



A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO BUYING A NEW KITCHEN



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introduction

- Embarking on a new kitchen project can feel daunting at first, as there are many elements to consider. To help you on your journey, we've put together this planning guide.
- For many families, the kitchen is the most important room in the house. It's a room that needs to fulfil many functions and not taking the time to thoroughly plan your new kitchen, could be a costly mistake.
- This guide will show you what to keep in mind when planning your first kitchen.
- Planning your new kitchen is a big deal with so many choices and decisions to make. Hopefully, with this guide we can help you through the process with as little hassle as possible.





assess your needs

Let's first consider all the uses of the room:

- Is it a social space or a functional space only?
- Does the whole family use the room?
- Will you eat in the kitchen as well as cook?
- How much seating do you need?

What is your family set-up?

- Young kids or family members with special needs?
- Are low maintenance finishes a priority?
- Do you have pets?

What is your lifestyle?

- The kitchen of a single person who eats out regularly will look completely different from one belonging to a family who eats their evening meals together.

Plan your storage requirements:

- How much storage space will you need for your groceries, cutlery and crockery?
- Which appliances would you want to accommodate?

What do you like and dislike about your current kitchen?

- Is it a lack of workspace, or maybe poor layout?
- What would you like to change?



make a list

There will be lots of things to consider, so here are some tips to help you keep track of your thoughts:

1. Get a notebook or a scrapbook to collect your ideas.
2. Collect sample of finishes and colours that you like.
3. Ask what your friends and family like and dislike most about their kitchens.
4. Take photos of other kitchens and keep them in a reference file on your computer

useful resources

The internet is filled with fantastic ideas for your new kitchen. Here are some great online resources to inspire you.

1. Google “kitchen ideas”, “kitchen trends” and “kitchen design”.
2. Look through the online versions of your favourite design magazines.
3. Have a look at the kitchen section on Houzz for ideas.
4. Pinterest - Use it to collect your ideas and get inspiration from other people.
5. Collaborate your ideas with your kitchen designer.



your current kitchen

1. Are you happy with the location of appliances in your kitchen?
2. Are your appliances at the right height for you, and are they the right size for your needs?
3. Do you have enough storage?
4. Do you have adequate worktop space?
5. Does the atmosphere suit you, and does the flow of the kitchen work?
6. Do you have suitable seating?
7. Are you happy with the lighting?
8. Consider additional features: do you want an island unit, a breakfast bar or a wine chiller?

To test if your ideas will work, it is important to put pen to paper. Measure the space available for your new kitchen and mock-up the room using graph paper.

This will give you an accurate representation of the kitchen units and furniture. Playing around with a layout is also a great way to improve the efficiency of your kitchen.

do you have a dinning room?

The dining room has become a casualty of modern living, with many of us far happier to congregate in a large kitchen to cook, eat, talk, and watch television.

Unless you hold regular formal dinner parties or will use your separate dining room for other activities, such as a music room or study, it may make sense to dispense with it altogether and use the space to expand your multi-purpose kitchen.

Do you have a utility room?

A scullery is certainly a luxury in modern homes. But if it is at all possible, create a separate scullery for washing up, laundry and keeping dirty dishes out of sight. It could also be a useful space to store some lesser-used appliances.





decide on a budget

You may have a vague figure in mind, but to make sure this is realistic and includes all necessary work, you need to estimate each component separately. We are here to help with this and can guide you.

You'll need to consider:

- Any structural/renovation work
- The kitchen furniture
- The work surfaces and flooring
- The appliances
- The lighting and accessories
- The installation

A new kitchen can cost anywhere from a couple of thousand to tens of thousands of Pounds, so decide on the look you want and then think about ways to trim back. A rule of thumb is never to spend more than 10% of the value of your home on renovating your kitchen.

Decide your budget from the outset and try not to be swayed by glossy advertising or smooth salespeople.

consider all the costs

Appliances

- What kind of appliances are you going to have installed? Choose the best brand that you can afford and remember to incorporate this into your overall budget.

Worktops

- Laminate worktops are standard and are usually included in the manufacturer's quote. Granite and wood almost always cost extra and can dramatically add to the final cost of the project.

Installation

- Check if your supplier has included this in their cost. Or, if you are arranging this separately, make sure that all the extras like insurance, rubble removal and all materials are included.

Electrical work

- What is the cost of wiring any new appliances or lighting? Do any sockets have to be moved? Is your fuse board up to scratch? Do you have to buy new electrical fixtures?

