





GUIDE TO PLANNING YOUR PERFECT KITCHEN

With the fast pace of today's lifestyle, the modern kitchen can be anything from a room to quickly prepare the evening meal to a place for families to catch up over the weekend.

The kitchen is an essential part of any home but however it's used, it needs to be functional, adapted to the space you have and look nice too.

How can you marry all these things together to create that perfect kitchen space? Put, simply, the answer is in the planning.

In this Ebook, designed as your basic guide to kitchen planning, we'll talk you through and help you understand all the necessary components so you can go into the process feeling confident that you have a sound knowledge basis.



FRESHEN UP OR NEW KITCHEN

Perhaps this depends on your budget or how you envisage using your new space.

Deciding whether you work with what you have already or go for an update from top to bottom needs to be the first consideration.

Think about why you will be making these changes in the first place – you know how you use your kitchen the best, and you will have an idea of what you would change so use that to inform how much of a transformation you wish to make.

If it's a matter of modernising your worktops for example, or refreshing your cabinets with new doors or a lick of paint to transform your kitchen, this provides a hassle-free and less expensive option and gives the room a new lease of life. Starting from scratch presents the perfect opportunity to carefully plan the layout so it makes the best use of space with the added bonus of visual appeal.





HOW DO YOU USE IT?

There has been a trend towards using the kitchen as a multi-functional space: a place to cook, eat, sit at a laptop and entertain so, naturally, the layout can be designed with these end purposes in mind. This is in addition to making the best use of space possible, of course.

Common kitchen layouts include single and double galley kitchens with one or two continuous runs of cabinets; L-shaped kitchens that run along two walls directly next to each other to form a 90-degree angle; and U-shaped kitchens which allow easy access to the majority of appliances. Islands or peninsular sections can be added to most layouts depending on space.

A good rule of thumb is to keep the most-used areas (sink, fridge and cooking) in close proximity to each other – also known as the golden triangle.

WALLS, FLOORS AND CEILING

How can you work with your existing structure to create a sense of spaciousness?

It might even be a case of removing elements of the wall or tearing one down completely, to extend the amount of room you have to work with or repainting the ceiling to lighten the area.

There may be changes made to your walls or ceilings that require redecorating, and there may be damage to the flooring which means you need to replace it, but pick with care as it will have a big impact on the overall look of the space. If there's a lot of traffic coming through your kitchen, a hard-wearing surface like wood will also add warmth while linoleum and rubber are great for modern styles.

Whichever structural changes you need to make, ensure that you factor these costs into your kitchen budget so that you don't get a nasty surprise mid-way along or at the end.





ELECTRICS AND PLUMBING

Work from the bigger picture here.

On your kitchen plan, make a note of where the electrical switches and sockets, and plumbing and waste pipes are so that if you need to move them, you can make a considered choice. Bear in mind also that moving these will incur extra costs.

Of course, working with what you have is always possible, for example, an electrician will check the system as it is but can also advise if you need a complete rewire in the case of a new kitchen. Don't forget that, as well as having a sufficient number of sockets for your appliances, it is always best to have extra.

A plumber can look at your existing pipework and tell you whether it is worth saving or starting again but the main consideration here is whether the pipe arrangement will sit nicely with your new layout which may incorporate or relocate new appliances such as dishwashers and washing machines.

Adding extra features like underfloor heating or changing from an electric range to a gas one requires you to firstly find out whether you can access the right source of energy to power the new system.



LIGHTING

Ultimately, lighting can make or break your kitchen, so plan it right.

Start by looking at how much natural light your windows already give you because your lighting (installed and from windows) will introduce differing levels throughout the day. Good kitchen lighting should provide bright and shadow-free light to allow safe preparation and cooking but also create atmospheric illumination to create the right ambience when entertaining or dining.

FUNCTIONALITY

Positioning is so important: your work surfaces need to be adequately lit and it's best to avoid central pendants as they don't produce enough targeted light, casting shadows around the room instead. Consider under-cupboard lighting, which also has the plus of remaining well hidden, to shine light on the hob or work surfaces and create functional task lighting.

AMBIENCE

Feature and accent lighting add nice touches to the space and highlight points of interest around the room – this could be something as simple as adding a run of LED lights under the rim of an island unit to make the spot look more inviting or even dimmable lights for kitchen diners so you can change according to the mood you wish to set.





APPLIANCES

Once you've got a better idea of the layout of your kitchen, you can get started with your search for the right appliances.

It goes without saying that your new selection must fit in the space you have, but it's always worth considering whether to replace those you already have or keeping the existing ones if they are in perfectly good condition.

We're spoilt for choice when it comes to varieties in form and style but the key pieces to think about are the oven, refrigeration and the cooker. Do you go for a freestanding or built-in oven, and will you need a single or a double oven? As for hobs – is it worth looking at a separate hob or an all-in-one range, and will you opt for induction, gas or ceramic? What capacity of fridge and freezer suits your food choices, and is your ideal model energy efficient? All these factors need to be considered at the basic level.

As for other appliances, it comes down to space and kitchen needs. Would you benefit from a dishwasher or a microwave, and can you fit in a washing machine if needed? Again, these appliances can fit into your kitchen as stand alone units and semi or fully-integrated.





STORAGE

Use the space your kitchen gives you to its fullest potential by maximising on the storage options it offers.

It needs to be accessible, well-organised and ergonomic so maybe you have an idea of how you might reposition things from walking around and using your current kitchen.

Think about the location of your storage: it helps to break the kitchen down into zones for different activities. You'll find that there is a lot to accommodate in your kitchen, especially if it is a multifunctional space, and small changes like keeping plate and cutlery storage close to the dishwasher can become a thoughtful solution. Consider whether or not you can afford to dedicate room to things you might want to keep close by, including cleaning products, and if more storage is needed.

The good news is that possibilities for storage are increasingly innovative and creative now so you can be sure that the functional aspects are combined with aesthetics in mind. There's not a variety on storage that's not been thought of for corner cupboards, drawers, waste containers, island units and doors – and that's just for starters – so take inspiration from what's out there.





Remember that throughout the process of planning your kitchen, your lifestyle and individual preferences are key.

There are lots of things to consider along the way but don't let that put you off and, instead, take the time to consider what you really want from your kitchen and how best to achieve it.

Thanks to the wealth of options out there, working within your budget is always possible, and it's always worth doing your research on everything from worktop materials to lighting options, and cookers to storage solutions because everyone's kitchen space is so different.

Need space to jot down your thoughts or maybe a place to take draw some initial measurements? Make the most of our graph paper page.

A good quality and well-designed kitchen can make a huge improvement to your daily life and add to the value of your home so whether you'd like to create something completely new and timeless to last decades or want to replace a tired kitchen, you need to go into great depths on the practicalities, usage and aesthetics of the room. Planning your dream kitchen takes time but it's worth it in the end.





ABOUT INFINITY KITCHEN DESIGNS



Established in 2010 by Darren Cavnor and Alistair Butt, Infinity Kitchen Designs brings together a team with a wealth of experience in construction and kitchen design.

Our strength lies in sharing our knowledge of the industry to help our clients make the best improvements to their homes.

We are also a Which Trusted Trader, and we pride ourselves on delivering excellent levels of customer care throughout the entire process, always asking ourselves: 'Would we be happy with this in our home?' Only if the answer is 'yes' will it be good enough for our customers.



0800 6899 555

WWW.INFINITYKITCHENDESIGNS.CO.UK

All photographs are showroom display kitchens and not actual customer kitchens.