



THE KITCHEN REMODEL

SURVIVAL GUIDE

RTA
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Kitchen Cabinets & Bathroom Vanities*

THE KITCHEN REMODEL SURVIVAL GUIDE

Ask any contractor or real estate agent and they will tell you that the one room that sells the house is the kitchen. More than just a place for cooking, the kitchen is now often the hub of the household; the place where family members and guests gather to talk, laugh and eat. If your current kitchen just isn't living up to the job, you might be considering a remodel, but it can seem like an overwhelming task.

To be completely honest, it is a big project and it isn't going to be smooth sailing all the way through. Fortunately, this survival guide is here to help you navigate the waters. With information on everything from budgeting to planning your layout to selecting your cabinets and appliances, it can help you through every step of the project. It even has helpful tips for maintaining your sanity amidst the chaos. If you're finally ready to begin the journey to your dream kitchen, then let's get started!



We all need to do our part to protect our natural resources. Wherever you see this symbol you'll find tips for keeping your remodel eco-friendly!

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CHAPTER 1: GETTING PREPARED

STEP 1: Set Your Budget

Before you can do anything, you need to decide how much you can spend. Let's start with the bad news. It isn't going to be cheap. Total costs can range from \$5,000 for a small, mostly DIY remodel, to upwards of \$120,000 for a luxurious, full-scale project. The good news is it will significantly increase the value of your home, as well as the enjoyment you get out of it.

Budget Breakdown

There's no exact science, but the National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA) has broken down the typical remodel costs in this handy chart. If you know what you have to spend, you can get an idea of how much you can afford when selecting cabinets, appliances, and everything else you imagine in your dream kitchen. Don't forget to set a little aside for some cushion room. Costs can quickly increase when you actually delve into the project.

CABINETS & HARDWARE	29%
INSTALLATION	17%
APPLIANCES & VENTILATION	14%
COUNTERTOPS	10%
FLOORING	7%
WALLS & CEILINGS	5%
LIGHTING	5%
DOORS & WINDOWS	4%
FAUCETS & PLUMBING	4%
DESIGN FEES	4%
OTHER	1%

Saving Tips

- If possible, try to plan around your existing electrical and plumbing structure. These adjustments and movements can quickly add to your tab.
- Make a plan and stick to it. Nothing ups costs faster than changing your mind, especially after supplies and materials have already been ordered.
- **Go green.** Some eco-friendly materials, like bamboo, are actually cheaper. Plus, you will certainly notice the savings in your gas and electric bills when you choose energy efficient appliances.
- Set priorities. Would you rather have high-tech appliances or granite countertops? You'll probably have to compromise on your wish list at some point, so decide up front what you can't live without.
- Do some research and comparison shopping. Just because something looks pretty,

doesn't mean it can stand up to the needs of your family. Look at durability and how much maintenance products require, in addition to cost.

- What can you do yourself? Many things are best left to the professionals, but you can certainly save some cash by adopting some DIY projects such as painting walls, installing crown molding or laying tile.
- Go over financials with your contractors and get your agreements in writing. Have a clear understanding of who you are paying and what you are paying them to do. Work out a payment schedule based on milestones; you should never pay 100% upfront.

Budget Your Time

Time is money, and a remodel project is no exception. The quickest way to start accumulating additional costs is to get off schedule. Depending on the size and extensiveness of the project, kitchen remodels can range anywhere from 4 to 6 weeks for partial remodels, to 4 to 8 months or longer for large-scale projects.

An understanding of the timeline for a typical kitchen remodel can help keep you on track. Remodels generally happen in 3 phases. With occasional overlaps, each phase is dependent on the prior being completed.

Phase I – Planning and Design (6 to 8 weeks)*

This is the most crucial phase in terms of staying on track. If everything is properly selected, scheduled and planned, the latter phases will go much more smoothly. No matter how involved you plan to be in the construction process, you must give this stage your attention. Nothing halts progress faster than a homeowner failing to communicate their wants and needs with the contractors.

Phase II – Ordering Material (6 to 12 weeks)

Phase II is mostly waiting for supplies to arrive and scheduling labor. It's usually best to have all materials on site before you start construction, so base this phase on the materials with the longest lead time. Typically, this would be the cabinetry and/or any other product that needs to be custom made. The nice thing about our cabinets, is that we carry a 3 month's supply and have a processing time of 7-10 business days. This can significantly reduce the time line for Phase II.

Phase III – Installation (6 to 10 weeks)

No matter how long it actually takes, this phase will probably feel like the longest.

It will be loud and dirty and you probably won't be able to use your kitchen at all. Keep your eye on the prize, you're almost there!

* Based on full-scale remodel of approximately 6 to 8 months

The unfortunate truth is that during a kitchen remodel, one of the most used rooms in

your home will be either partially or completely unusable. Plus, it's going to be noisy and messy. You need to decide how much time you can spend living in a construction zone and let your contractor know upfront. It plays a big role in determining the scope of the project.

First, decide what your sanity can handle, and then check your calendar. Go several weeks beyond when you expect to be completed. Planning to host Thanksgiving at your house this year? Are the grandkids going to be underfoot all summer? These are the things you need to consider to ensure your remodel doesn't disrupt your life more than necessary.

Unfortunately, there will probably come a time during the remodel process that will require you to be a little flexible and very patient. Ordered supplies don't always arrive on time, deficiencies that weren't noticeable during the design phase can pop up when you start knocking down walls, and anything custom made is going to take some time to construct. Always factor in some cushion time.

STEP 2: Hire Quality Professionals

You won't be able to do it all by yourself. Whether you are hiring a remodeling firm to take you from start to finish or contracting out electrical, plumbing and other more complicated aspects yourself, the importance of hiring good professionals cannot be understated.

You can put all the money in the world into beautiful cabinets and hi-tech appliances, but if the workers don't know what they are doing, you won't be happy with the end results. Likewise, if you and your contractor can't communicate or don't get along, it's going to be a very long remodel process. Here are some considerations to keep in mind when doing the hiring:

- Find a professional member of the National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA). Not only are their skills verified, they must also adhere to an NKBA Code of Standard. You'll be sure to get experience and expertise. We also have a contractor locator on our website which will help you find contractors in your area that have worked with and installed our cabinets before.
- Look at their previous work. Contractors and remodelers should have photos and files on projects they have done in the past. You may even be able to visit one of their completed projects or, at the very least, contact past clients for references.
- Decide who is doing the hiring and scheduling. A professional remodeling firm typically handles everything from start to finish, from the layout design to the ordering and installation of cabinetry to the hiring of electricians and painters. Many will help with interior décor as well. You can also do the contracting of professionals like plumbers and carpenters on your own. You can save money this way, but plan on increased stress levels and a longer timeline.
- Discuss warranties and guarantees. You are shelling out a nice sum of cash for this project and part of your payment should ensure that if problems arise that are not your fault, you aren't stuck with the costs.
- Agree on budget and timeline early on. If you and the contractor can't agree on parameters, save both of you weeks of undue stress and find someone else.