Plumbing

- What is the cost of installing a new sink and other appliances like a dishwasher that require plumbing? Are you going to use a gas hob and cooker? If so, they will also need to be considered as this cost is not usually included in the kitchen manufacturer's costs.



cost continued



Delivery

- If you are going to install the kitchen yourself, is delivery included in the price? Will there be extra charges if your home is difficult to access?

Painting

- How much re-painting will be required? How much will it cost?

Wall and floor tiling

- What are the cost of the tiles themselves and the tiler's fee.

Contingency

- It is impossible to plan for everything. Allow 5% on top of your total cost for unforeseen items.

Project Management

- Are you going to manage all these items yourself? You will save a lot of money but be prepared for a large amount of time spent in chasing up quotations, following up with contractors, scheduling the work, making sure the work is done to the correct standard, payment, and dealing with challenges.

layout and efficiency

Perhaps the biggest deciding factor in your kitchen design will be the size and shape of the room.

You can only work with the space you have available, so it is important for you to identify what type of kitchen you have and consider how best to design it.

The main types of kitchen layouts are:

- Single-wall, Gallery, L-shaped, U-shaped and L-shaped with an Island.

The working triangle is a useful guide.

- Plan the activity areas of cooker/hob, fridge and sink in a triangle spanning a total of between 4 and 7.9m for the perfect working kitchen.

Find out more about kitchen ergonomics on our blog... [“Top tips for your kitchen layout”](#)

main types of kitchen layouts

Single wall

If you have a small or narrow space, a single wall kitchen is a great solution. Rather than cluttering the kitchen with many wall-mounted units, it makes the most of the height of the room with tall cupboards and floor units.



Galley

Galley kitchens provide a practical solution and offer more storage below the worktops. The most important consideration is to leave at least 90cm between the two rows of units so that you can bend over to reach inside the oven without bumping into the cupboards behind.



U Shape

A U-shaped design will provide plenty of work surface and storage space. It can however, become a little enclosed if there are cabinets all around the room. If this layout is chosen for a bigger room, one of the legs of the U may be used as a breakfast bar or shortened to open the circulation space. Place the dishwasher and oven in the center of a section so that they do not obstruct any cabinets when opened.



kitchen layouts continued

L Shape

The L-shaped kitchen provides adequate workspace and storage below the worktop, while walking distances between the main zones will be minimised. Another big advantage of the L-shaped kitchen is that one section of the room will be free to use as a dining area. Corner cabinets may post a challenge, with solutions including a rotating carousel unit, or a diagonal sink.



Island

Islands are hugely popular, providing a free-standing unit with access on all sides. It can accommodate appliances and even the sink and cooker while also creating an informal seating area. If you position your island hob facing into the room, you will be able to cook while interacting with your family or friends.



design & style

Determining the desired look of your kitchen is very important. It should appeal to your style, but also be in keeping with the property as a whole and add value to your house.

Shaker

This style of kitchen has a very utilitarian design that is focused on simplicity and functionality, rather than ornamentation.

While the Shakers' traditional beliefs are central to the design of the Shaker-style kitchen, it has proven to be a timeless style that remains a popular choice today.

Thanks to its clean lines and practical layout, it is suitable for both modern and traditional homes.

more design

In-Frame

With in-frame kitchens, a solid wooden frame is fixed to the front of the cabinet, and the door is installed inside the wooden frame. The frame forms an integral part of the design and style of the kitchen.



Painted

Our bespoke painted option is available across most of our painted door styles. Because we manufacture and can paint our doors to order, we are able to offer a 'Bespoke Paint' service which allows you to create a truly personalised and unique kitchen. If you have got a favourite colour in mind, send us a sample of the colour or quote us a paint reference and we'll match your kitchen to it.



more style

High Gloss

High gloss kitchens offer clean lines, sleek finishes, and striking designs. A modern and mostly minimalist option with a variety of colours to choose from.



Handleless

A handleless kitchen refers to a style of kitchen unit that doesn't have protruding handles or knobs on the door fronts. There are several common mechanisms that a handleless kitchen will use as a means to open cabinet doors: J pull kitchen doors technically have a handle, but it's recessed and hidden from view.

True handleless cabinets have the handle 'recess' built into the cabinet as opposed to a channel in the actual door also known as 'J' pull. The horizontal recessed handle emphasizes the beauty of the simple line.

The true handleless door is easy to open even with a dishwasher behind it, is easy to clean, comfortable and calm.



cabinets

Cabinets form the backbone of your kitchen and are an essential item to get right.

