

Everything—and the Kitchen Sink

Thoughtful design leads to a successful kitchen

by Anne Marie Draganowski
photography by Mark Englund/Homeplans, part of Move

The kitchen is no longer a place for the singular purpose of meal preparation. It is the heart of almost every home. It's a place for cooking, but also for eating, visiting—even entertaining and relaxing. Children can be found doing homework here. Phone calls are made. Hobbies are pursued.

Are you building your dream home? Putting thought into the kitchen's layout and use of space will increase its functionality, versatility and beauty.

The Layout

Kitchen layouts fall roughly into one of three categories: galley, L-shaped or U-shaped.

- Galley-style kitchens consist of two parallel banks of countertops and appliances, and they are often open on either end. Named after the style of kitchen found on a ship, they are prized for their efficient use of space. One drawback to this layout, however, is that additions like islands and tables and chairs will not fit inside these kitchens.
- Although they usually take up more of a home's square footage, L- and U-shaped kitchens (their names say it all) do have room for amenities like islands and snack bars, plus more room for the cook and his or her helpers. Often, storage space is more plentiful in these kitchens.

"The kitchen . . . is the beating heart and social center of the household."

—Julia Child



A well-planned kitchen, although it may perform many tasks, can also appear unruffled and serene.

- The key to a usable kitchen design is the "work triangle," made up of the imaginary lines that connect the refrigerator, the range and the sink. According to the National Kitchen and Bath Association, the combined distance between these three work centers should be no more than 26 feet. Ideally, each leg should measure between 4 and 9 feet.
- To ensure a kitchen that simmers with efficiency, select a design that is not part of any major traffic areas in the home. The kitchen may be open to adjoining rooms, but don't let it become a thoroughfare.

Entertaining Style

Consider your entertaining style when choosing a kitchen.

- If formal dinner parties are the norm for you, be sure that a separate dining room—one that is either partially or entirely closed off from the chaos of the kitchen—is part of your home plan. A butler's pantry, which provides a meal-staging area between the kitchen and the dining room and sometimes includes a wet bar, is a useful plus.
- If casual entertaining is more your speed, you may want to forgo a formal dining room altogether, and devote more square footage to the living spaces you'll use every day. A kitchen that offers an open view of the dining area and the



This home's butler's pantry boasts a handy wet bar.



Plan E-1811, www.homeplans.com

A raised snack bar not only provides casual seating in the kitchen, but it also hides any clutter that might have accumulated during cooking.

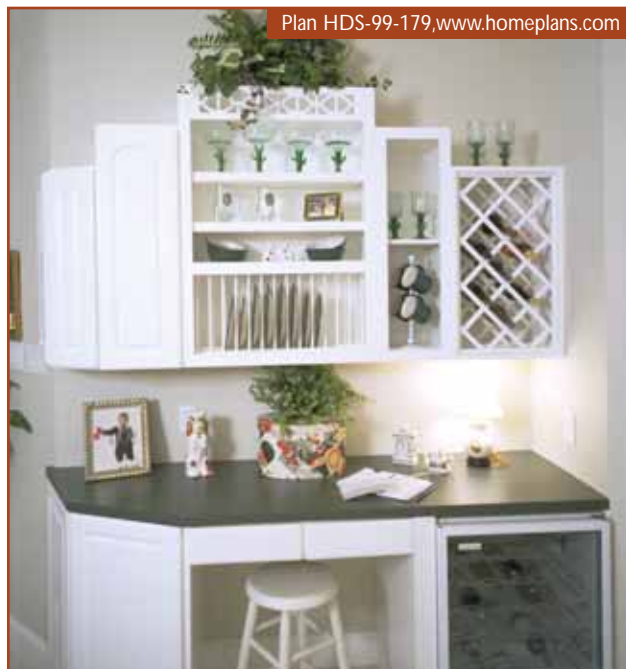
family or Great Room allows for a relaxed atmosphere where your guests can visit with you and even help as you put the finishing touches on the meal. A raised snack bar or another subtle divider between the kitchen and the living areas will hide meal-prep clutter.

What other activities will the kitchen host?

- If the kids will be camping out in the kitchen with homework each evening—either now or in the near future—incorporate a wide snack bar or a nearby breakfast nook into your kitchen design.
- Meal planning, phone calls and even bill paying go on in this nucleus of the home. Keep the details tidy with a kitchen desk, complete with phone and Internet hookups, cubbyholes for storage, and a place to sit.
- Hobbies like flower arranging and crafts can find their welcome in your kitchen with proper storage and planning. Include an additional pantry or an extra bank of cupboards to stow supplies. Let a snack bar, table or other work surface do double duty as a crafting area.

A Place for Everything: Use of Kitchen Space

- Evaluate how much storage your present kitchen has, to help you determine the amount of storage space you'll need in your new kitchen. Are your cupboards bare? Consider yourself fortunate, and take this into account in the new design. Have you been troubled lately by overflowing shelves? Plan for more cupboards or a pantry in your new home.
- Do you think that only large kitchens have lots of storage space? You're right—sometimes. Smaller kitchens can



Plan HDS-99-179, www.homeplans.com

A desk in or near the kitchen helps keep the cook and the household organized.

offer plenty of storage space, too, if they're carefully planned. Smart use of space is key.

- Don't forget bookshelves for cookbooks. Open shelves for pots, pans, jars, pitchers and plates can be useful, as well, and can even become part of the room's décor. Keep in mind, however, that items stored out in the open will inevitably need to be cleaned more often. You may want to limit this kind of storage to oft-used items.
- You can never have too many electrical outlets in the kitchen. Ask your electrician to install extras on one side of an island and in any area that will be heavily used.
- Do you want to reduce countertop clutter? House your small appliances—toaster, food processor, mixer and others—in an appliance garage that's built into the cabinet or pantry space. 🏠

Resources

HGTV's Web site is sure to spark some ideas. Go to www.hgtv.com/kitchen.

National Kitchen and Bath Association's Web site, www.nkba.org, includes helpful design hints.

Susanka, Sarah. *The Not So Big House*. Newtown, Conn.: The Taunton Press, 1998.

The photographed homes may have been modified by the homeowners. Refer to floor plan for actual blueprint details.