STEP 3: Get Ready For Chaos

Let's be honest, 6 to 8 weeks of construction in your living space is not going to be easy. There will be days that you think you are going to chuck the whole project if you have to listen to another afternoon of hammering or eat one more frozen dinner.

Consider these tips for easing your aggravation and remember that all the dust, noise and takeout will be forgotten when you are enjoying your dream kitchen.

- Set up a makeshift kitchen in another room that isn't affected by the remodel. Preferably your dining room, but that may not be possible if the kitchen is adjacent as dust and debris will be an issue. Set up a table in the corner with a microwave, hotplate, coffee maker, crock pot and toaster oven. Indoor grills, like the George Foreman, and water dispensers also come in handy.
- You will still need a refrigerator/freezer. Set up your old one in the garage or purchase a cheap mini-fridge.
- Designate a sink for cleaning dishes, rinsing vegetables and washing hands.
- It isn't the most ecologically friendly option, but disposable utensils and paper plates can be lifesavers.
- Consider all the ways you can eat without a kitchen: go to a restaurant, get take-out, grill outside, trade meals in your new kitchen for dinners at friends and families now...use your imagination.
- Make and freeze as many meals as possible before your kitchen is unusable. Heat them in the microwave or plead with a close neighbor for occasional use of their stove.
- These foods can all be made without your full kitchen: soup, sandwiches, canned chili, salads, raw fruits and vegetables, cheese and crackers, hot dogs, and frozen entrees. Keep lots of snacks on hand.
- Anything you know you won't need, pack away in the garage or basement. However, make them easy to get to and easy to identify because you will inevitably need something at some point.
- Block off the remodel area as much as possible with plastic sheeting to avoid dust and dirt. Put plastic sheeting, blankets or tarps over expensive items that may be damaged by the dust like stereo systems, sofas and carpets.
- Plan a mid-remodel vacation, even if it's just a long weekend at a local hotel. Your sanity will thank you.
- Don't forget about the other members of your family—the pets. If they are accustomed to eating in the kitchen, get them used to another room well before the remodel starts. Also determine how you will keep them out of the construction zone and inside the house when doors are constantly opening and closing.

- Stay positive! Keep a picture of your dream kitchen nearby to remind you of the end result. And remember, there will be an end to the madness.

CHAPTER 2: LAY IT ALL OUT

How Do You Measure Up?

Exact measurements are extremely important. Imagine ordering your dream refrigerator only to find out it doesn't fit after it arrives because your measurements were off. Your contractor will probably measure for you, but if you are doing a lot of the work yourself or just want to get a head start on your first design meeting, then break out your pad, pencil and tape measure and follow this simple, 4- step guide to getting proper measurements. Always work left to right, taking your time and recording measurements to the nearest 1/8 of an inch.

STEP 1 Measure the Length of the Walls

When standing at the entrance to your kitchen, start with the wall to your left and measure the entire wall from corner to corner at the very top.

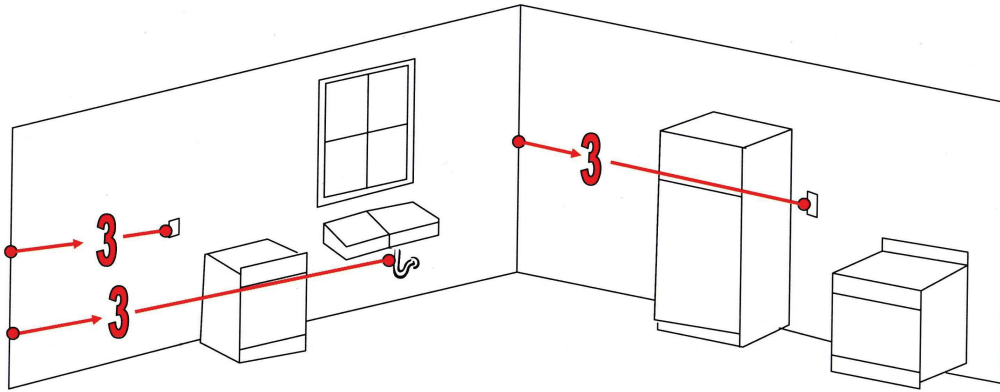
STEP 2 Measure the Height of the Walls

Measure from floor to ceiling in at least 4 places.

The diagram shows a 3D perspective of a kitchen corner. It illustrates two measurement steps: Step 1, measuring the length of the walls, and Step 2, measuring the height of the walls. Step 1 is shown with blue arrows and the number '1' indicating the measurement along the top of the walls from corner to corner. Step 2 is shown with orange arrows and the number '2' indicating the measurement from the floor to the ceiling at four different locations along the walls. The kitchen layout includes a window, a sink, a refrigerator, and a stove.

STEP 3 Measure Utility Points

Record the measurements from the left corner of the wall to the center of outlets, vents and plumbing.

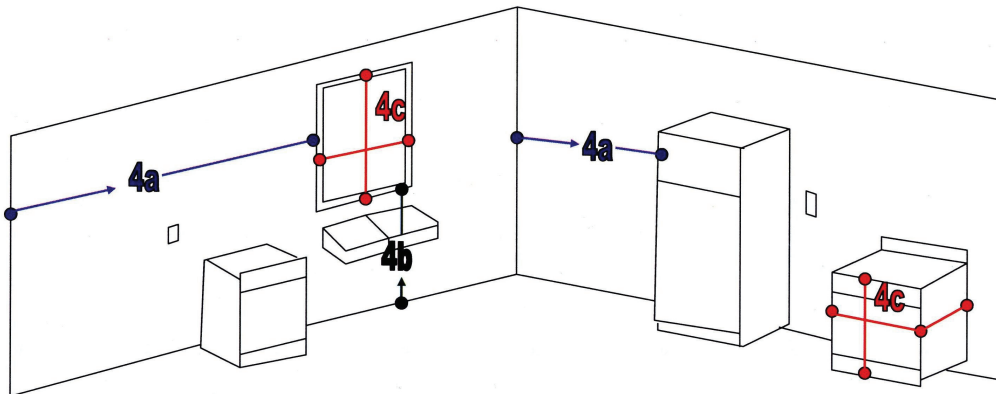


STEP 4 Measure the Placement of Windows, Doors and Appliances

4a Measure from the left corner to the left edge of any breaks or gaps; these include windows, doors, closets, and appliances.

4b Measure any gaps between the floor and the bottom of any windows or wall-mounted appliances.

4c Record the height and width of the windows and doors. Take the height, width and depth of all appliances.



STEP 5 - Repeat Your Measurements!

