Hello there!

I am so happy you’ve purchased An Insider’s Guide to Kitchen Design. This guide is born out of my love for kitchen design and my experience as both an interior designer, kitchen designer and homeowner (we’ve restored and renovated our 1940s Chicago Bungalow). My design education also included coursework affiliated with the NKBA (National Kitchen & Bath Association), which I highly recommend as a resource to designers and homeowners alike. The majority of imagery in this PDF is of kitchens from our design portfolio (the source is otherwise attributed). I opened my full service design firm, Centered by Design in 2015, and kitchen design has become a passion for our firm.

Designing a kitchen, or the heart of the home as we like to call it, takes a lot of knowledge, organization, a great team and an even better project manager. Whether you are about to embark on your own renovation and have a designer, contractor or cabinet maker, etc. this guide will give you a lot to think about and empower you to make educated design choices!

The guide is broken into four sections: Practical Advice, Design Guidelines, How To Get Started and Sample Drawing Set. Follow it in order and use it like a workbook for maximum efficiency. It’s never too early to start planning your dream kitchen, Bon Appetit!

Claire Staszak, Principal, Centered by Design

For all our latest design inspiration follow along on Instagram @centered_by_design
# SECTION I
- PRACTICAL ADVICE -

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**Kitchen Questionnaire - Part 1**

**Household Information:**
How many people are in your household, and who is/are the primary cook(s)? Do you cook frequently or is the kitchen used more on the weekends / special occasions? Do you enjoy entertaining or have any special hobbies to consider, like baking?

**Children:**
If you have children, do they like to cook? And what considerations would you like to make for them in the kitchen? (e.g., step stool, cutting boards, pantry access, microwave or appliance heights)

**Pets:**
If you have pets, what would you like us to know about them and their use of the kitchen? (e.g., pet food storage, bowls, water access, etc.)

**Research:**
What DO you like and what do you NOT like about your current kitchen?

Do you consider your kitchen as just another room in your home, or is it more of a living space/heart-of-the-home where you and your family spend a majority of time?

What improvements are you looking for in a new kitchen? (e.g., Easier to clean; Upgraded appliances; More efficient traffic pattern; More storage; Better lighting; Additional workspace; Other)

Do you prefer small appliances out and accessible or hidden away for clear counters? What key small appliances do you use daily?

Are there entertaining features or technology you would like to see in your kitchen?
Are there any new or different appliances you hope to incorporate into the new kitchen design?

**Design:**
What style would you like your new kitchen space to have? *Formal, Traditional, Transitional, Contemporary, Open and Airy, Modern?* Are there any kitchen designers, magazines or brands you love that you’d like to emulate or incorporate in the kitchen?

What colors do you like/dislike?

Which metal finishes do you prefer? Are there any you really don’t like? *Brass, Bronze, Polished Nickel, Chrome - satin or with shine?*

What type of finish would you prefer for new cabinets? *Natural wood, Light wood, Medium wood, Dark wood, Metal/glass, Aged/antique, Painted, High-Gloss, etc.?*

What type of material are you considering for your countertops? What is most important to you in regards to durability, natural materials, cost, aesthetics?

Do you need additional decorative or task lighting? Do you like under cabinet lighting?

What are key areas you’d like to invest in or areas of importance to you? Please refer to our kitchen design checklist.

Anything else you would like us to know or consider as we design your new kitchen!?
# Kitchen Remodel Checklist

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<tr>
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<td>single / double / convection/ microwave &amp; oven combo</td>
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Average Kitchen Renovation Cost Template

Ballpark overall costs to expect, depending on geographic location: $50K - $250K

Highest Cost Items:
- Contractor Fees: Estimate 30 - 50% of overall project budget
- Designer Fees: Estimate 10-20% of overall project budget
- Cabinets: $10K - 50K
- Appliances: $6K - 100K
- Countertops: $5K - 25K

Median Cost Items:
- Backsplash: $1K +
- Hood/Exhaust Fan: $2500 +
- Cabinet Hardware: $500 +
- Light Fixtures: $2000 +
- Furniture: TBD

