



style & layout



AS THE MOST POPULAR ROOM IN A HOUSE, THE KITCHEN NEEDS STYLE AND SUITABILITY. The style of a kitchen makes a lasting impression, and you want that impression to be one that pleases you. But how the space works when you are cooking and entertaining, not to mention as a living space, is a big part of a successful kitchen. Aesthetics and function should coexist in harmony. To achieve a blend of looks and function that suits your lifestyle and taste, take time to explore finishes, colors, and styles, and take a close look at the way you use the kitchen.

If time and money are short, quick style fixes can do the trick, but for a new kitchen or big renovation, do your research. Explore current design trends, if only to discover new products such as environmentally friendly paints and cabinets or the latest oven options. For a kitchen based on a specific historic style, look for cabinetmakers who work in that particular style, and find hardware, countertop materials, and lighting that complete the look.

As for layout, consider how the kitchen is used not only day-to-day, but all year long. What happens on a school morning or in the afternoon before a dinner party?

What sets a stylish, hardworking kitchen apart? Here, traditional cabinets painted a soft, buttery yellow provide a backdrop for the richly stained wood island. White marble countertops brighten the space, and the white gabled ceiling creates visual interest and allows the hood duct to look like a traditional chimney. Workspaces are situated in the tried-and-true triangle formation.

From the start of planning a new or renovated kitchen, think about how you'd like the kitchen layout to relate to the rest of the house and the outdoors. Those connections have a significant impact on how well the kitchen works and how comfortable it feels.





• eclectic style

If your kitchen leans more toward an eclectic blend of styles rather than one overriding fashion, try to keep an overall sense of harmony and balance. For example, pair sleek stainless-steel appliances with beaded-panel cabinetry and ornate crown molding, or hang an elaborate chandelier over a starkly modern breakfast bar.

Color or texture can unify different style elements, such as white face-frame cabinets with a white sheet-glass backsplash. On the other hand, you may like to mix and match styles, colors, and textures for contrast.

ABOVE This mix-and-match kitchen combines traditional frame-and-panel doors with modern frameless cabinet cases. Mosaic glass tiles add spice to a neutral color palette of brown, tan, cream, and white.



• floating islands

Space, style, or budget may suggest that a movable island is the best choice for a kitchen. An antique kitchen worktable can be a flexible, stylish centerpiece for a traditional kitchen, and it offers a bit of open storage as well. A simple kitchen table set on high legs can also stand in as an island and be a place

for food preparation, dining, and homework. Movable island furniture is also a good choice if it's not feasible to install the receptacles that a built-in island requires by code. Of course, such an island won't make a safe home for a mixer or food processor.



FACING PAGE

Just because it's not a built-in doesn't mean an island is insubstantial. This massive island with a profiled white marble top is styled to look like a piece of antique furniture. The fanciful modern pendants overhead suggest this island is going to stay put.

BELOW A moveable island leaves a lighter footprint than a fixed island. It's easy to move when the occasion arises, and there's no need for it to have electrical outlets. There's plenty of storage space, and shelves are open and airy.



all about...

COOKING SAFELY ON AN ISLAND

a cook who loves to be at the center of the action, working with friends and family around, will love the spotlight that a cooktop on an island brings. Just be aware of the need for a few commonsense safety precautions. Allow for an expanse of heatproof landing space on all three sides of the cooktop—at least 15 in. on the flanking sides, as well as a broad expanse or raised surface on the far side. A vertical barrier provides protection from splatters and steam and is also a perfect spot to plate a meal. The most efficient cooktop exhaust system is one with a range hood, which draws heat and grease upward and away. An integrated downdraft exhaust system is sufficient for cooking that is not typically a four-burner affair. A range hood with a gleaming surface or unusual shape can be a great design feature, and it also provides the lighting a cook needs over the range.



This multidimensional island has a lot going on. Range and hood with flanking countertops and base cabinets provide function and style, while columns and storage-filled column bases turn the whole piece into a room divider. The raised countertop in the center acts as a plating area and informal dining space.



Light green stain gives a refreshing look to these streamlined frameless wall cabinets, while the dark brown base cabinets act as a rich backdrop. Matching brown tab pulls blend with the base cabinets for a unified look.



The kitchen island is a unique element by virtue of its location, and highlighting it with contrasting colors or materials makes good design sense. This dark wood-faced island with butcher-block countertop stands out against the cream-colored, marble-topped cabinets in the rest of the kitchen.



A multilayered decorative paint finish creates an antique patina on the doors and cases of these cabinets, appropriate for a traditional country kitchen.



countertops, backsplashes & sinks



COUNTERTOPS, BACKSPASHES, AND SINKS SEE THE MOST ACTION IN A KITCHEN, YET WE EXPECT THEM TO LOOK GREAT, TOO. Fortunately, there's no need to compromise appearance or performance. With today's countertops, sinks, and faucets, style and functionality go hand in hand. The backsplash isn't exposed to constant wear and tear, making it the perfect place to incorporate materials that are not practical to use on a flat surface. But that doesn't mean it won't be durable.

Nowadays, kitchens are where a variety of tasks take place, so it makes sense to equip countertops, backsplashes, and sinks with different materials and configurations. Think about choosing a marble top for a baking center and stainless steel for around the cooktop. A small sink for washing veggies and a larger sink for dishes wouldn't be a bad idea. Also keep in mind that each appliance needs a nearby countertop—15 in. if possible—as landing space. Each cook should be able to claim a 36-in.-wide countertop. As for height, a 36-in. countertop is standard, but you may want to consider a few countertops that sit higher or lower.

A sink is the hardest-working kitchen tool, so make sure it is comfortable for you. Consider size and configuration, then materials, accessories, and, finally, the faucet and other back-of-sink fixtures.

White materials incorporated throughout this kitchen make it a serene, airy space. Rectangular tile serves as a backsplash, and marble—square-profiled with eased edges on the perimeter countertops and ogee-profiled on the island—gives rich texture to the single color scheme. The primary sink is paired with an equally generous bridge faucet in polished nickel.





ABOVE The neutral shades of the irregularly sized mosaic tiles in this backsplash match the colors of the cabinetry, countertop, and stained wood floor.



LEFT Mosaic stone tiles grouted with a neutral tan color give the opportunity to incorporate numerous colors while creating a surface that won't show stains—ideal for a backsplash behind a cooktop.