



When planning your kitchen renovation, keep the following tips in mind:

Plan, Plan, Plan. Make a list of what you like about your current kitchen design and what you'd like to change. Scour home magazines for ideas that you want to implement. Talk to family and friends if they've recently remodeled. Prioritize what you'd like to change and decide what your budget will be. Make sure the different components of your new kitchen work well together. If you need to obtain financing, now is the time find out what you can obtain.

Study your current floor plan. Your goal should be to minimize the number of steps you take while preparing meals. For maximum efficiency, the work triangle between your sink, stove, and refrigerator should be less than 26 feet. Keep in mind how traffic flows through your room. Minimize family traffic flow through your work triangle - that traffic flow will reduce your efficiency and invite kitchen collisions.

Cabinets. Cabinets typically account for half of the budget for a new kitchen. They come in an enormous variety of sizes, designs, and colors - your selection can instantly revitalize the room. Before buying your cabinets, consider the amount of storage you have in the kitchen. Do you need more storage? If so, you may want to consider deeper or taller cabinets to increase kitchen storage options. Decide if you want ready-to-assemble, stock, or custom-made cabinets. Prices can vary greatly.

Choosing Appliances. Appliances are another big ticket item. Research appliance features, prices and consumer ratings. Neutral-colored appliances won't look dated when color trends change, while stainless steel appliances reflect surrounding colors and quietly blend into the background. Most appliances come in standard sizes, so you should be able to find one to fit your space, but measure before you order. You don't want to end up with a beautiful fridge that you can't quite fit under the new overhead cabinets you planned.

Countertops. Countertops are another remodeling consideration and there are many options. Laminate countertops are by far the least expensive, while stone and granite countertops are the priciest. Don't forget functionality. Too often countertops make us bend, stoop and work at counters that are too high or low. If someone in the family is unusually tall or short or has special needs, take that into consideration when you plan countertop height.

Flooring. Your choice of flooring can dramatically affect the overall feel of your kitchen. Create space by using light colors if your kitchen is small. For a more intimate feel with a larger kitchen - employ darker woods or more colorful flooring choices. When you add new cabinets, it can impact your need for a new floor - new cabinets may not align with the edges of your old flooring.



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Safety Tips. Make safety a factor when planning your kitchen. Think things through before you start your project. Don't place an oven next to a hallway where someone could easily stumble over a hot, open oven door. No entry, appliance, or cabinet doors should block each another when you open them. If you have an island in your kitchen - it shouldn't hit an appliance or cabinet when you open a door. Remember good lighting can cut down on accidents. Illuminating specific task areas can increase family safety.

Investigate contractors. Once you have a plan, call several contractors for price estimates. Ask them to fill out a detailed pricing estimate or bid form. These forms will breakdown the bids into labor and materials items. Compare the contractor bids. Also ask for names of customers and the locations of other work they've done. A room addition requires a lot of work, things such as plumbing, electrical work, carpentry, getting the right permits and passing building inspections. A good contractor will coordinate the necessary subcontractors and the permit process, saving you a lot of time and energy.

Get it in writing. When you've found your contractor draw up a contract. The contract will spell out the tasks to be done, the work schedule, and when payments are due. The contractor may have a form they use to draw up the contract. Have your legal expert review it.

Prepare for the start of remodeling. The kitchen is a vital part of the home and it can be difficult while it is under construction. Pack up kitchen goods and put them in boxes out of the way to avoid construction dust. Put aside essential items - such as coffee, salt, pepper, utensils, microwave, can opener and paper plates. Put these items in another part of the home as a mini kitchen while remodeling is being done. Dine out as often as your budget will allow during the construction phase.