Here are some key questions to ask when choosing kitchen cabinets:

1. Will your cabinets be factory assembled? Make sure they are factory pre-assembled, as this ensures a top-quality product. Do not underestimate how much time, money and hassle will be saved come installation time compared to flat pack cabinets.
1. Will your cabinets be made from board produced by premium suppliers such as Egger and Kronospan?
2. Will your cabinets be made from 18mm thick board? 15mm thick boards are used by some kitchen manufacturers, but they are not nearly as durable as 18mm boards. And do the cabinets have 18mm full-height solid back panels? This is an important part of the cabinet construction.
3. What kinds of drawer runners and hardware fittings are being used? They should be from quality brands like Blum or Hettich. Don't accept cheap alternatives that could have a reduced lifespan. Blum offer a lifetime guarantee on all their hinges, lift systems and drawers.
4. Are the cabinets dowel and glue construction? If so, the finished product will be stronger, sturdier and remain square throughout its life. A further benefit is the cabinet exterior is free from visible fabrication hardware, nails, screws, holes etc.
5. Do the wall units have concealed cabinet hangers? Drastically reduced fitting time is achieved with the concealed cabinet hangers which are located and hidden behind the solid back panel. Pre-fitted to the cabinet, a simple 180-degree turn of the fixing lever locks the hanger into place.
6. Do the cabinets have 2mm ABS radius edging in the front edges for added protection and strength? Run your finger along the edge of the cabinet shelf - is it sharp, or does it feel smooth to the touch?
7. Are the cabinets available in many colours for the best possible match to your preferred door style and colour?



cabinet doors

Doors are the most visible part of your kitchen.
Here are a few questions to ask:

1. Will your cabinet doors be made 18 - 22mm thick? Some manufacturers use 15mm thick boards, but these are not the best quality and are not nearly as durable as the 18mm boards.
2. What kind of door handle options are available? Ask for various colour and finish options.
3. Are the door handles included in the quote?
4. If you are considering a J Pull handleless door, check that the door is 22mm thick and that the doors **are not** pre-drilled for hinges. Because the doors are handed, you don't want to end up with 4 hinge holes for just 2 hinges.
5. Are high quality hinges being used from a respected brand like Blum or Hettich? It is especially important to use excellent quality hinges on larger, heavier doors, otherwise they will start to sag very quickly.

worktops

Choosing a kitchen worktop is about more than just the look, it must be practical too. There are several different surfaces to choose from, each with its own pros and cons.

Laminate

Suitable for a range of styles and with looks imitating wood, stone and quartz, high-pressured laminate tops are the most cost-effective option. Modern laminates are highly heat and scratch resistant, but care should be taken with very hot pots and pans.



Solid Surfaces

Granite, marble and quartz are favoured for their exceptional durability and beauty, but they are also some of the most expensive worktop options and must be fitted by a specialist.



Timber

Wooden worktops are beautiful and durable but do need to be oiled regularly to keep them that way. While not entirely scratch or heat resistant, they can be sanded down and refinished to get rid of burn marks, stains or other damage.





don't forget

Make sure that details like cut-outs for the sink and hob and drainer grooves, as well as any special finishing of the worktops are all included in the quote to avoid getting any surprises with your bill.

If you are having upstands, splash-backs or windowsills, make sure they have all been quoted for. The type and location of joints, if there are any, are also agreed upon prior to installation.

sinks and taps

There is a wide variety of sinks to choose from. Stainless steel, traditional ceramic, and marble sinks are all great choices. Integrated sinks, another good option, are made from the same material as the worktop in single, double or half bowls with various configurations of drainers

Here are some tips to help you plan and decide:

1. Do you need a large sink bowl? For example, will your sink comfortably accommodate your largest roasting tray?
2. Will the sink come with accessories such as strainer bowls, chopping boards and drainage baskets?
3. Do the taps match your other fixtures?
4. Are the taps easy to operate, particularly by young children and the elderly?
5. Are the taps you want compatible with the pressure flow of water?
6. Do you want pull-out taps with a spray fitting?
7. Boiling water taps are becoming popular, however they are fairly expensive. If you are tea lover, make sure the tap is 100° boiling, and not 96° or 97°.

ovens

Choosing an oven is not only an important decision - it's also an investment.

Convection

These are the most popular kind, and one that most will be familiar with. They heat quickly, evenly and come in various sizes to fit into any kitchen.



Steam

For a healthy option, consider a steam oven. Using water vapours to cook, they're healthier than a convection oven. It seals in flavour and cooks quickly. It's also a great choice for baking, as it won't dry out cakes, biscuits and bread. They will however not be able to brown or crisp, so choose a convection/steam combination.



Range

These remain popular as both traditional and range-style ovens. Traditionally, range ovens were used to give heat and hot water for the whole house. A ranges-style oven on the other hand, looks like a range with separate ovens, grill and hob rings, but works like a normal oven that you switch on as needed.



