

# Zellige tile

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CERAMIC & GLAZED CLAY · MANUFACTURER-COMPLIANT (ZIA TILE/CLE TILE) ·

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# How to Clean Zellige Tile: Science-Backed Protocol

Zellige is handmade clay with glaze pits and micro-cracks. This protocol prevents staining and grout damage.

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## Zellige Care

GLAZE-SAFE CLEANING AND GROUT CARE

Zellige tiles are hand-molded clay with natural pits and crazing. Acids and abrasive scrubbing can stain the clay body or scratch the glaze.

Prohibited methods include vinegar on grout, bleach, and stiff bristle scrubbing. This protocol focuses on gentle, pH-neutral cleaning and moisture control.

Follow these steps to protect the glaze, grout joints, and open pits from stains.

## The science: why zellige is high risk

### Handmade clay body

Zellige is hand-molded natural clay fired in traditional kilns. The tiles are intentionally irregular and porous by nature.

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### Glaze crazing and pits

Micro-cracks and surface pits allow liquids to reach the clay body. Acidic spills can stain under the glaze and become permanent.

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### Grout sensitivity

Zellige uses tight grout joints. Acidic cleaners degrade cement grout and allow moisture to migrate behind the tile.

## Part 1: Myth vs. Science

### Myth #1: Clean the grout with vinegar and baking soda.

**Science: False.** Vinegar breaks down cement grout. Baking soda is abrasive and lodges in pits and crazing, drying into chalky deposits that scratch the glaze.

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### Myth #2: Scrub hard to get dirt out of the pits.

**Science: False.** The glaze is glass-like and fragile. Stiff nylon or wire brushes scratch the surface and increase staining.

## Part 2: The Clean Era Protocol

### Step A: The daily clean

**The agent:** pH-neutral mild soap and warm water.

**Method:** Use a soft sponge or cloth and wipe gently across the surface.

**Crucial:** Dry with a microfiber cloth to prevent moisture from settling in pits.

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### Step B: The pit protection

**Protocol:** Seal grout joints with a penetrating sealer to reduce staining.

**Constraint:** Do not let sealer dry on the glazed surface. Wipe it off immediately to avoid haze.

## Summary for your home

### NEVER USE

Vinegar on grout, bleach, stiff bristle brushes, or abrasive pastes.

### ALWAYS USE

pH-neutral soap, soft cloths, and sealed grout joints.

### GOLDEN RULE

Never soak zellige. Wipe and dry to keep moisture out of the pits.

## Manufacturer verification data

### Zia Tile

Warns against soaking unglazed zellige and requires pH-neutral cleaners. Acidic spills can cause permanent staining.

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### Cle Tile

Advises cleaning up acids, oils, and soap immediately and discourages abrasive cleaning methods.

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### Clean Era note

We follow these guidelines by using only pH-neutral cleaners and never soaking the tile, preventing efflorescence and haze.

## FAQ

### Can I use vinegar on zellige grout?

No. Vinegar degrades cement grout and increases moisture penetration behind the tile.

### Why does zellige stain so easily?

The glaze has micro-cracks and pits that allow liquids to reach the porous clay body.

### Should I seal zellige grout?

Yes. A penetrating grout sealer reduces staining and helps keep pits from holding moisture.

# Clean Era standard

Clean Era uses manufacturer-compliant, science-backed protocols so artisan materials stay beautiful for decades.