



Is your kitchen underwhelming?

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It's been a long cold winter in Manitoba, and we are all looking forward to enjoying the warmer months. Being cooped up indoors may have inspired you to bake and cook more often. If you find that your kitchen is not as functional as you want it to be, or lacks the sparkle that some trendy kitchens have, you may be starting to think that it's time to renovate your kitchen.

The kitchen is one of the most popular spaces in a house to renovate. While it seems like it should be fairly

straightforward, there are many things to consider before you bring out the sledgehammer to take your frustrations out on your existing cabinets and walls. What are the next steps and what do you need to consider? While budget seems like the most important item, you will also need to determine when you want to start your renovation, how long it will take and decide what you want in your dream kitchen. Oh, and don't forget that you need to plan your kitchen layout and design!

Invest in your kitchen with research time

While you don't have to know what you want, it will benefit you to pop on the internet to do some research into kitchen designs. This can help you decide what kind of overall style you want to see in your new kitchen. If you are unsure, some popular styles to get you started include mid-century modern, contemporary, farmhouse, French country and traditional. Don't forget to consider the architectural

features of your home to ensure that your new kitchen will reflect or complement the rest of your house. You don't need to stick to one style; it is possible to mix styles like a contemporary kitchen in a farmhouse style home, or a French country kitchen in a modern home.

Once you have found a kitchen style you like, consider cabinet materials and door styles. Remember that cabinetry style is one of the most important items in the kitchen. Look at different styles of doors and determine which style best achieves the look you want. If you're looking for a wood door, then consider oak, ash, walnut, beech or maple. You can finish these wood doors with a stain or use a semi-opaque stain for a more traditional feel. Lacquer on MDF (medium density fiberboard) or maple is also another popular choice in modern kitchens. Acrylic high gloss, matte finishes and aluminum framed glass doors are trending in Europe and look wonderful in a contemporary kitchen.

Deciding what to use for your countertop is next. While white quartz is popular, oversized porcelain slabs are the upcoming trend. Countertops are also available in granite, concrete, butcher block and stainless steel. You can mix some of these for a unique look. For example, you could use quartz on the main counters and pair it with butcher block on the island. The kitchen backsplash is a great spot to make a statement. Mustard, terracotta and jewel tones are trending this season. Some flooring materials to consider include tile, hardwood/engineered hardwood, laminate, LVT (luxury vinyl tile) and LVP (luxury vinyl plank). Next, you need to look at appliances and the finishes they are available in. Do you want a black stainless, stainless steel or panel ready appliances? This is an important piece of the renovation process as it can affect your layout.

Planning and layout

The design of a kitchen is where reality hits. Figuring out how the kitchen will look can seem like a daunting task especially if there is a change in layout, or if you are making the



If you are considering doing the plan yourself, here are a few points to keep in mind:

- 1 **Where are your work centers?** These include places where food storage (both dry and refrigerated), preparation and cooking take place. Your pantry, sink, oven/range and refrigerator should be considered as part of your work centers.
- 2 **The golden triangle.** Who does the cooking in the kitchen? The golden triangle is the relationship between the sink, refrigerator and stove. This guideline states that these should be laid out to loosely form a triangle, enabling you to perform tasks with ease and free from obstruction. Ideally, the perimeter of the triangle should be no less than 6 steps and no more than 12 steps. With today's trends, the kitchen triangle may not be the best solution for your kitchen, especially if there are multiple cooks. Break the kitchen into working zones (consider prep, cooking, cleaning and storage as your zones). Each cook should have ease of access to all zones. A second prep area and sink are a strong consideration if you want peace in the kitchen! It is important to pay equal attention to the style, function and to ensure the working zones make the best sense for your needs.
- 3 **Use smart storage.** Once you have figured out your working zones, determine where in your kitchen you need the storage for each zone. Drawers are a great choice for pot and small appliance storage. While walk in pantries are ideal, if you do not have the space, consider pull out pantries in the cabinet as an alternative.
- 4 **Know your spaces and surface heights.** Counter height is 36" and bar height is 42." Space between major work areas should be 42" to 48." Space between secondary work areas should be 42." There are exceptions to the rules but if you are unsure, it is best to rely on an expert for these exceptions.

After you have considered all these points, you may want to consider hiring a professional to look over all your plans and materials to ensure it will perform the way it should. Then, you are ready to experience the start of your kitchen renovation! Just remember that through all the wonderful "learning experiences" you are about to partake in, this journey and all the nights of ordering out, you will, in the end, be able to enjoy a functional kitchen with family and friends.

kitchen larger. There are also some other factors you should consider – do you want a message center, a place to display collections, a butler's pantry or an island with seating? Your space will determine how many items on your wish list will become

a reality. The sizes and location of your appliances will play a large role in determining the layout of your kitchen. Because the kitchen is such an expensive undertaking, you may want to consider using a professional for your layout.



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