Lower Cost Items:
- Faucet: $650 +
- Sink: $800 +
- Flooring: $5 - $10/ sqft
- Inspection/Permit Cost: TBD

Total $_______

Thoughts on How to Value Engineer:

Everyone has costs top of mind when undertaking a large renovation. Our advice is to decide what is most important to you and put your money there. If this is your “forever home”, invest in cabinets that will stand the test of time, appliances and countertops are easier to swap out over the years. If this is an investment property, higher end appliances and quality countertops will garner more interest. There is a huge range for costs of items like hardware, lighting, sinks and faucets. With some diligence, you should be able to find a style you love at a price point that works for you!
Top 8 Questions To Ask Your Contractor

1. Are you licensed and insured in my city?

2. Could I have the phone/email of two recent clients who could give you a referral?

3. How long have you worked in this industry?

4. If you’re newer to the industry, what did you do before? Experience in peripheral fields like architecture or building trades is a good sign.

5. Do you work mostly on commercial, residential, new construction, or renovations?
   What’s your area of expertise?

6. Have you ever collaborated with an interior designer? Good contractors understand the value of an interior designer, or home owner who appreciates and understands design details.

7. Can you create a project budget? An itemized list of expected costs broken down per room or per trade, such as plumbing costs, electrical costs, framing, drywall, tile, etc.

8. Can you explain your process for a “change order?” When changes occur to scope of work, either increasing or decreasing costs what is the procedure?

We always suggest printing out inspiration photos to show to a potential contractor. Use your photos as a tool to gauge the contractor’s sensitivity to design details. It is a good sign if they are responsive to the vision and even add suggestions / comments on design possibilities (or restrictions) based on their construction knowledge. They likely have a good eye for design and detail which goes a long way during the building process!
The following three suggestions are a good general practice when preparing or meeting with potential contractors or other trades people:

1. Create a thorough wish list or scope of items needing to be addressed by area throughout the home.
2. Prepare a good inspirational package with images. You can gather these on sites like Pinterest and Houzz. Print these out for your meeting.
3. Provide any plans of existing conditions, including plat survey plans from your closing or floor plans from your home or online listing.
1. **SET REALISTIC GOALS**: Kitchen renovations are known for going over on time and budget. Even the biggest budgets need value engineering. Decide what are the most important elements (i.e. appliance quality, cabinet quality, better lighting plan, etc.) for you and your family, stick to those priority items and let them guide your choices. Living through a renovation is not easy, plan for it accordingly or move out!

2. **DO YOUR RESEARCH**: Make sure you talk to friends, family and professionals for guidance on their experience with different brands, designers, showrooms and dealers. You are about to spend a lot of money and time to create function and beauty for your family, do your due diligence and then trust the professionals.

3. **CREATE A BUDGET**: A simple Excel spreadsheet will do. We always recommend budgeting, even if at first the numbers feel like a guess. As designs become finalized you can swap numbers for the actual costs. There are a lot of moving parts and this helps keep track of not only costs, but ordering too.

4. **HIRE YOUR TEAM**: After steps 1 - 3 you should be well on your way to find your supporting players for this renovation. Designers and builders can aid in your budgeting process as well. We recommend involving a good team from the start for efficiency. You will save time, money and costly mistakes with professional help. We recommend first reaching out to an interior or kitchen designer, they can often recommend vetted contractors and builders.
5. **MEASURE YOUR SPACE + IDEATE:** Kitchen design comes down to millimeters! Make sure you or a professional gets very accurate measurements to work from.

6. **FLOOR PLANS, ELEVATIONS AND 3D VIEWS:** Now is the time to get creative! Use online space planning tools like SketchUp and more to draw and ideate for your project. If you are working with a professional they should provide multiple floor plan options, elevations and 3D views.

7. **SUBMIT FOR PERMITS IF NECESSARY:**

   Work with your city, architect or builder to submit for your permit once plans are drawn and finalized.

8. **CREATE PROJECT TIMELINE:** Ask your contractor or builder for a timeline and contingency time.

9. **FINISH SELECTIONS:** With your drawings approved, now is the fun part! Choose your cabinet door style, color/s, metal finishes for plumbing, lighting, countertops, hardware, etc. If you are struggling, this is another good stopping point to involve a designer.