We all make mistakes, but don't make yours a costly one.

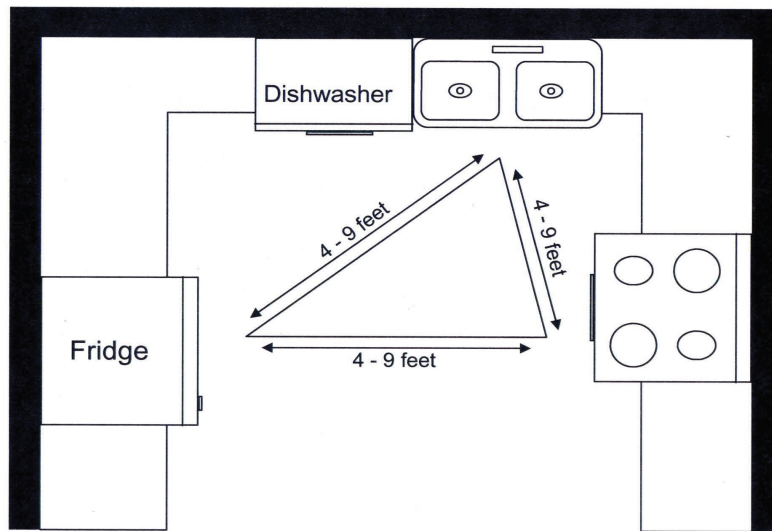
Planning the Layout

Now that you know what you are working with, you can start planning perhaps the most crucial aspect of your kitchen design—the layout. Put a lot of thought into your layout as this will inevitably dictate how much enjoyment you really get out of your new kitchen. Tired of walking around an island to get to your refrigerator? Wish the sink was closer to the stove? Tired of bumping into others while you cook? This is your chance to add convenience and fix any of those little annoyances that bother you about your current kitchen. If you head over to our website, we have a custom design tool that can help make the layout process easier, since you can move cabinets and appliances around to get the perfect layout. Here are some basic designs to keep in mind.

The Basic Work Triangle

While layouts vary and should definitely be personalized to your needs, you can't go wrong planning around what is known as the kitchen work triangle. Literally a triangle, the three points are the three most utilized areas of a kitchen-- oven/stove, refrigerator, and sink. This is the cook's domain and nothing should interfere with the sacred triangle, so consider this when designing traffic patterns and laying out islands, peninsulas, tables and appliances.

For maximum cooking productivity, you have to make sure that you have enough room to work smoothly while not having to walk more than necessary. Experts recommend that each leg of the work triangle be between 4 to 9 feet long, and that the total of all three legs not exceed 26 feet.



Common Layouts

Let's look at a few of the most popular kitchen layouts. A good contractor and designer can help you choose an option that best fits the space you have and the needs of your

family.

Galley

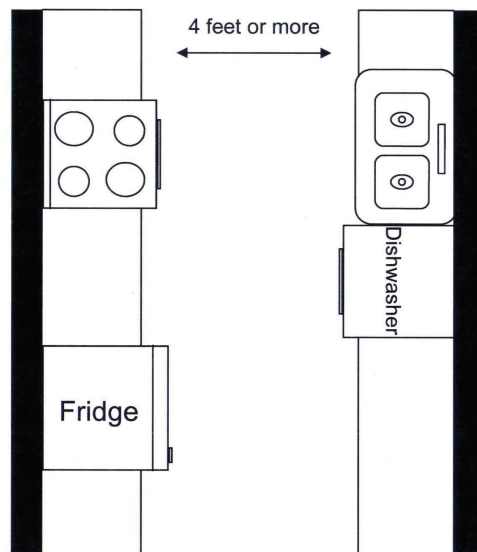
A galley kitchen is set up like a hallway or corridor with your countertops and appliances on two opposite facing walls. If you have a smaller area to work with, this will usually make the best use of your square footage. But, remember that the space between each wall needs to be 4 feet at the very least to ensure mobility.

Best For: Making the most of smaller spaces; smaller budgets

Best Work Triangle: 2 points on one wall and 1 point on the opposite wall

Pros: Least expensive
Works in smaller spaces
Less walking distance
Plenty of storage
Lots of counter space

Cons: High traffic, sometimes coming from both ends of the kitchen
Not a lot of room to maneuver
No space for eating or gathering



U-Shaped

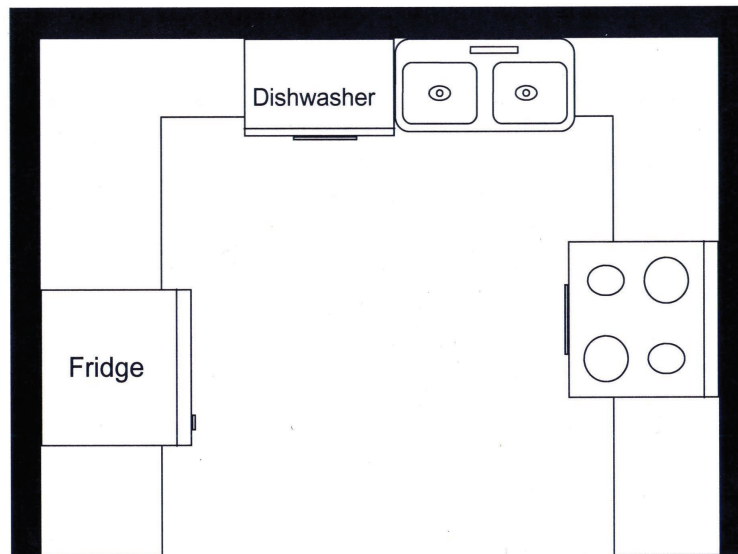
With a U-shaped layout, you get the benefit of the galley's efficient work triangle, plus added workspace and often less through traffic. This is one of the most popular kitchen layouts, but it usually doesn't work as well in smaller spaces, especially kitchens that are less than 10 feet wide.

