

10 Tips for Creating a Beautiful Kitchen that's EASY to Work In

1. **Consider more than just cooking when designing your kitchen.** Kitchens are now often landing zones for the whole household – mail/office space, cell phone charging stations, entertaining. When planning your kitchen design, throw the net wide and consider all the uses.
2. **Group similar activities into zones.** Primary zones like prep, cooking and cleanup create the kitchen framework and should be distributed to avoid crowding, but close enough to share common needs. Locate prep and cleanup zones near each other. Distribute secondary zones like baking, beverage, communication centers, storage and entertainment throughout the primary zones to spread out activity. Use this system as an alternative to the standard kitchen triangle, which doesn't work for all floor plans.
3. **Plan for multiple cooks in the kitchen.** Organize zones with enough elbow room to accommodate multiple people. Can someone access the dishwasher while another preps and cooks? Does opening the refrigerator door cut another person off from the sink? If you have the space, leave at least 48" of clear counter space to one side of the stove or cooktop.
4. **Face your guests.** If you are the social type, create an interactive layout to better connect with your family or guests while in the kitchen. Give people a comfortable place to sit to help with prep, do homework or just visit.
5. **Buy eco-sensible materials.** Shop for eco-friendly alternatives to standard kitchen materials. Cabinet boxes can be made from non-off-gassing particleboard or sustainable wood from managed forests. Research has shown granite can be radioactive (*The New York Times* "What's Lurking in Your Countertop?" 7/24/08). Check out cool & durable countertop materials that contain recycled materials. Recycled glass: lcestone.biz, Vetrazzo, Trinity. Post-industrial-waste integrated with cement: SquakMountainStone.com. Recycled paper: PaperstoneProducts.com. Bamboo+paper: EcoTop. Decommissioned money: Shektastone.
6. **Designate a technology center.** Put a computer in or near the kitchen to have easy access to online recipes or cooking tips. Designate a safe location where it is close by but not at risk of water damage.
7. **Get faster cooking with convection.** Convection ovens utilize a fan to circulate heat, resulting in more even heating and about 25% faster cooking. Look for "true" or "pure" convection units that have an additional heating element to ensure the fans blow hot, not variable, air to the food.
8. **Don't get burned with induction cooking.** Induction cooking consumes 17-30% less energy than traditional cooking methods. An electromagnetic field under a ceramic surface keeps the cooking surface cool while heating the cookware placed on it. Because there is no residual heat left on the cooking surface you have less danger of burns. Do keep in mind that the cookware must be magnetic (made of iron or steel). Learn more at: divainduction.com.
9. **Join the industrial revolution.** Commercial kitchen features have made their way to residential homes. Sub Zero Refrigeration is a popular choice for its sterile aesthetic and high performance. It offers a dual refrigeration system which ensures the freshest food. Consider installing a sensor-controlled faucet or foot pedal valves to avoid spreading germs and dirt, and to save water.
10. **Inspect your gadgets.** If it takes you more than five minutes to find something, it's not a time saver. Instead of a jumbled mess of utensils in one or two drawers, move them to their respective zones: rolling pins in the baking zone, wine opener in the beverage zone. Pause before buying that cool new mini-appliance, and think about how difficult it may be to assemble or clean. Don't clutter your counter with minimally used items. If you don't use it every day, it probably doesn't belong on the counter.



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