

# 2

## Types of kitchen

---

### First considerations

How will the kitchen be used and by whom? What are the clients' particular requirements, if any? While considering these requirements, remember that the basic layout of the kitchen may last considerably longer than the present occupiers of the house and, therefore, should not be so idiosyncratic as to devalue the property. For instance, although it is common knowledge that kitchens are frequently ripped out and revamped, the general disposition of the entrance door, main window, position of sink and cooker if needing a flue, will largely condition future layouts unless substantial re-building is undertaken.

### Questions to be asked

- How many people will the kitchen serve?
- Will all meals be served and eaten within, or adjoining the kitchen
- Or should there be a 'breakfast bar' in the kitchen with a more extensive dining area nearby?
- Is the person, who does most of the kitchen, tidy and able to work in a relatively compact area, or would they prefer a more generous layout?
- Do the clients have a once-a-month massive shop, and therefore require a large area of food storage, or even a separate larder?
- Or do they live conveniently near shops and buy food frequently, and can therefore manage with a relatively small area of food storage?

## Cost

Determine whether quite basic cabinets and appliances are required, or whether no expense should be spared. If funds are limited, advise clients not to economise on the initial provision of plumbing and electrical installations so that some appliances may be added later when more money is available.

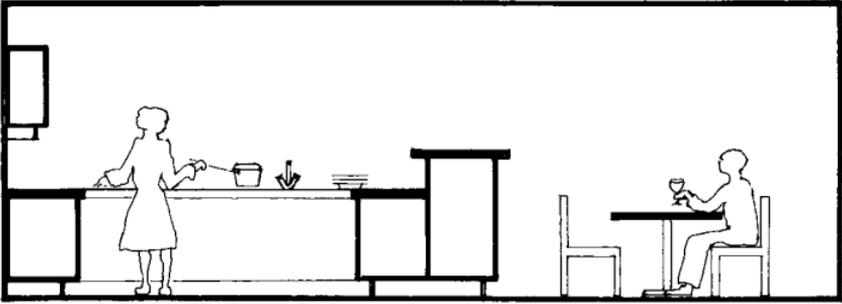
## The family kitchen

The family kitchen is the key room in the house. It not only has to deal with cooking and eating, but may entail the supervision of children, whether toddlers playing on the floor, school-age children doing homework on the table or playing in the adjacent garden.

It should have links with the outside for access to dustbins and to any outhouses which may have a second fridge-freezer. Where there is a garden, a sheltered paved area could be provided for cooking and eating outdoors, and vegetable and herbs grown for the kitchen. Ideally, the kitchen should not be too far from an outside door to reduce the distance needed to carry shopping.

In the case of the dining-kitchen, the dining area should be accessed first so as to avoid guests walking through the not-necessarily pristine cooking area.

Many clients underestimate how much time is spent in the kitchen by all the members of the family, and wish to tuck the kitchen away in a dreary, north-facing room whilst giving pride of place to the formal dining room which, often, is only used a few times a year. Except for the super-rich who can afford staff or employ outside caterers, a separate dining room has largely become an anachronism for most families. The separate dining room also involves considerably more work in laying and clearing the table. In this respect, where kitchens are being installed in existing buildings, two adjacent rooms opened up into one makes the serving of meals and the supervision of children far simpler.



Kitchen screened by taller cabinets. Cabinets serving dining area set 300 mm higher than kitchen worktop conceal inevitable mess arising from dishing up

One essential device for the kitchen-dining room, which cannot be overestimated, is to have a barrier between the cooking and dining area which is a minimum of 1.2 m high. This can take the form of a back to counter unit with a shelf on top or storage cupboards of this height facing the dining area (see above). This device screens the kitchen counters when seated at table, and hides the inevitable mess created when serving up a meal.

## The luxury kitchen

At the top of the market, the kitchen becomes a status symbol which can cost anything from £70–500,000 equipped perhaps with a range cooker, larger and more expensive than a Mercedes-Benz SLK car.