Best For: Medium to large spaces; average budget; small to medium sized family

Best Work Triangle: 3 points near the bend in the U

Pros: Plenty of storage
Lots of counter space
Efficient use of work triangle
Option to add an island (if the space is large enough)

Cons: Doesn't work well in smaller spaces
Can feel cramped at the closed end of the kitchen
Maneuverability may be difficult with more than 1 cook



L-Shaped

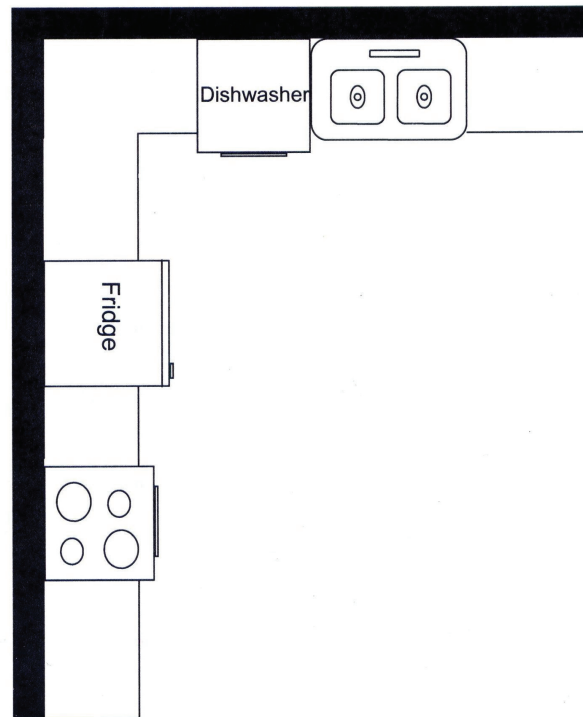
The L-shaped is the most common kitchen layout. There is a lot of extra moving space and it works well for the average sized kitchen. It is also optimal for open floor plans in which the dining or living area is directly adjacent.

Best For: Medium sized kitchens; open floor plans; average budget; large families

Best Work Triangle: 2 points on one leg of the L and 1 point on the perpendicular leg. Keep in mind the recommended lengths for each leg of your triangle (4-9 feet) and try not to make one leg of the L so long that it requires you to walk great distances between storage and appliances.

Pros: Minimal traffic in the cooking area
Great for larger families
Option to add an island
Room to put table and chairs

Cons: Not optimal for larger spaces
Appliances may be spaced out requiring more walking



Island

The island layout, if done properly, has a lot of added conveniences—more storage, more seating, more counter space—but no matter how much you may want an island, if you don't have the space, it will quickly become more of a burden than a bonus. It works

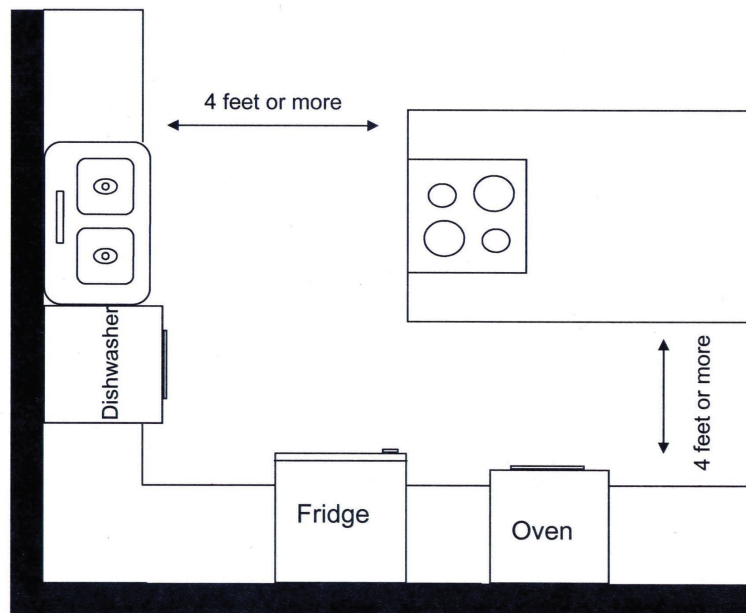
best in an L-shaped kitchen with at least 4 feet of space between the island and the base cabinets.

Best For: Large kitchens; medium kitchens with an open floor plan; large families; entertaining

Best Work Triangle: The best use of the triangle will be dependent on how your counters are set up, but it generally helps to have one point on the island. Whatever you do, make sure you don't have to go around the island to work between your 3 triangle points.

Pros: Tons of storage and counter space
Great seating and gathering area
Cook can better socialize with guests

Cons: Not optimal for smaller spaces
More expensive, especially if you need plumbing or ventilation hook-ups
Can make even a large space seem cramped

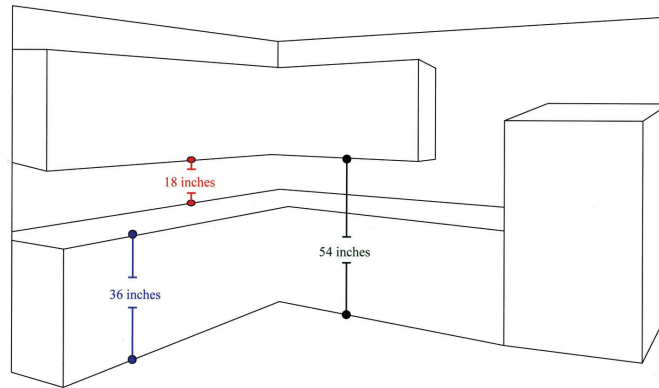


Space Considerations

You probably don't often think about the amount of space between certain objects, unless you start to notice that there is too much or too little of it. To alleviate some future headaches, keep these industry spacing standards in mind:

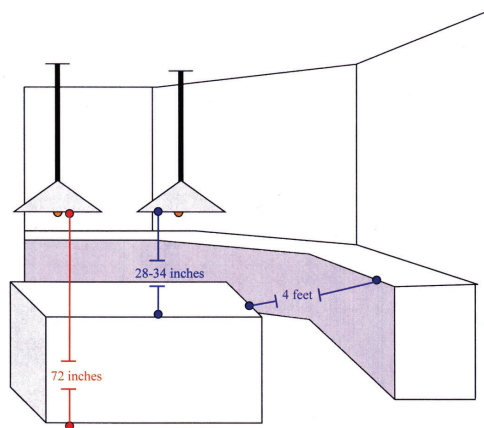
Countertop and Wall Cabinets: Wall-mounted cabinets should be placed 54 inches from the floor. Standard base cabinets are 36 inches tall, so that leaves 18

inches of space between. You could do with as little as 12 inches between if you have customized cabinets, but you don't want to place your wall cabinets much higher or lower for ease of access.



Island and Lighting Fixtures: 28 to 34 inches above the island or 72 inches from the floor

Island and Base Cabinets: 4 feet (48 inches) is recommended, but 42 inches is the minimum. Allow extra if you regularly have more than one cook utilizing the space.



Points on the Kitchen Work Triangle (Oven/Stove, Refrigerator, Sink): 4 to 9 feet

Dishwasher and Sink: Maximum of 3 feet

Leg Room beneath Islands or Bar Seating: 12 to 19 inches

Standing Room In Front of Appliances: 21 inches

Other Factors

There are so many factors that can help in determining what is best for your new kitchen. Here are a few other considerations that may affect your personal layout:

- Ages, heights and needs of all family members (or expected family members)

and/or residents), especially those who will be cooking.

- Accommodations for any disabilities, physical issues or special needs. This doesn't just mean wheelchairs or walkers. Arthritis, poor eye sight, or the inability to stand for long periods of time can all be factors.
- Do you plan on doing any entertaining? If so how often and for how many people?

