

Kitchen Design Guidelines

Whether you're planning a new kitchen or renovation of your existing space, it's time to think about making the room more efficient, safe, and functional.

The following are some basic guidelines when planning your kitchen layout. Although not all kitchen spaces will allow for some of these guidelines, these are good reference points.

- Leave at least 36" for walking between fixtures, appliances, and cabinets. For ease of movement, you don't want to be cramped, and you need room to open the dishwasher door, cabinets, and the refrigerator.
- Be sure that doors do not interfere with others. It's terribly inconvenient if you have to close the refrigerator door to walk into the kitchen or open a cabinet. Leave plenty of room for functions to work smoothly.
- If space provides, make room for comfortable in-kitchen dining. Avoid that cramped feeling by allowing a minimum of 36" between the edge of the table and a wall. You'll have plenty of room to push back the chairs comfortably.
- Leave 30"- 48" of floor space in front of appliances. You'll need to walk in front of the dishwasher, oven, and refrigerator, and have space to stand at the sink.
- A minimum of 36" of counter top space for food preparation is ideal. Even if you take food from the freezer to the oven or microwave, you'll need some place to put the containers and serving dishes. More is better.
- Place the dishwasher near the sink. Your rinsing and washing will be easier if the sink is 30" or less from the dishwasher.
- Have sufficient counter space near the sink. If space allows, install at least 24" of counter top on one side and at least 18" of counter top on the other side of a sink to provide for food preparation, dish washing, and work space.
- Provide for 2 waste containers. Have one container for garbage and one for recyclables. Keeping them separate from the start will make it easier at disposal time
- Provide proper ventilation for cooking appliances. A fan should be installed above any surface cooking to allow the air to clear.
- Consider easy-to-use [hardware](#). Since you don't know what you might be doing, choose knobs and hinges that allow you to open and close cabinets and drawers with one hand.
- Use different types of lighting for each area in the kitchen. For general lighting, [recessed can lights](#) or [track lighting](#) will illuminate the whole room. Use under-counter lights for counter work spaces. And choose a decorative fixture or [chandelier](#) for the eat-in space.
- Think "safety first" when it comes to electrical outlets. Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters, commonly known as GFCIs, are required for electric outlets

in areas where water is used, such as kitchens and bathrooms. Should moisture enter the circuit or appliance, the electric power will be cut.

- Use dimmer switches on ceiling and under-counter lighting. Every work space can use a bit of atmosphere, and dimmers can save energy.