus 3 x 3 inch samples to get you inspired. Check them out here and get started bringing your ideas to life.