Utilities

Your new kitchen may look gorgeous when it's completed, but if you don't have water and electricity, it is pretty useless. Plumbing and electrical work are trades. People go to school, study codes and have a lot of supervised on the job experience before they can work alone. It isn't something that can be learned overnight and mistakes can be costly and extremely dangerous. No matter how much of the remodel you are planning to do yourself, these areas are best left to a professional. A little knowledge, however, can help you communicate better with your electrician and plumber, so here are some basic codes and recommendations for a kitchen. This is just general information. You *must* ensure that you are in compliance with local codes as well.

Electrical

These are your basic needs and the absolute minimum that any kitchen must have:

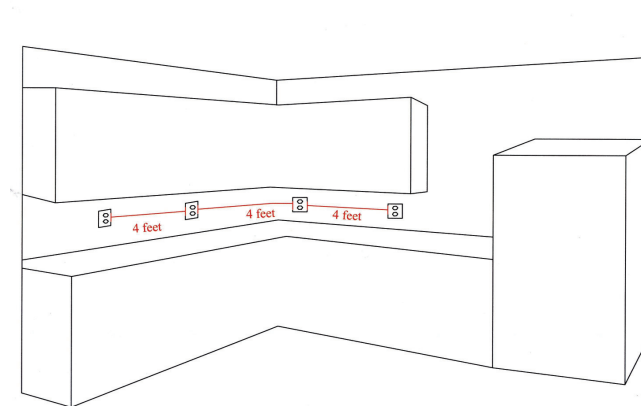
Service Panel

To power a modern kitchen, you will need a 200 ampere service panel.

Outlets and Circuits for Small Appliances

By code you need at least two 20-amp, 120-volt circuits to run your small appliances (toaster, coffee maker, blender, etc.). These circuits must also include a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI). Lighting and large appliances should not be on these circuits.

You should have an outlet every 4 feet along the countertop. Outlets must also be included on islands wider than 12 inches and work spaces that are wider than 2 feet.



Basic Lighting Circuit

To power all your lighting, including ceiling fixtures, can lights, and cabinet lighting, you need one 15-amp, 120-volt circuit.

5 Dedicated Circuits

You will need a separate circuit for each of your major appliances. Your appliances need to be selected well before construction begins so your electrician can evaluate the amount of power it needs. This determines the correct wire and breaker sizes. Don't forget that if you have an extra stove or dishwasher, you will need an extra circuit.

1. Oven/Range Circuit

One 50-amp, 240-volt circuit. You can get away with a smaller circuit if you have a gas version, but keep in mind that you'll be limited to another gas version if you ever want to replace or upgrade.

2. Dishwasher Circuit

One 15-amp, 120-volt circuit

3. Garbage Disposal

One 15-amp, 120 volt circuit

4. Refrigerator

One 20-amp, 120 volt circuit. In the past it wasn't uncommon to use one of your small appliance circuits for the refrigerator, but with advances in technology, most modern models need more power and should have their own circuit.

5. Microwave

One 20-amp, 120 volt circuit

The Lighting Layout

Lighting is often skimmed over in the design process, but putting some real thought into your lighting set up can go a long way in ensuring kitchen productivity. It's a little more complicated than just picking out fixtures, but very much worth it in the overall scheme of things. There are different types of kitchen lighting and a well-lit kitchen incorporates all of them. We offer a line of LED lights that can work for any of the lighting scenarios below. For more information, head over to www.ledundercounterlight.com

Overhead Lighting

Don't make the common mistake of trying to light the whole room with one light in the center of the ceiling. This lighting scheme isn't your best choice in any room, but it is especially wrong for the kitchen where you need detailed lighting to read and do intricate tasks. Several can lights mounted at various spots around the kitchen are the most popular. Take shadows and glares from glass front cabinets in mind when determining your layout.

Task Lighting

This is the light you need to chop vegetables, frost a cake or check the doneness of meat. Task lighting is best placed to allow light to shine between the cook's head and

the work surface, such as those on the underside of wall-mounted cabinets. If you have an island place lights 28 to 34 inches above the island or 72 inches from the floor. Other places to ensure adequate task lighting: in the pantry, inside cabinets, and above the sink and range.

Ambient and Accent Lighting

Yes, your kitchen needs to be functional, but it should also feel like a part of your home. It should have that cozy, welcoming glow. That can be achieved by installing lights in unexpected places, such as above cabinets or on the underside of an island overhang. You can also use smaller fixtures to highlight art or that china collection you have on display. Recessed lights and dimmer capabilities also create soft lighting effects.

Natural Light

Windows and skylights create a bright, cheerful kitchen during the day and an exotic glow in the evening. Obviously, you can't rely on it for all your lighting needs, but it's always a nice touch. If you can afford to add some natural light, a remodel is the perfect time to do it. It doesn't hurt your electricity bill either.

Green Lighting

No not lights that are green in color, but lights that are energy efficient. Look for CFL (Compact Fluorescent Lights) bulbs which use less energy and cut back on your electric bill. Also consider LEDs (Light-emitting Diodes), especially for under cabinet lighting. They are a bit more expensive, but you'll earn your money back in energy savings. The LED lights that we sell are not only more eco-friendly, but they last longer, and emit a brighter light than any other traditional form of light.

Decorative Lighting

With so many options on the market, there is no reason to sacrifice personal style for functionality, so look for fixtures that match your home's architectural elements and interior décor.

Plumbing

Many DIYers consider plumbing an easy enough task to take into their own hands. Again, it is best left to a professional to avoid costly mistakes, but if you're bound and determined to give it a go, you absolutely must have a permit! While the police probably won't be knocking down your door, you will certainly run into difficulties if you ever try to sell your home.

Sink

You will need to ensure both supply and drainage lines are properly installed under the sink. Size and placement of drains, pipes and valves can be affected by the type and model of sink you have chosen. Generally, you will use copper pipe lines for the incoming water supply and PVC pipes for drain lines. Also ensure that control valves

are easily accessible for future repairs and maintenance.

Island Sink

Plumbing pipes are in the walls, so when you need to connect the water source to an island, it gets a bit more complicated and expensive. You'll have to run the pipes under the floor which is fairly simple if you have a basement or crawlspace. A concrete slab foundation, however, is going to make this a very difficult project that should really be handled by a professional.

Dishwasher

Your easiest bet, in terms of both plumbing installation and meal clean-up, is to install the dishwasher adjacent to the sink. Don't forget to make sure you have hot water flow and take extra care during installation; you could end up with a flooded kitchen if not done correctly.

Refrigerator

If your refrigerator has an ice maker and water dispenser, you'll need to run a water line to it. It should come from the cold water source closest to the refrigerator, which is often under the sink, but could also be in the wall, floor or ceiling if your sink isn't in close range. This is a project most homeowners could do themselves, but if you're already in the remodel process, it makes sense to have your plumber take care of it. Beware of DIY ice maker installer kits from hardware stores. They don't always meet local codes and they may come with subpar materials.

