



LEFT: Mix natural light with a centerpiece chandelier in your eclectic kitchen, and then add more brightness with a white, highly veined island top. Kohler's Iron/Tones single basin sink and entertainment sink, both in Vapour Green, add a touch of color. Photo courtesy Kohler

ABOVE: If traditional is your choice, you can incorporate the Top 10 with a spacious feel from a sloped ceiling, exposed beams and natural light from clerestory windows. In this kitchen with Wood-Mode cabinetry, the open shelving keeps plates and serving pieces at hand's reach, and wall cabinets with mullioned glass doors show what's inside. The Kitchen Source is a Wood-Mode showroom.

BELOW: Sleek and ultra-modern kitchens naturally call for built-in appliances, plenty of uncluttered prep area and workspace and a window wall to let outdoor light fill the room. The kitchen pictured is by Poliform, with systems available locally through Scott + Cooner.

TOP 10 CHECKLIST FOR A GREAT KITCHEN





CHOOSE YOUR STYLE, AND THEN FOLLOW OUR GUIDE FOR TODAY'S MUST-HAVES FOR THE MOST POPULAR ROOM IN THE HOUSE

BY CLAIRE CASSIDY AND AMANDA FLATTEN

Celebrity chefs such as Rachel Ray and Mario Batali rule the airwaves, so it's no surprise kitchens reign as the stars of home design. Whether you are building a home or proposing a remodel, the expansive choice of colors, styles and materials available creates exciting opportunities for kitchen planning.

Architects declare kitchens the new heart of the home. No single style dominates; from Hill County chic to ultra-contemporary, there's something to please every palate. Here's our experts' list of tips and trends to consider when planning your new kitchen.



ABOVE Old World kitchens remain a popular style, and wood floors are the perfect complement to continue the warmth of this look. This kitchen features Armstrong's Artesian Classics Color Wash maple flooring in Pinecone Tan, available at Kingdom Flooring.

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ABOVE: *Is entertaining your forte? And is your budget open? Then you'll want a large unobstructed kitchen for busy caterers to do their job well. Photo courtesy Thermador*

BELOW: *If your kitchen space requirements and budget are top priorities, you still can have the kitchen of your dreams with the latest appliances by Kitchenaid.*



1. ASSESS YOUR NEEDS.

As the saying goes, "To thine own self, be true." When designing a kitchen, Mary Kathryn Reese, co-owner of Kitchen Design Concepts in Carrollton, says homeowners first should determine if the kitchen needs a reface, replace or redesign. Also consider how long you will be staying in the home. "This will help you determine the scope of the investment you will want to make," she says.

A homeowner's personal, unique life situation and lifestyle are the most important things that should influence a kitchen design. "You need to anticipate not only what you need now, but also five to 15 years from now," Reese says. "For example, many baby boomers we talk with anticipate having a parent move in with them within the next five years, so special consideration needs to be given to that life change."

These considerations can help you determine the types of kitchen appliances, floor plan and materials that make sense for your kitchen.

2. DECIDE ON A BUDGET.

A detailed budget helps narrow the selection of materials and appliances. High-end commercial-style appliances such as Sub-Zero refrigerators and Le Cornu ovens are in vogue, but GE's Profile Series and models by Kitchenaid offer a similar look for much less.



TOP 10 CHECKLIST



ABOVE: Spin the color wheel and pick your favorite hues for your kitchen color theme. Here, the white and terra cotta painted surfaces work wonderfully with Armstrong's vinyl sheet Deerfield collection in Copper Brown. Find Armstrong products at Kingdom Flooring.

BELOW: From supply area, such as the refrigerator, to work station and then to the oven/stove, the work triangle is a must for functional kitchens. Photo courtesy Armstrong



Granite and marble are stunning, but tile and Formica in stone finishes suit a more modest budget. Hand-forged hardware for cabinets is expensive, but attractive options are available in lower price ranges at hardware stores such as The Home Depot.

3. PAY ATTENTION TO THE WORK TRIANGLE.

The work triangle is used by architects and designers to help clients plan their kitchens in the most efficient and functional manner. The idea is to create three separate areas for food prep, food storage and food cooking in the shape of a triangle, with no distance longer than 9 feet or shorter than 4 feet. Today's triangle can be adapted to include microwaves and drawer refrigerators that further improve the work flow.

4. CHOOSE A STYLE AND COLOR PALETTE.

Today, kitchens are open to the rest of the home. Balance wall colors and cabinet styles with the décor of adjoining spaces. Creative use of color can define kitchen spaces and help rooms flow together.

5. CONSIDER THE CABINETS.

Designs are evolving in the world of cabinets. Chip Hornbeek, owner of Chip's Custom Cabinets in Arlington, says many of his clients want rich, warm craftsman-style cabinetry. "It's trendy to make cabinets look like furniture pieces, with an island that looks completely different from the rest of the cabinets," he says.