10. **PREPARE FOR CONSTRUCTION:** Setting up a makeshift kitchen in the basement or elsewhere really helps if you are living through a renovation. We recommend access to a fridge, sink, crockpot and hotplate! Get ready for some dust...we promise once it’s all over it will be worth it!
1. DEMOLITION  (~1 WEEK)

2. STRUCTURAL CHANGES:  (3-5 WEEKS)
   - Framing
   - Plumbing
   - Electrical
   - Mechanical

3. DRYWALL & PAINTING  (~1 WEEK)

4. FLOORING  (2 - 3 DAYS)

5. CABINET INSTALLATION  (3 - 5 DAYS)

6. COUNTERTOPS & BACKSPLASH  (~2 - 3 WEEKS)
   - Cabinets must be installed to measure.
   - Fabrication & Installation require multiple site visits.

7. APPLIANCES & DECORATIVE LIGHTING  (1 - 5 DAYS)

8. FINISHING DETAILS & HARDWARE  (1 - 2 WEEKS)

9. PUNCH LIST & CLEAN  (2 - 3 DAYS)

10. ENJOY!!!

KITCHEN DESIGN STEP BY STEP – PART II: CONSTRUCTION & PROJECT MANAGEMENT
**Basic Cabinetry Glossary - Part 1**

Get familiar with cabinet industry terminology and construction:

### Wall Cabinet
Also known as upper cabinets, typically 12-13” deep

### Base Cabinet
Also known as lower cabinets, typically 24” deep

### Appliance Box and Panel
Cabinetry used to house / hide appliances

### Crown Molding & Back Band
Detailed woodwork used to finish the tops of wall cabinets

### Toe Kick & Furniture Base
Detailed woodwork used to finish the bottom of base cabinets

### Flush End vs. Paneled End
Refers to how the side of cabinet is finished
**Inset vs. Overlay Cabinet**
Most popular types of cabinet doors/styles in the USA

**Inset Cabinet**
Features doors and drawers that fit inside of the cabinet face frame.

**Overlay Cabinet**
Refers to how much a door overlays the face frame of the cabinet.

**Door Style**
Defines the look, construction and type of cabinetry door.

**Appliance Garage**
Custom cabinetry, designed to conceal large appliances.

**Pull out/ Roll out Cabinet**
Cabinetry type that rolls or pulls out, f.e. for spice storage, trash can, etc.

Get familiar with cabinet industry terminology and construction:
Cabinet Knowledge: General FAQ

What are the things you need to consider before you purchase your cabinetry?

- Good quality cabinetry is absolutely beautiful and will add value to your home.
- Invest in the best you can afford. You will use and touch your cabinets everyday.
- Make sure your cabinetry is built out of solid materials. Quality cabinetry should have a minimum of plywood box construction with corner braces, full height backs, soft close hinges and joinery details (such as dovetail drawer boxes).
- Cabinet face frames and doors should be made of solid wood or (if painted) there may be a wooden frame with a composite center panel.
- Talk to your cabinet maker about their finishing process and cabinet interiors. Great cabinets are finished by hand with very high quality painted and hand applied finishes.
SECTION II
- DESIGN GUIDELINES -

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

• Kitchen Inspiration Sources: Start Dreaming & Designing
• Styles of Kitchen Design: What’s Your Style?
• 10 Ways to Layout Subway Tile: So Much to Choose From
• 7 Favorite Countertop Edge Profiles: Details that Matter
• 18 Favorite Light and Dark Cabinet Colors: Tried and True Colors
The following are my favorite design accounts/brands to look at for inspiration!

Corey Damen Jenkins
@coreydamenjenkins
coreydamenjenkins.com

Humphrey Munson
@humphreymunson
humphreymunson.co.uk

KitchenLab Interiors
@kitchenlabinteriors
kitchenlabinteriors.com

Jean Stoffer
@jeanstofferdesign
jeanstofferdesign.com

Kate Marker Interiors
@katemarkerinteriors
katemarkerinteriors.com

Waterworks
@wtrwrks
waterworks.com/us_en/
What’s your style? No need to pick just one! The best kitchen designs often result from combining unexpected elements from different design genres.

