Brown is an all-embracing term to describe a range of fascinating colours - from purple-tinged taupe, to neutral biscuit and beige, and through to the deepest chocolate and richest coffee shade. Many of these browns are a very familiar part of the natural landscape and play an evocative part in home décor.

From wooden floorboards, doors and furniture to woven natural fibres, wallcoverings and textiles. Dark and light brown provide a neutral setting for a large range of colours and patterns. Being a colour of Mother Nature, it is often used in art and design to allude to natural forms. It is the chosen palette of many cultural arts and crafts, and in graphic design earthy colours are effectively used in projects that deal with ecology and the environment.

The relaxed and embracing feel of earthy colours in interiors is used to advantage in residential kitchens and dining areas, and is seen repeated in textured materials such as wood, bamboo, rice paper, hemp, canvas, sisal and leather.
Brown is considered an earthy colour and ideal for interior and exterior colour schemes because it has the natural feel that goes with a variety of building and decorating materials and textures. It can be used to create a rustic look, but also look quite elegant and understated in the right setting teamed with white or black. Earth colours look best if a contrast of tone or colour is introduced into the scheme.

The rich and spicy brown palette of colours is mainly derived from naturally occurring pigments and was used by our ancestors to decorate homes and record the world around us as illustrated on the walls of famous caves in Spain and France. Pigment colours still
used in art today are Sienna from Tuscany and Umber from Umbria - warm colours with a natural feel.

Brown is technically created by mixing complementary colours from the colour wheel together, such as blue and orange, green and red, or yellow and violet. In the Resene ranges, Brown, Red and Yellow Oxides are the base colours for many of the browns and neutrals, with black, white or colour added to give them their unique character.

Brown tells many a story - think about where this suitcase may have been in its travels.
The caramelised browns, evocative of burnt sugar or toffee, are rich and warm with copper undertones. They immediately conjure up feelings of scrumptious home-made puddings, frothy cappuccino coffees and caramel sweets and cakes, providing instant emotional comfort.

In interior design deep-caramel coloured walls generate a warm, elegant cosiness, and serve as an unassuming backdrop to a vast range of collectables and paintings. They can also convey a more sophisticated look when teamed with black furniture and accessories in a living room or masculine bedroom.

Caramel browns in the Resene ranges include - Resene Kalgoorie Sands, Resene Brown Sugar, Resene Root Beer, Resene Rust, Resene Rope, Resene Sorrell Brown, Resene Rusty Nail, Resene Old Copper and Resene Desert.

caramel browns
Chocolate and coffee browns are slightly blackened, and considered sophisticated colours in interior design, and again stimulate the tastebuds with flavours of rich chocolate cakes and desserts, flat whites and hot chocolates with chocolate swirls on top. Use intense, dark browns for rooms designed for work or contemplation, such as a library or study, or an enveloping dining or living room. Dark brown walls work well with antique or traditional furniture, or with sleek black and white furnishings for a more international and contemporary effect.

Dark browns always combine with their lighter neutral shades and are often considered a safe option in interior design, but try them with pastels such as Resene Ashanti, Resene Icebreaker, Resene Vanilla Ice or Resene Provincial Pink for a slightly more interesting combination. Blackened browns include Resene Sambuca, Resene Coffee Bean, Resene Cola, Resene Cuban Tan and Resene Barista.

Try the following Resene combinations -

Espresso + Rosehip  Sandcastle + Wilderness  Rivendell + Timber
Spicy browns are warm and energetic, from ginger to cardamom the lighter shades bring a zesty sparkle to a room. Saffron and curry may be associated with yellow-browns, while nutmeg and cinnamon relate to the darker spicy shades of brown. The terracotta shades of brown may be linked with cayenne and paprika, and certainly heat up a cool space instantly.

Spicy browns work well with cooler shades of blue and green, or can be set off with crisp white ceilings and woodwork. Try accenting spicy browns with Resene Dotcom, Resene Spinnaker or Resene Espirit for a bold statement.

Check out Resene Moroccan Spice, Resene Rust, Resene Cajun, Resene Wild West, Resene Dallas and Resene Hot Curry.

spice browns
Elegant and Sophisticated

Fur and Animal Skin

Safari Brown

Soft
Cuddly
Innocent
Adorable

Nutty browns are usually infused with red or orange - chestnut, walnut, hazelnut - and frequently used to enhance the colour of natural timber to give the richness and warmth of mahogany.
Ruddy tans and russets may also be included in this sector.

These shades of brown work well with blue and green also, the cooler colours complimenting their warmth. Tan looks great with black and charcoal for a hand-crafted look, e.g. Sante Fe style, or with white and blue to warm up a cooler space.

Look up Resene Digeridoo, Resene Tobacco Brown and Resene Double Nullabor.

Paler shades of brown, biscuit and sandstone, are popular as a background for any scheme, from matt and subdued neutrals with lots of textural relief for a natural and casual feel, through to a glossy and reflective backdrop for marble and glass furniture. These lighter shades are reliable and stable, or tranquil and relaxing.

The wall in bottom left illustration is similar to Resene Ashanti which works beautifully with the lighter shades or chocolate brown.
Greyed browns are emerging as the preferred choice by designers and architects - often ambiguous and difficult to read as to whether they are brown or grey, especially the metallics which are warmer than pewter but cooler than antique gold.

Urban, abstract, industrial, organic - these could all describe some of the greyed browns in the Resene range such as Resene Arrowtown, Resene Makara, Resene Cork, Resene Smokey Ash, Resene Felix, Resene Mondo, Resene Oilskin.

greyed browns
Vegetation, Bark and Leaves, Ethnic, Bamboo, Rattan, Blackened Brown

As in nature, green and brown combine harmoniously together.

Try Resene Jigsaw and Resene Mondo.

Or Resene Norway and Resene Gargoyle.

Rusted metal, Chestnut, Metallic browns