Garbage Disposal

Typically, you would install the garbage disposal while installing the sink, but take care to connect your water supply pipes to the faucets first or you will be working around the bulky garbage disposal.

CHAPTER 3: THE ULTIMATE KITCHEN

You have a lot of choices to make when designing your kitchen. It can be a daunting task, but it is also one of the most fun aspects of the whole design process. But you can't just pick items here and there with no rhyme or reason. Ultimately, everything has to coordinate or it just isn't going to work in terms of both functionality and aesthetics.

Thankfully, there is a recommended selection process which will save you tons of time, money and stress.

Step 1: Cabinets

Cabinets come first. Not only do they take up the biggest chunk of your budget and have the longest lead time, they are also the largest part of the design scheme. Cabinets dictate the overall tone of the kitchen, so they are a good base starting point. We tried to make the buying process as easy as possible, but if you need any help with your layout, we are more than happy to help.

Step 2: Appliances

Appliances are a close second because you can't finalize your cabinet order until you know the dimensions of your appliances.

Step 3: Countertops

Next, select your countertops. You'll have a good idea at this point of what will complement your cabinet and appliance choices and you'll know exactly how much space you have to cover.

Step 4: Flooring

At this point you can select the best flooring to coordinate with your choices from steps 1-3.

Step 5: Fixtures, Faucets, and Décor

Now tie it all together with the accessories. Lighting fixtures, faucets, knobs and handles can be selected a bit later in the process as long you get the ball rolling on all the items that need to be constructed and ordered. This is also the time to start picking other décor elements such as wall color and texture, window treatments, art and decorations.

Unfortunately, it's not going to be quite that simple. You'll want to ensure you are getting quality items that will meet the needs of your family, and that entails a little research and forethought. There's a lot to think about, but you just need to take it a step at a time. Let's break down what you really need to know about each element.

Cabinets

This is the big one, the choice that is going to have the biggest effect on the overall style of your kitchen. This is also the biggest portion of your budget, which means you need to be sure of what you are getting. Otherwise, you will either end up living in a kitchen you aren't thrilled with or going 30% or more over budget to fix the mistake. Here is what you need to know to make an informed decision.

Materials

There are a lot of options on the market. Your final choice will ultimately be decided by the style of your home, how much abuse the cabinets are going to take, and how much you have to spend. Our cabinet lines come in primarily three choices of wood: oak, maple, and bamboo. If you find a cabinet style or wood type that you absolutely have to put in your kitchen, but we don't offer it, we can always try to find it for you.

Alder has been growing in popularity, primarily because it is one of the less expensive woods on the market. It accepts stains easily so it comes in a variety of tones and colors. Although a hardwood, it is on the softer end of the scale putting it at increased risk for scratches and dings.

Bamboo is as durable as wood (it is actually a grass) and is a more renewable natural resource. Plus, it comes in several finishes and can give your home a more modern look than the typical natural wood grain.

Birch is typically used in stock cabinets. It is the least expensive option, but it doesn't have the durability of other woods.

Cherry is a very popular choice for kitchen cabinets. It is elegant and traditional. You can stain other woods to look like the real thing for less cost, but it won't have the durability of real cherry wood.

Ebony can be very chic and stylish, especially if you are going for a modern look. It is very expensive and very dark, almost black in fact, so think about how that will affect the look of your kitchen.

Hickory is a very hard wood, making it very durable. It is most appropriate for homes with a rustic, country style and it looks best with its natural finish.

Laminate is essentially many layers of a special paper that are compressed and heated into a durable, wood-like material. It is much less expensive than solid wood. You can find laminate cabinets in virtually any color imaginable, but beware of chipping which is very difficult to repair.

Mahogany is a very dark wood. It is fairly expensive and best for elegant, formal styles.

Maple is probably the most versatile choice and currently the most popular on the

market. It is smooth, accepts color well, and fits with a variety of décor styles. Plus, it is durable enough for families with young children and nicely priced for its high level of quality. The majority of our cabinet lines are made from Maple because it is easy to work with, harder than most woods, and offers a really nice wood grain.

Metal cabinets, usually constructed with stainless steel, are appropriate for very modern and minimalistic looks. They are extremely durable, but easy to scratch and you'll have to wipe off fingerprints regularly.

Oak is another popular option for kitchens. It is known for its durability and it accepts many stains and finishes. It holds up well to scratches and dings. It is a high-quality wood that is very affordable and is also the best option for humid climates.

Poplar is a wood with green undertones. It doesn't accept stains well, but can look nice painted in a variety of colors, especially white. It is a softer wood, so it may not be appropriate for large families and small children.

Finishes

Your finishing choices are pretty straightforward with laminate and metal—just pick the color or shade you like and it's ready to go. With wood, you have a few more options that can alter the look of the cabinets. Many prefer to stick with the **natural wood** color and just apply a clear varnish top coat.

Stains will change the color of the cabinet, usually lightening or darkening, while still leaving the natural wood grains visible. Staining is relatively inexpensive and simple enough for the average homeowner to do themselves if they so choose. Plus, maintenance and touch-ups are quick and easy.

Paint is much thicker, so it usually covers the wood grains for a smoother, more solid appearance. The process, which includes sanding and sealing, is a bit more involved than staining and it can be quite a bit more expensive than a simple stain.

Frame Styles

Look at elements like frame styles, door shapes and inserts when determining the perfect cabinetry for your new kitchen. There are four basic frame styles:

1. Full Overlay

The cabinet doors cover the face frame completely. You will only see a tiny sliver of space between drawers and doors.

2. Partial Overlay

This is a very traditional look. About half of the frame is still visible when the door is closed. This is the easiest to construct and thus the least expensive style.

3. Full Inset

If you are having your cabinets custom made, consider the full inset style for a modern and unique look. The doors and drawers are flush with the frame instead of lying on top of it.

4. Frameless

Some cabinets do not have a frame at all (this is the Ikea style of cabinet). When the door is open, you see the edges of the wood pieces that make up the cabinet box. This will give you a bit more space. It is a less finished look however, most appropriate for contemporary and modern kitchens. Generally speaking, a frameless cabinet box will also be less rigid and could sag over time (especially if it is made of particle board, mdf, or flakeboard)

Door Styles and Elements

Slab doors are smooth with no decorative elements on the front. They best match the clean, sleek lines in modern kitchens.

Doors with **raised panel inserts** are perfect for elegant, traditional and formal kitchens. Based on your style preferences, you can choose simpler versions with a single square panel, or opt for more decorative elements and detailed edging.

Recessed panel inserts create a similar effect, but the altered dimensions give them a bit more of a streamlined, contemporary look.

