

WHITE MAPLE

WOOD VENEER | SPEC BRIEF

01 – DESIGN OVERVIEW

White maple is a light-colored, fine-textured veneer with a quiet, refined appearance. It ranges from white to light golden or reddish-brown and is commonly produced from sapwood. Its smooth, closed-pore surface and generally linear grain make it well suited to contemporary, modern, minimalist, and light-toned interiors.

Sapwood-dominant veneer; grain and tone are generally more consistent leaf-to-leaf than natural maple. It provides a restrained wood character rather than a strongly textured one.

DEFAULT CUT

Plain Sliced

DEFAULT MATCH

Book Match

PORE STRUCTURE

Fine/Closed

RELATIVE COST

Economy

02 – COLOR & TONE

White maple ranges from white to light golden, with occasional subtle cream or reddish undertones. Sourced from sapwood, it provides a lighter and more consistent base than natural maple. Tonal variation is generally mild, though mineral streaks and subtle grain color shifts may be present.

TYPICAL COLOR RANGE



SPECIFICATION NOTE

Light maple does not guarantee a completely uniform face. Natural mineral streaks and tonal shifts may be more visible with clear or light finishes. Evaluate on a finished 8"x10" sample.

Aging note: White maple is generally stable in color over time; slight yellowing may occur with prolonged light exposure.

03 – GRAIN & TEXTURE

White maple has a fine, smooth texture with a generally linear grain. Plain sliced faces can introduce mild cathedral figure, while overall grain movement is quieter than many other species. The closed-pore surface reads as smooth and refined under most finish systems.

SPECIFICATION NOTE | STAIN ABSORPTION

Maple's closed-grain structure can absorb stain unevenly. Figure and grain density variation can create blotching or light/dark patches, particularly with medium-to-dark stains. Evaluate on a finished 8"x10" sample—not a small 2"x4" sample.

SEE ALSO: NATURAL MAPLE

For a broader color range that includes heartwood, see the **Natural Maple** Spec Brief. White maple is the sapwood-only specification; natural maple includes both sapwood and heartwood.

Adjacent leaves are mirrored in book matching. Where grain figure alternates between leaves, a subtle barber-pole effect may appear as a natural characteristic of the match.

02 – CUT OPTIONS

CUT	GRAIN APPEARANCE	TYPICAL USE	KEY CONSIDERATION
Plain Sliced DEFAULT	Cathedral and straighter grain combined; mild figure possible	Contemporary and light-toned interiors; most common default	Most available and economical; some cathedral movement across face
Rotary	Broad, bold, random grain patterns	Cost effective; where a more varied, less linear grain appearance is desired	More variation in grain expression; confirm availability
Quarter Sliced	Straighter, more linear grain; minimal figure	Where a controlled linear grain is preferred	Lower yield; available on request; confirm with manufacturer

*Plain sliced is the default and most common specification for white maple. Rotary cut produces wider leaves with greater grain variation.



PLAIN SLICED



ROTARY



QUARTER SLICED

WHITE MAPLE

05 – NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS TO ANTICIPATE

CHARACTERISTIC	APPEARANCE	GRADE CONSIDERATION
Color Variation	Mild tonal shifts across face or between leaves	Allowable by grade; define acceptable color range explicitly
Color Streaks	Subtle linear color changes in the grain direction	Allowable by grade
Mineral Streaks	Darker lines or marks from natural mineral uptake—particularly noted for maple by WDMA	Allowable by grade; may be more visible with clear or light finishes
Worm Tracks	Fine, wavy dark lines	Allowable by grade; may be limited at AA grade
Figure	Irregular grain movement; may appear in plain sliced and rotary cuts	Not grade-controlled; can contribute to blotching with stain
Cross Bars	Faint horizontal bands crossing grain direction	Natural characteristic; cannot be fully eliminated
Barber-Pole Effect	Alternating light/dark leaves in book match	Result of book matching; not a fabrication defect

06 – FINISHING

FINISH DIRECTION	EXPECTED BEHAVIOR
Clear/Light Stain	Lowest risk; preserves white maple's natural light character; grain, figure, and mineral streaks fully visible; best choice when a light appearance is the design intent
Medium Stain	Moderate risk; maple's closed-grain structure can absorb unevenly—blotching or light/dark variation more likely; evaluate on a finished 8"x10" sample before approving
Dark Stain	Highest blotching risk; may conflict with the design intent of specifying a naturally light species; validate with a finished sample and confirm species suitability before proceeding

RECOMMENDED DIRECTION

Clear or light stains are best suited to white maple and lowest risk. Medium-to-dark stains carry a higher blotching risk due to maple's closed-grain structure and should be validated with a finished 8"x10" sample. If a dark finish is required, confirm that white maple's natural light character is compatible with the design intent before finalizing the selection.

07 – SPECIFICATION WATCH-OUTS

Critical considerations prior to material release

01

A light appearance does not mean a uniform face

White maple's light base color can make mineral streaks, tonal shifts, and grain variation more visible—not less. Even at AA grade, natural characteristics will be present and may be more apparent with clear or light finishes.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSE: Define acceptable mineral streaking and color range explicitly in the project specification. Specify white/select maple where a sapwood-based lighter appearance is required. Approve a finished 8"x10" sample for visually sensitive applications.

02

Closed-grain structure increases blotching risk with medium-to-dark stains

Maple's fine, closed-pore surface can absorb stain unevenly—producing blotching, lighter patches, or localized darker areas. Figure and grain density variation amplify this effect, particularly with medium and dark stain colors.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSE: Evaluate all stain options on a finished 8"x10" sample—not a small 2"x4" sample. Medium-to-dark stains should be qualified as higher risk and validated with samples on the specified species before finalizing the finish.

03

Dark stains may conflict with the reason white maple was selected

White maple is commonly specified for its naturally light, refined character. Applying a dark stain can mask that character and introduce blotching risk—and may suggest another species is better suited to the finish direction.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSE: Use clear or lighter finishes where preserving white maple's natural light appearance is the priority. If a medium-to-dark finish is required, evaluate whether natural birch, cherry, or another species with a more compatible natural color range may be more appropriate for the application.