

Top Kitchen Trends to Update Your Space

10 TIPS FOR CREATING A CLASSIC, FUNCTIONAL KITCHEN USING THE LATEST DESIGN TRENDS.

By Deborah R. Huso

Kitchens are big business for designers—and often require big budgets for homeowners. According to the 2014 Remodeling Cost vs. Value Report from *Remodeling Magazine*, the average upscale kitchen remodel rings up around \$107,406. Not surprising, given that kitchens are increasingly becoming multifunctional spaces. Here are 10 cutting-edge trends kitchen designers are seeing this year. While most of these are based on classic, traditional design, keep in mind that trends, by definition, are always shifting. So figure out what will work well for your kitchen and stick with that.



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1. OPEN SHELVING

Wall-to-wall cabinets with concealed storage can create a bulky aesthetic. Incorporating open shelving or a few glass-front shelves can go a long way toward adding visual interest to the kitchen. And, unlike traditional cabinets, open shelving provides storage in tighter architectural spots—over a fridge, near a sink or around a door.

2. BACK-TO-BASICS PALETTES

In the mid-2000s, kitchens were weighted down with dark cabinets and heavy, tumbled stone backsplashes. But whites and other neutrals, like gray and greige (that perfect combination of gray and beige), breathe new life into the kitchen, creating a fresh, timeless feel. Think white tiles, marble countertops, gray cabinets. Infusing a kitchen with these neutrals preserves a basic elegance while making the room appear larger.

3. TRANSITIONAL STYLE

Designers and architects agree transitional style is big right now. The classic design infused with a fresh twist allows for a more moderate, warm look in a kitchen space, without making it seem too formal or too traditional. For instance, taking a classic buffet with clean, simple lines and adding the unexpected—nailhead trim around the edges or linen inlays on the drawer fronts. Try mixing up traditional cabinetry by giving it a weathered gray stain, allowing the wood grain to show through. Or, add mid-century modern-style lighting to a classic kitchen. Transitional style allows for some playfulness within the kitchen design, while still allowing for a tailored finish. The blend of styles offers depth and architectural interest.

4. PAINTED CABINETS

"The top color for cabinets in traditional and transitional design is white, with gray coming in at a close second," says Kerry Flanagan White, kitchen designer and cabinet salesperson at Factory Builder Stores in Houston, TX, adding that greige is the most popular gray choice. "Clients want a gray that will work with warm wood tones, and greige does just that. A lot of my kitchens have a white- or gray-painted perimeter, with a wood-stained island," says Flanagan White.

To add more contrast in the kitchen, choose two hues of gray. Paint the darker shade on the bottom cabinets and the lighter shade on the uppers. This gives the room a boost of depth and range, "anchoring" the bottom cabinets while adding an illusion of lighter weight to the top cabinets. A few classic grays we love: Benjamin Moore's Pigeon Gray and Fieldstone, and Sherwin-Williams' Dovetail.



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5. STATEMENT LIGHTING

"A properly lit kitchen contains three types of lighting—task, accent and general," Flanagan White says. While general lighting often means canned ceiling lights, think of task and accent lighting as opportunities for a pop of color or texture.

The Peterson Drum Pendant from transitional furniture company Gabby Home, for example, could add visual interest over a kitchen table. The pendant has a classic parchment drum shade punched up with an antique gold geometric overlay. Or for something more casual, pair two oil-rubbed bronze mid-century, industrial-style pendants, like the Lumens Pelham Pendant, over an island.

Wall sconces are an increasingly popular task lighting choice. Forget those fluorescent under-cabinet strip lights. Sconces offer utilitarian lighting with a more pleasing glow. We love the Irvine Single Sconce from Schoolhouse Electric, with its heavy-gauge brass and clear-glass shade, for a warm, vintage appeal.

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6. METALS

Stainless steel appliances are de rigueur, but metals such as gold, brass, bronze and copper are creeping back in, in part due to the more neutral kitchen colors. "The gold tones are a perfect accent to gray cabinets and appliances," says Flanagan White. These warmer metals can be incorporated into everything from antique gold drawer pulls to pendant light fixtures, hammered bronze range hoods and copper stoves, and they can be mixed for a complementary look. "I am seeing people get away from having hardware and plumbing fixtures be a perfect match," she adds.

7. SYNTHETIC COUNTERTOPS

"I see clients opting for light colors and marble-like quartz counters with very simple movement," says Flanagan White. Quartz counters are the top choice at the moment, she says, adding that "granite and marble are still hugely popular, but people want the look of marble or natural stone, but not the hassle of maintaining it." Quartz manufacturers like Caesarstone and Silestone offer almost exact marble and stone replicas. "They are non-porous and pretty much maintenance-free," she adds.

8. NATURAL MATERIALS

While countertops may be trending a bit toward synthetic, other natural architectural features are being added in. Think tongue-and-groove boards, planked walls, reclaimed flooring, rough-hewn islands, exposed ceiling and wall beams. It's these organic details that coax out a warmth in the kitchen, softening the stark lines of industrial, cutting-edge appliances.

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9. BIG, FUNCTIONAL ISLANDS

Islands are getting big. How big? Flanagan White says many of her designs include 10- by 4-foot-plus islands, featuring sinks, dishwashers, seating and plenty of storage. This all goes back to the need for functional space. "Almost every kitchen I design contains a pullout wastebasket cabinet, multiple drawer organizers for utensils, tray dividers for cookie sheets and pans, spice pullouts and rollout trays. Everyone wants drawer-base cabinets; they're more convenient than the standard base cabinet."

10. BIGGER BACKSPLASHES

Think backsplash and that 1.5 to 2 feet of space contained between upper cabinet and counter comes to mind. But tile is quickly creeping up the wall to the ceiling. This trend pulls the eye upward, adds visual interest above and below the upper cabinets, and creates a cohesive accent wall. **I-L**



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