Shaker style doors are very clean and simple, but can also be extremely elegant.

Instead of being square or rectangular, **cathedral style panels** feature an arch at the top. This is a great way to add some architectural detail to your kitchen and break up the horizontal lines.

Glass panel inserts are a great way to turn your dish collection into decoration. Consider adding lighting inside the cabinets to further showcase your dishware.

For cottage and country style kitchens, consider **beaded board**. They are less formal and are a great look for white cabinetry.

Knobs and Pulls

They may seem like an insignificant detail in the overall scheme of things, but don't scrimp on quality or functionality when choosing knobs, handles and pulls for your cabinets. Keep these simple tips in mind:

1. **Test them out.** Hold them in your hand, make sure they are comfortable and size appropriate. Consider family members with arthritis, joint problems and other disabilities before making your final selection.
2. **Check for quality.** Look for solid, heavier knobs constructed with durable materials. Check screw holes, anti-twist pins, and the thickness of metal plating.
3. **Match with your overall décor.** More than just a means of opening your cabinets and drawers, knobs and pulls also add a decorative element. The question is: how much of a decorative element do you want them to be? If you want them to pop and really draw attention, consider knobs in unique shapes, materials, or colors. If you have detailed cabinets that really speak for themselves, consider less ornate decorative hardware in simple shapes and classic materials such as wood or metal.

Accessories

Here is a small sampling of the extras features and elements you can include in your cabinetry set for added conveniences.

- Rollout Drawer Trays
- Drawer Dividers
- Dish Displays
- Adjustable Shelving
- Pantry Pullouts
- Slide-out Baskets and Bins
- Recycling Centers
- Tilt Paneled Sink Fronts
- Lazy Susans
- Spice Drawers
- Appliance Garages
- Wine Racks
- Task Lighting
- Decorative Lighting
- Drawer Glides
- Auto Close Doors
- Soft Close Hinges
- Vertical Tray Dividers

Appliances

Your appliances are the heart and soul of your kitchen. It's where all the magic happens. Preparing food has never been easier and a remodel is the perfect time to take advantage of some modern world conveniences by purchasing new appliances.

You've probably done some research online or visited some showrooms, so you know there are a lot of options on the market, but what do you really need? Any good kitchen must come equipped with these major appliances: oven/range, refrigerator, dishwasher, and sink.

Oven/Stove

Do you want your stove on top of the oven?

Once a package deal, it isn't necessary to combine both if one fits better in another area of your kitchen, like say an island stovetop.

How many burners do you need?

It used to be a standard 4, but it isn't uncommon to see 6 or 8 nowadays.

How much of a variety do you cook?

Stovetops can come equipped with BTU burners, simmer burners, griddles, deep fryers, steamers, woks, grills, rotisserie attachments and many other special additions.

Are you going to be cooking for a lot of people?

Ovens and ranges come in all shapes and sizes. Find one that suits your needs, but make sure it fits in your kitchen before you purchase. A double oven is something you may be very glad you installed next time you face the two dishes to be cooked at different temps for different amounts of time dilemma. Plus, entertaining and cooking for large groups is twice as easy.

Gas or electric?

Some cooks just have a personal preference; usually it's what they learned on. Gas heats up quicker and you have exact control over the flame. Electrical is a more even heat and cheaper initially, but costs can be higher in the long run. There are even some dual gas/electric models if you need a happy medium.

What type of burners do you want?

Electrical coils are your cheapest option, but certainly not the easiest. Ranges with a flat top surface are highly recommended and they are available with radiant electric, halogen, and magnetic-induction heating elements, which can greatly decrease cooking and clean up time.

Are you a messy cook?

Ceramic and glass cook tops can alleviate the stress of cleaning spills that have been baked-on, and a self-cleaning function on the oven is a must.

How much ventilation will you need?

Your ventilation and exhaust systems should be sized in accordance with your stove. If you require a really large range hood, try to incorporate it into your decorating scheme by finding one in cooper or customizing one with tiles.

Refrigerator**How many people do you regularly cook for?**

This determines the size you need. Ten people naturally require more food than two, and more food means you need more space. If you entertain often, look for a model that is wide enough for trays and platters. Adjustable shelves are a must for larger dishes, like a turkey.

What extras do you want?

Vegetable crispers, ice makers, water dispensers, adjustable shelves, digital temperature control—these are just some of the added conveniences you can opt for.

What door set-up works best for you?

From freezers on top to freezers on bottom to side by side options, there is not standard refrigerator layout. Try some out in the showroom and see what you like best. Keep in mind that freezers on the bottom may not be best for people with back problems, and side by side doors often limits the space for larger items.

Do you want it built-in to your kitchen?

Many homeowners these days opt to have the refrigerator permanently built into their kitchen. In fact, you can also have it customized to blend right into the cabinetry. Free-standing units are also available.

Are you being green?

This is perhaps more important for your refrigerator than any other appliance because it has to run constantly. Make sure you look for the Energy Star rating and read the yellow Energy Guide sticker on the back of most major appliances carefully. In addition to telling you how many kilowatts the appliance will use, it also gives you an idea of the annual cost to run it.

Dishwasher**Do you need more dishwashers?**

One popular trend is to include two dishwashers in your kitchen. This is an added convenience for large families and entertaining, but if you only run your washer every couple days right now, you probably don't need to spend the extra money.

How loud is it?

With advances in technology, there is no reason you should be yelling over the roar of the dishwasher to communicate in your kitchen. With a quality model you should have to be right next to it even tell if it is running.

Is it environmentally friendly?

Look for versions that use less water and have air-dry options. Models with internal water heating systems don't cut into your home's overall hot water supply, which adds up to savings on your heating bills.

What type of dishes do you have?

Many people will hand wash their fine china or crystal, but there are now dishwashers with gentler cycles for your more delicate dishes. No need to put a lot of elbow grease into pots and pans either; your dishwasher should have a cycle for those as well.

Is your current dishwasher an eye sore?

There are sleek, handsome stainless steel versions with concealed control panels and models with stylized paneling fit to match your cabinetry.

Sink**What type of material best matches your kitchen?**

Stainless steel isn't your only option anymore. Sinks are also made from enamel-coated cast iron, quartz, polyester/acrylic, solid surface, and even bamboo. Choose one that is not only durable enough for your family's needs, but also plays nicely into your overall décor scheme. Keep décor in mind when choosing faucets also. Try to match them to your lighting fixtures to tie everything together

Single, double or triple?

Typically sinks are either one large bowl or two side by side bowls. It all depends on how you prefer to cook and do your dishes. The triple sink is also growing in popularity with two large bowls and one smaller in the center, usually with a garbage disposal.

How much depth do you need?

While width is important, don't forget about the depth. Make sure yours is at least 8 inches deep. 10 inches is even better if you have a lot of big pots and pans.

