The character of the stone makes this patio!

Stone varies greatly in color and texture. Visit a number of stone suppliers to see what’s available in your area and to check prices. (See the Yellow Pages under “Stone” or “Landscaping.”) We chose 3- or 4-in. thick stone intended for building walls, but any relatively flat stone that’s 2 to 4 in. thick will work. Because stone is sold by the ton (we used 5-1/2 tons at $250 per ton), a thinner stone like flagstone would have been more economical, but it wasn’t available in the tumbled finish we wanted. If you use thinner stone, don’t tamp it with the compactor. It will crack. The stone dealer will tell you approximately how many square feet a ton of each type of stone covers. Order at least 15 percent extra to allow more selection when you’re looking for just the right shape.

Concrete pavers are the most economical choice for paving patios. They cost about 49¢ each and are available in many sizes and colors. Traditional clay pavers have truer brick color and cost about 68¢ each. We paid 90¢ each for these used street pavers, but prices vary widely.

Concrete pavers are available at home centers and landscape retailers, but you’ll probably have to find a brickyard to buy clay pavers (in the Yellow Pages under “Brick”). You’ll need about 4-1/2 bricks for every square foot, assuming an average-sized 4 x 8-in. brick. It’s difficult to figure the exact amount of brick needed for an irregularly shaped patio like this, so order about 15 percent extra.