



Kitchen Design 101

Planning for a renovation in the most important room in your home

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Kitchens are the heart of every home. They are fast becoming the defining feature of a home's stature and worth. If you're thinking about renovating your kitchen, here are a few things to consider...

The numbers game...

Home buyers rank a kitchen renovation as the most desirable upgrade to a home. Kitchen renovations can be costly, messy and down right scary to complete. Kitchen changes usually involve a fairly substantial investment (over \$5,000) can be daunting if you don't feel confident with the decisions you're making. Kitchen renovations also require

percentage can change depending on what your goals are. Do you want to sell your home in the next 3-5 years? If so, you may decide to scale back your investment to maximize your return upon resale. Do you plan to live in your home forever? If so, you may decide to go for it and get what you want, regardless of the price. I once had a retired couple tell me their main floor/kitchen renovation had to last until they were dead! Talk about pressure!

Research – Function and Style

The most important step in designing your dream kitchen is research. You need to assess what your functional requirements are and ensure you address those issues in the layout and design of the kitchen. Ask yourself questions like: how many people cook at once in my kitchen? Do I want to create an informal or formal dining area or both? Do I want an open concept plan where I can entertain and cook at the same time? Do I need more natural or artificial light in the kitchen? How many people normally eat together? To make sure you've thought through every detail, visit www.kitchens.com and fill out their "design questionnaire". It's a wonderful assessment tool that ensures you've covered all the bases. The website also has an online photo gallery of many different kitchen styles and configurations you can research and use for inspiration.

The style of your kitchen is as important as its function. Truly inspired kitchens have unique "personalities". The question on every renovator's mind is "how do I inject my personal style into my kitchen to create a one of a kind look?" To create an overall "vision" for your kitchen, create an "idea file" by going

coordinating a number of different trades which can be a challenge to get the timing right. It's no wonder people prefer to buy a home already renovated than to go through it themselves! Yet, a well-planned and designed kitchen renovation can reap financial rewards. You can expect to recoup 70-80% of your investment when updating your kitchen. This return on investment is ranked the highest of all home improvements. Your house will likely sell faster and for more money if you renovate your kitchen.

Many people wonder what a kitchen renovation costs to complete. That varies dramatically based on the value of your home and your individual situation. As a general rule of thumb, invest 10% of the value of your home in a kitchen renovation. For example, if your home is valued at \$150,000 then plan to spend about \$15,000. That

through design magazines. Cut out photos and visual images that inspire you, make notes about kitchens you love, take photos of materials or cabinetry that inspire you, etc. Don't edit your ideas – start with the "pie in the sky ideas", no matter how outlandish they might seem to be. As your "idea file" grows, you'll likely see a trend develop that will send you in the right direction. Once you've settled on your particular style, edit your ideas and think of practical ways to incorporate some of those "pie in the sky" features in your idea file. There is always a way to bring a little luxury into a kitchen without blowing the bank. One piece of advice – don't compromise on that one item that you love. It may be a chunk of granite, an apron front sink, a wall mounted faucet, or a special backsplash tile. That one special "something" will likely create your individual "design stamp" on your kitchen.




Even if used sparingly to reduce cost, you won't regret your decision to go the extra mile to incorporate it into the design.

Creating the overall vision for your kitchen is critical. Without it, you may be overwhelmed and unsure of how to proceed. With a clear design in mind, all the finishing and surface selections should fall like dominoes, helping to make each selection easy. If this is an area where you struggle, consult a design professional to assist you in creating the vision. If necessary, we can recommend the right layout, unique style ideas, appropriate finishes and colours to create your dream kitchen. We live and breathe design on a daily basis and can maximize your investment from both an aesthetic and functional point of view.

Adding style and function doesn't have to be expensive...

- For about \$50 you can add a "vacpan" in the kick of your base cabinetry. It connects to your central vacuum system and you'll never use a dustpan again.
- For almost no added expense, request a "grommet" installed in your countertop where phone cords and wires can be channeled into an electrical plug and phone jack behind the cabinetry below. This reduces the look of cluttered cords on countertops and gives you a fresh, clean look.
- If you have a water cooler, plan where it will go. Can it be placed inside a pantry or nearby closet? You want your cooler accessible but not visible.
- For better resale appeal, add a raised eating bar to your countertop if you have the space.

- Buy black appliances instead of stainless steel. The look is still modern but the cost is substantially lower.
- Think about how and where you recycle. Add pull out recycling bins into a lower cabinet to reduce the daily grind of taking out the recycling.
- Change the colour of your electrical plugs and plates on the backsplash to coordinate with the colour of your backsplash tile/treatment. You never want to see plugs and switches if you can avoid it. For example, if the backsplash is black, opt for black plugs and plates to blend into the décor.
- Match your finishes throughout the kitchen including appliances, faucets, lighting, sinks, cabinetry hardware, electrical plugs and plates, accessories, etc. If you've decided to go with stainless steel accents, ensure you plan for pewter lighting and brushed nickel faucets for example.

I encourage all of you to follow your kitchen dreams and find that unique vision which expresses your true style. Although it may seem a challenge, everyone is always glad they completed the renovation in the end. I always say renovating a kitchen is like child birth - painful during the process but always worth it in the end. 

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