Warmer Drawer

These are heated to lower temperatures than ovens, and are ideal for warming plates, keeping food hot and proofing dough. They can even be used for low temperature cooking, like when making meringues.



hobs

Perhaps the first thing to consider when choosing a hob is what type of fuel type you would like; gas or electric, restrictions dependent of course. There are four types of hob available; Gas, Induction, Ceramic, or Mixed fuel for those who would like the best of both worlds.

Gas

Traditional, powerful and still the most popular type of hob, gas power gives you instant heat and ultimate control over your dishes. So, you can boss those stir-fries and spice up those curries. They're a little trickier to clean than the other types due to all the different bits, and you'll need a mains gas supply to install one. But, if you love to cook, then a gas hob is an ideal choice.



Solid Plate

Solid plate hobs are really easy to use and will give you powerful and even cooking. Powered by electricity, the sealed plates transfer the heat to your pans above. They're not the fastest at heating up, however their steady increase of heat can actually give your food a nice even cook.



more hobs

Ceramic

Ceramic hobs are the perfect choice if you want style and convenience. Their modern ceramic finish means they fit beautifully on top of your kitchen or island counter.

And, because they're powered by electric, they're a breeze to use and super easy to clean. It's worth bearing in mind that they can take a little longer to heat up, but once you're up and running, your taste buds won't be disappointed.



Induction

Smart, stylish and powerful, induction hobs are becoming the go-to choice for modern kitchens. But they're not just lookers, these electric powered hobs pack a punch too.

They use electromagnets to heat up the base of your pan, meaning they're much quicker than other models. Plus, they're super easy to clean. One thing worth noting, you'll need pans that have a magnetic base, such as cast-iron pans and some stainless-steel sets.



extraction

A beautiful kitchen loses some of its appeal when covered in grease and smelling of last night's dinner.

Kitchen ventilation is required under building regulations and combats the damaging effects of grease and water vapour on the fabric, carpets, and materials in your home.

There are two types of hood — extractors and recirculating hoods - both of which can also be integrated.

Extractor Hoods

Extractor hoods take air through a grease filter and extract it to the outside via ducting. This removes virtually all steam and cooking odours, while disposable or washable filters trap airborne grease.

Recirculating hoods are not as effective as extractors but may be used when ducting out is impractical.



up, up and away

Integrated Hoods

Integrated cooker hoods are used in fitted kitchens and blend seamlessly into the design of the room. They are fitted between wall cabinets and concealed with false door fronts.

Chimney Hoods

Chimney hoods and hoods over an island are usually the most expensive options, but act as a visual centerpiece to the room.

Retractable or telescopic kitchen extractors are also available which slide out of sight when not in use

down and out

Designer downdraft cooker hoods have all the latest features in Downdraft technology with a price to match.

Cooking vapours and steam are extracted in the normal way as a wall mounted, island cooker hood or ceiling extractor, however the vapours go down and out, rather than up and out.

If you have room in your kitchen island unit or have the space against the wall, you can run your ducting under the floor to the outside wall pretty much the same way as if it was in your ceiling.



refrigeration

Traditionally, designers advised against putting the fridge next to the oven as it would have to work extra hard to hold its temperature, wasting energy.

But things are changing, which is good news if you have a very awkward space. Technology has improved and today, all good appliances tend to be self-contained and well insulated and shouldn't omit much heat or cold.

However, if you position your fridge next to an oven stack, I'd ensure you include a small 50mm filler just to be safe.

Also, I'd still be wary if you're installing low-budget appliances, where such technology is limited.



the company

Find out how long the kitchen suppliers you are considering, have been in business.

1. Do they have an established showroom where you can view their products?
2. Are they dedicated kitchen experts who specialise in fitted kitchens?
3. Will you have one member of their team dedicated to you and will they own the project from the initial enquiry right through until the kitchen has been installed in your home?
4. Will your new kitchen be manufactured in the West Midlands and support British jobs?
5. Do you have friends or family that can recommend the companies you are considering?

before you go to the showroom

Measure the space available for your new kitchen and make sure to bring the measurements with you to the showroom.

Do your **research**. This will allow you to be in a much better position to leverage the kitchen designer's experience and judge their expertise.

Write out a list of questions and bring them with you to the showroom.

And then most importantly - enjoy the process!

Planning a kitchen and seeing the results of your imagination, hard work and inspiration come together in a design that you helped to craft is a hugely rewarding process.

We wish you the best of luck with your new kitchen and hope it will bring you many years of joy.