This type of kitchen may have vast refrigerators and ice machines from the USA, fan refrigerators which are better at circulating air, wine coolers, and even a separate cold room reminiscent of the north-facing larders of old country houses.

This phenomenon has largely been inspired by celebrity TV chefs who have renewed an interest in cooking from good raw materials. The rich, who like to cook, want a great room

to do it in which will not only look good, but be a show place for the latest gadgets such as steam ovens, cappuccino machines, glass-covered plasma screen televisions and stainless steel-lined copper pans. These will be set in a decor of hardwearing, expensive finishes such as limestone floors and oak cabinets and granite or composite stone worktops.

There, more than ever, the kitchen is truly the heart of the home, and is where the party not only starts but continues.

## **Kitchens for flats**

Kitchens in flats differ from kitchens in houses in that they may not be on the ground floor.

Waste disposal should be made easy, possibly with refuse chutes.

Care should be taken to provide good sound insulation, particularly if they are positioned next to bedrooms (including neighbours') as machines can vibrate and be noisy.

If the kitchen is to be installed in an old building with suspended timber floors, then provision must be taken to waterproof the floor against accidental leaks from appliances.

Inevitably, flat kitchens may have to accommodate laundry machines as space may be limited elsewhere but, if at all possible, try to locate these machines in or near the bathroom or bedrooms. Where a condensing dryer is installed in a kitchen, then an additional extractor fan over the dryer may be needed to deal with the resulting condensation.

## **Small, low-cost kitchens**

Where space is at a premium, the choice of appliances must be considered first. A hob with a single oven built in underneath the counter will take up less room than a double

oven built into a tall cabinet with a separate hob. Fridge/freezers come in many combinations so that the ratio of refrigerator to freezer can be to choice – possibly with a freezer situated elsewhere. For the really small kitchen, the narrow under-counter refrigerator with integral icebox is one choice and, for the bedsitting room there are mini iceboxes which can sit on the counter, large enough to contain a little milk, butter and cheese.

Busy people may not want an oven at all, and will be satisfied with a versatile combination microwave, perhaps augmented by an electric frying pan, jug kettle and toaster. The disadvantage of such a solution is that it may devalue the property for future owners.

Avoid sinks without drainers. Even the smallest draining area will help to contain water puddles on the worktop. Wall-hung wire plate racks, fixed above the sink or drainer, can increase the draining area without extending the worktop. Where there is space for a dishwasher, narrow models are available (see p. 135). For inexpensive cabinets, see p. 144.

## **Kitchen in a cupboard**

For the rock bottom priced kitchen, an ‘off the peg’ counter-top, available from DIY superstores, with a sink unit and open shelves above and below, will save the cost of cabinets but will be subject to grease and dust and look untidy.

There are bespoke ‘mini-kitchens’ prefabricated with various combinations, which are not cheap but worth studying for ideas. It will generally be cheaper and more desirable, but not quicker, to design a more client-specific combination instead. These can be concealed with sliding or folding doors, which could also form part of a storage wall where the depth of the cupboard is suitable for clothes-hanging space alongside.



Stainless steel mini-kitchen by Space Savers  
1000 w × 600 d × 2000 h.  
Other combinations include microwave ovens.  
Can be customised as required

## Kitchens for the elderly

Older people who are not fully mobile and who may prefer to sit on a chair with castors while preparing and cooking meals, will need the worktops, appliances and socket outlets set at a lower level.

Cookers and refrigerators built into tall cabinets should also be positioned at a lower level and conversely dishwashers,

washing machines and dryers should be set higher above the floor to access the interiors more easily.

Base and wall cupboards without doors make the contents more accessible and a knee-hole under the sink can make washing up and vegetable preparation easier.

Carousel shelves in corner cupboards and small free-standing carousel shelves on a worktop can also help.

Free-standing vegetable racks on castors can be stored under counters, and narrow wire basket shelves can be fitted to the inside of cabinet doors.

For more details of kitchens for the disabled and for wheel-chair users, see pp. 45–53.