PKI in Dallas specializes in custom furniture and upper-end contemporary cabinetry. Owner Philip Koch says he is seeing a trend of using darker woods and clean lines. "We also are seeing more use of glass doors, such as aluminum frame glass doors and textured glass," he adds.

Reese also is seeing a trend away from highly decorative cabinet door styles seen in traditional kitchens in





ABOVE: Glazed-finish oak by Wood-Mode for the open shelving adds sophistication to the cabinet trend. Low-voltage pendant lights provide that all-important task lighting.



ABOVE: Armstrong's CushionStep looks handsome and provides a comfortable base for any kitchen. Here shown in Devonian Slate in taupe.

ABOVE: Add a bit of whimsy to your kitchen floor with Cork by MODE from Armstrong Flooring.

favor of the simple, clean lines of transitional styles.

As more appliances are added to kitchens, they can be covered with panels to resemble cabinets, while others prefer the look of stainless steel appliances.

In very high-end designs, Reese says full-extension drawers, full-extension roll-out trays in lower cabinets with door fronts and soft-close doors are all the rage.

6. COUNTER POINTS.

Hornbeek reports that granite continues to be the choice of counter surface for more than 90 percent of his customers. "Granite is the best bang for the buck," he says, adding that he encourages clients to go to the stone yard to look at entire slabs. "About half of my customers have picked their slabs and have requested a specific vein in the slab."

Marble such as Carrara White is gaining popularity, even though it's a softer stone that shows wear. "I recently did a kitchen where we did granite countertops and slabs of marble as the backsplash," Hornbeek says.

Butcher block counters, especially for island counter surfaces, are another trend Hornbeek has observed. Reese says she is seeing a growing interest in teak countertops. "They are beautiful and an environmentally friendly choice," she says.

Backsplashes are getting more creative and colorful, with everything from granite, marble, stone and glass tiles.

7. STEP ON IT.

The effort and expense of maintenance is a practical consideration when choosing kitchen floors. If you have an active Labrador and young children running around the kitchen in soccer cleats, wood floors will get scratched. Sealed tile is easy to mop, but might crack. Slate and stone are sturdy and easy to care for, but they need resealing every five years or so.

Environmentally friendly floors such as bamboo and





ABOVE: From your kitchen window, watch your garden grow and enjoy plenty of natural light. Photo courtesy Ralph Lauren Paints

BELOW: Enjoy your own coffee bar at home with Miele's built-in coffee system. Miele coffee systems are available at Factory Builder Stores and Ferguson Kitchen & Bath Gallery.

Marmoleum are good choices when thinking "green." Homeowners increasingly choose the same floor surface for kitchen and living spaces, which results in ease of maintenance and better flow.

8. LET THERE BE LIGHT.

"One of the most frequent complaints we hear from folks is about their current kitchen lighting," Reese says. "It can be a safety thing if a client plans to stay in a house long-term. Good illumination is appropriate for them as they age so all surfaces and flooring are well lit."

Fluorescent light is out. Natural light and windows feature prominently in new kitchens. Many homeowners want a view of landscaped gardens. Others want to watch young children play outside while they cook. Today's kitchens usually feature only two walls with cabinets, as opposed to the four-walled kitchens of our parents' homes, creating an "open" look.

Installed lighting is divided into task, ambient and accent lighting. Task lighting includes under-cabinet lights and over-counter pendant lights that focus on food preparation. "For under cabinet lighting, we recommend xenon or halogen," Reese says. Ambient or "mood" lighting is created by adding dimmers or sconces. Accent lights are used in cabinets for display collections. "To be energy efficient we've started looking at LED and CFL as bulb choices," Reese adds.

9. TURN ON TO NEW APPLIANCES.

The look of commercial-style appliances with stainless steel finishes is fashionable, as are appliances hidden behind panels to match cabinets. Our experts predict a boom in built-in appliances such as wine refrigerators and coffee centers, as well as "drawer" appliances such as warming drawers, refrigerator drawers and microwave drawers.

10. GATHER 'ROUND THE TABLE.

In addition to efficient workspaces, one of the most important goals of modern kitchen design is to create a comfortable gathering place. Think of cocktail parties you've attended where everyone stands in the kitchen to talk — and the living room sofas sit empty. Accept that everyone wants to be in the bustling kitchen and plan accordingly. Islands should provide unobstructed views for cooks to converse with guests.

Homeowners often desire small sitting areas near the kitchen where children do crafts and homework or where guests can relax with a drink. Televisions and fireplaces may flicker across the room. In today's thoughtfully designed homes, food preparation merges with family and friends, and the "heart" of the home doesn't miss a beat.



BELOW: The Wolf warming drawer helps keep moist foods moist and crisp foods crisp. Electronic controls are hidden to allow the unit to become completely integrated with surrounding cabinetry. Wolf products are available at numerous locations, including Factory Builder Stores and KIVA Kitchen & Bath.



ABOVE: Seating is an important component in any kitchen, as people tend to gather 'round while meals are being prepared. Photo courtesy Armstrong



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