

How to Plan Your Kitchen

There are a number of critical factors that will determine the design of your kitchen. An accurate floor plan is necessary for a successful design. You can easily draw your own floor plan with a ruler, a pencil and a piece of paper. A scale of 1/2" to the foot usually fits on an 8 1/2" X 11" sheet. Place the doors and windows carefully because these will be your most important reference points.

You must also know what appliances you will have and the dimensions of each one. These appliances will usually include a fridge, a stove (regular or slide-in), a dishwasher, a microwave, a range hood and a sink (double or single). Other appliances that are gaining popularity are wine fridges and warming drawers. Each appliance will have its own specifications that determine the space and clearance required.

Placement of these appliances is the first step to any kitchen design. The sink, for instance is often placed under a window. The dishwasher is commonly placed near the sink to simplify the plumbing and because of their common purpose.

The stove should be placed so that there is usable counter space on either side of it. This is both convenient and safe. Do you plan to install a regular range hood or a microwave range hood? Will it re-circulate or vent to the outside?

The fridge, due to its size, is most often placed at the end of a run of cabinets to avoid breaking up work spaces. Make sure you leave room for the door to open wide enough to remove the crisper drawer

These 3 appliances, the fridge, the stove and the sink are the most important appliances in the kitchen. The traffic lanes between these 3 appliances form the work triangle that you may have heard of. Simply put, you want the distance between these 3 appliances to be convenient and roughly equivalent. This is a useful but flexible concept because each of us works in the kitchen differently and places importance on different things.

When you have determined where you plan to put the appliances, then you can start to fill in between the appliances. Modern kitchens have many more drawers than older designs. There is a wide range of pull-outs, specialty storage inserts and space saving options available and you can find these on line, in home magazines or in our showroom.

Management of recycling materials and waste is a good example. Single, double, triple and quadruple recycling centres are available, with and without covers. Some are rotating and some slide-out but they offer a custom solution to your recycling plan.

Do you want a pantry cabinet? Due to its size the pantry cabinet is usually placed at the end of a run of cabinets, often next to the fridge. You can have shelves or the convenience of roll-outs in the pantry. There are also many larger pull-out units with adjustable baskets and accessible storage, specifically designed for pantry cabinets.

Many homes are built with a 96" floor to ceiling height. Do you want to have cabinets right to the ceiling? Perhaps you want cabinets of varying height, the staggered look. Some kitchen designs dispense with the upper cabinets altogether, installing a few open shelves for a decidedly modern effect.

If you have the space you may want to have an island.

In deciding where to put the island and how big to make the island you must consider a number of factors. How will traffic flow around the island? Any clearance less than 36" may be a problem. Will there be easy access to the fridge, pantry or dishwasher? How about when the door is open? Is the island a work space or a social area? That might help you decide if you want appliances in the island.

These are some of the things you should consider when planning your new kitchen. It may seem daunting at first but if you approach it in the order suggested above you will find it much easier.

Once you have your lay-out, then you can concentrate on the colours, hardware and finishes that complete a good design.

Our experienced design team can help you with all aspects of the design process starting with a complimentary home visit to measure your kitchen space, right through final construction.