



Installation & Care Guide: Zelliges

By Opia Design

Prepare your Layout:

- Before installing the tiles, mix them from multiple boxes since nuanced colour variations are inherent in the manufacturing of the tiles.
- Always verify the conformity of the tiles before laying; verify the beginning of the work and its evolution.

Laying the Tiles:

- Prepare your surface: make sure it's properly levelled and waterproofed where needed.
- Soak all glazed zellige tiles in clean water to remove any dust and residue from transportation and ensure good tile adherence.
- Use flexible white high-bond mortar or flexible white paste adhesive to form a coat of at least 3 mm after laying.
- Double spread the adhesive on the surface and the zellige and adjust the zellige to each other. The double spread allows the zelliges to be adjusted, thus preventing sharp edges from becoming visible.
- Laying edge to edge: All our tiles must be laid almost edge to edge, with a gap of a maximum of 1 mm. However, the irregular character of zelliges means that in certain places, it must be accepted that the joint will be slightly wider.
- Adjust the zelliges alongside and in relation to each other so that the edges touch as far as possible, so as not to leave any sharp edge exposed.
- There can be differences in thickness between zelliges of approximately 1.5 mm, and they are never perfectly flat.
- Make sure that the whole surface of the zellige is in contact with the high-bond mortar (otherwise, an overhanging tile may crack in the corners).
- Laying tiles in a shower tray or cubicle: must be carried out by an experienced professional.

Laying the zelliges in wet areas

Zelliges are commonly used in swimming pools, shower walls, fountains, spas, and bathrooms.

Before starting:

- Make sure the area is entirely waterproof by covering it with a permanent coating.

- The mortar used is highly water-resistant.
- The gradient to the drain hole must be sufficient in shower floors, and the walls of the shower tray are also made waterproof.

Trim:

- We recommend installing zellige to bring your tiles flush with the finished surface of your tile to eliminate the need for trim.
- If you have an exposed edge that needs to be finished in your design, we recommend having your experienced installer mitre the tile or add a thin layer of grout to any exposed edge.

Grouting the Tiles:

Reminder: All natural stone tiles, polished (shiny), honed (matte), or tumbled (antiqued), are porous; therefore, sealing before grouting is essential to fill these pores with a protective sealer to avoid hazy surface appearance.

- Tiles should be allowed to set for 24 hours before applying grout to the joints with a trowel or sponge.
- Non-pigmented (dove or off-white), flexible, unsanded cementitious grout is recommended.
- Use a very liquid grout, then wipe the edge of the joints with a damp sponge.
- Perform this operation several times, until the joints are completely filled.
- Care must be given to wipe down the tile's surface immediately.

Special Treatment of Natural Unglazed Zellige/Bejmat:

Unglazed zelliges are matt terracotta and are highly porous. They absorb stains very easily. Therefore it is essential to fill the surface.

- Use a grout containing few additives (off-white or neutral colour).
- Just before grouting, wet the joints until they do not absorb any more water. This is essential for filling thin joints and preventing the jointing product from penetrating the slightly porous

surface and thus forming a veil of cement, which is invisible while wet, but tarnishes the appearance of the surface when it dries.

- Use a very liquid grout, never a pasty one. Grout very quickly, working on small areas at a time, and clean with water to which a household detergent has been added immediately after grouting. This way of working should avoid forming a cement veil on the surface of the "natural" zelliges.
- Clean the tiles thoroughly with water to which a household.

[Watch the Installation Tutorial Here.](#)

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Sealing (for unglazed Zellige ONLY):

- We recommend using a terracotta Sealer before grouting (TFC Sealant)
- After laying the tile and before grouting, clean the tiles thoroughly, make sure there are no stains or remaining dust.
- Make sure the tiles are dry
- Apply penetrating sealer in thin layers until the tiles become fully saturated, wiping off any excess sealer before it dries. Do not over-seal, as it can dry unevenly and result in an undesirable waxy film on the surface of the tiles.
- Allow the sealer to cure according to the sealant manufacturer's application instructions.
- After grouting, clean the tiles thoroughly.
- If necessary, apply one more coat of sealer following the manufacturer's instructions after grouting to protect the unglazed zellige adequately.

Care and Maintenance

- One of the attributes of zellige is that they require very little maintenance. The tiles should be regularly washed with mild soap and water.
- For "natural" unglazed zelliges, use a fatty soap for natural stone or terracotta floors.
- Immediately clean up any spills or stains on the tile, especially oil and grease on unglazed zellige, as it may stain permanently.

NOTE: Stains on unsealed unglazed zellige may be permanent, so it is important to follow the sealing process AND expect patina, natural ageing, and wear of unglazed natural zellige over time.