Do you need a prep sink also?

In addition to the sink you wash your dishes in, many cooks prefer to add a prep sink on an island or in another convenient area of the kitchen. This can be handy for washing vegetables or filling up pots near the stove top.

What type of handles do you want to work with?

Many faucets come with two handles, one for hot and one for cold. Some cooks find this easier to get the temp they want and some just think it's an extra hassle. Think about what you have now and determine if another set up would be easier for you.

What extras do you need?

The sink isn't a simple tap and basin anymore. Soap and lotion dispensers can be installed right on your sink ledge. The side spray attachment always takes a little scrub time out of dishes. Some models also come equipped with cutting boards and draining racks. You can also have a hot water tap installed and get hot water for tea or soups instantly.

Extra Appliances

These may not be absolute musts for every kitchen, but they can significantly enhance productivity and convenience for your family. Determine what your budget can accommodate and add a couple extra frills.

- Microwave/Convection Oven
- Wine Refrigerator
- Built-in Coffee/Esspresso Maker
- Trash Compactor
- Toaster Oven
- Warming Drawer
- Steam Oven

Countertops

The countertops are like the frosting on the cabinet cake. They pull the cabinetry together and can be an interesting element of your overall décor. However, this is the kitchen we're talking about, so they need to be functional as well. Fortunately, you can have both style and functionality. The trick is to know what type of counters work best for your home's needs. Let's take a look at some of the more popular choices.

Granite is the most popular choice. In addition to having everything a serious cook needs (durable, easy to clean, stands up to heat and knives), it's elegant and it will add value to your home. It does require a bit of maintenance, mostly periodic resealing, and it is costly, but well worth the price tag in the long run.

A **wooden, butcher-block** countertop is a fun option that can give your kitchen added character. They come in all colors and shades, so you shouldn't have a problem finding one to match your cabinets. But, while easy to clean on a daily basis, they aren't quite as durable as some other counters and are prone to stains and burn marks.

Laminate countertops are probably your cheapest option and they come in almost any color you could want. Although they are fairly low maintenance, heat and knives can easily damage and it's difficult to repair. The harsh truth is that they aren't as aesthetically pleasing as some of your other counter options. The seams often show, they are susceptible to discoloration, and they just don't look as finished. You don't get always get the warm, inviting feeling that wood or stone brings.

Ceramic tile is another inexpensive alternative to stone. It can create a charming look for your kitchen by adding a unique focal point to the room. The bad news: tiles are bound to chip and crack and the grout may stain. The good news: they are pretty easy to replace and with a little practice and patience you don't even need a professional to do it.

Nothing says class like **marble**, and it will certainly look stunning in your kitchen. Its beauty comes with a price tag though. Not only is it very expensive, it requires quite a bit of upkeep. If you're set on the elegance of marble, a good compromise is just topping an island with it and using a more practical material for your base countertops.

If your style leans towards ultra-modern and sleek, you might consider a **stainless steel** countertop. It's durable and easy to upkeep, as long as you don't cut on it which leaves scratch marks. This won't give you the cozy feeling of stone or wood, but if it fits with your design scheme, it isn't a bad option.

Flooring

Everything is resting on your flooring choice—literally. This means that you're going to have to give it a little forethought. If you were planning to save a few bucks and keep what you have now, you may have to reconsider once you choose cabinets, lighting and décor. The wrong floor can make your fabulous new kitchen all wrong. Depending on your set up, the floors can really make a room look smaller, or bigger for that matter.

Ultimately, lifestyle and money are going to be your biggest factors in selecting a material. While it's been done, carpet is not highly recommended for any kitchen, so let's take a look at some of your better options.

Wood flooring can be a very nice complement to any kitchen. It adds warmth and can really tie the whole room together. But don't confine your options to just planks; square parquets can create an interesting effect. Also, don't make the mistake of matching the floor to your cabinets. Naturally, they shouldn't clash, but they shouldn't be an exact match either. If you have lighter cabinets go for darker floors for balance, and vice versa. Keep in mind that wood needs some upkeep and maintenance. Depending on the wood, it can be susceptible to scratches and it needs to be sealed regularly to avoid warping.

Linoleum and vinyl tiles are popular kitchen choices, especially for families with children. They are inexpensive, easy to clean, and you are sure to find a color or design that matches your kitchen. Linoleum is a bit more durable and withstands heat better, but it comes with a slightly higher price tag. However, it is still much more affordable than ceramic tile or wood.

Ceramic and stone tiles always look beautiful in a kitchen. They also offer what you are really looking for in a kitchen: easy cleaning and durability. It is definitely worth looking into for your remodel project, as you will get a nicer overall look than with some less expensive options. Try to keep it simple though; don't overpower the rest of your room with a crazy floor tile design. Also remember that tile can be slippery when wet, so spills need to be cleaned up right away.

The importance of living an ecologically sustainable lifestyle cannot be overstated, which is why **bamboo** flooring is rapidly increasing in popularity. While not available in the wide variety of tones that natural wood is, bamboo still rivals the look and durability of hardwood, but because it grows much faster than trees, it is a much more renewable resource. If you're not convinced, just glance at the price tag; it's cheaper than wood also.

Interior Design Styles

The décor and interior design scheme is ultimately what makes your kitchen yours. It should reflect your personal styles and tastes, creating a room that makes you feel happy and comfortable. We've discussed some basic ways of incorporating personal style through cabinetry, flooring, and other elements, but let's take a closer look at how to create some popular interior design styles in your kitchen.

Traditional

Keywords: Elegant, formal, classic, historical

Key Elements: Detailed molding, period styling, decorative wood panels, ornamental and antique cabinetry, lush fabrics

Colors: Deep greens, burgundy, brown, cream

Materials: Cherry wood, mahogany, oak, marble, granite

Lighting: Chandeliers, wall sconces, bronze fixtures

Country and Cottage

Keywords: Comfortable, casual, inviting, cozy, Americana, natural

Key Elements: Painted cabinets, beaded panels, wood floors, antique accessories, knick-knacks and collectables, open shelving, patterned fabrics, ceramic tiles, wainscoting, rustic furniture

Colors: White, cream, pale yellows, blues and greens

Materials: Pine, poplar, hickory, ceramic

Lighting: Glass, wrought iron and antique fixtures

Contemporary and Modern

Keywords: Sleek, minimal, non-traditional, clean, spacious

Key Elements: Slab doors, flat surfaces, minimal ornamentation, cabinets with metal and glass elements, simple decor

Colors: White, black, red

Materials: Stainless steel, plastic, concrete, glass

Lighting: Stainless steel fixtures, sculptural chandeliers

Finished Kitchens From Our Gallery...



Autumn Shaker Kitchen Cabinets



Tuscany White Maple Kitchen Cabinets



Mocha Shaker Kitchen Cabinets