**Traditional**
@centeredbydesign

**Modern**
@centeredbydesign

**French Country**
@centeredbydesign

**All Wood / Rustic**
@centeredbydesign
What’s your style? No need to pick just one! The best kitchen designs often result from combining unexpected elements from different design genres.
Our 10 Favorite Subway Tile Layouts

1. Stack Bond by Ann Sacks

2. Vertical Stack Bond by Fireclay Tile

3. Running Bond by Ann Sacks

4. Crosshatch by Claybrook

5. 4x4 Square Tile by Entrance

**Designer Tip:**

For more modern spaces, try Stack Bond and Vertical Stack Bond patterns.

**Designer Tip:**

For a more vintage aesthetic, try 4 x 4 Square and Offset patterns.
Our 10 Favorite Subway Tile Layouts

**Designer Tip:**

Shower niches are a great place for contrasting mosaic tiles.

6

**Offset**

by. Centered by Design

7

**Diagonal Offset**

by. Home Designing

---

**Designer Tip:**

Don’t forget to choose your grout color! Decide if you want grout to match or contrast with your tile selection.

8

**Traditional Herringbone**

by. Erin Hanrahan

9

**Diagonal Herringbone**

by. Centered by Design

10

**Straight Herringbone**

by. Bedrosians Tile & Stone
Our 7 Favorite Countertop Edge Profiles

1. Square

2. Eased Edge Square

3. Miter with Apron

Designer Tips:

Countertops are typically priced by a stone fabricator. This is the person who installs the stone in your home. You visit stone yards to choose your slab and they can connect you with a stone fabricator.

Fabricators will visit your site and laser measure for accuracy of the installation. Make sure you have chosen or installed a sink prior to measure.

Make sure to think about your backsplash and edge profile when considering your kitchen design.

Styles 1-4 are great in more modern kitchens and style 5-7 work well in more traditional settings.
Our 7 Favorite Countertop Edge Profiles

4 Bullnose
by. Cambria

5 Ogee with Dupont
by. Centered by Design

6 Ogee
by. Centered by Design

7 Bevel
by. Cambria
Our Top 9 White Paint Colors

**Chantilly Lace**
by Benjamin Moore
OC-65

**Simply White**
by Benjamin Moore
OC-117

**Mountain Peak White**
by Benjamin Moore
OC-121

**White Dove**
by Benjamin Moore
OC-17

**Intense White**
by Benjamin Moore
OC-51

**Wavet**
by Farrow & Ball
No. 273

**Ammonite**
by Farrow & Ball
No. 274

**Cornforth White**
by Farrow & Ball
No. 228

**Skimming Stone**
by Farrow & Ball
No. 241
Our Top 9 Dark Paint Colors

- **Wrought Iron**
  by Benjamin Moore
  2124-10

- **French Beret**
  by Benjamin Moore
  1610

- **Overcoat**
  by Benjamin Moore
  CC-544

- **Kendall Charcoal**
  by Benjamin Moore
  HC-166

- **Metropolitan**
  by Benjamin Moore
  AF-690

- **Worsted**
  by Farrow & Ball
  No. 284

- **Down Pipe**
  by Farrow & Ball
  No. 26

- **Off Black**
  by Farrow & Ball
  No. 57

- **Mahogany**
  by Farrow & Ball
  No. 36
## SECTION III
- How To Get Started -

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How To Measure Your Kitchen

1. Prepare a piece of paper, pencil and a good measuring tape.
2. Try to draw the shape of the room, based on where you stand.
3. Begin with measuring the ceiling height, and write it down on the site as follows: Ceiling H= xx”
4. Next, measure every wall’s length and write them down next to each of them.
5. If there’s an opening (window or door), make sure to mark it on the plan.
6. Measure each opening from outside to outside, including the trim that goes around it. Do the same for height & width. For window, make sure you also measure from floor to the top of the sill.
7. Write down which room the door leads to - this will influence the design process.
8. Next, measure the space between wall and window/door on each side, and write those down.
9. Lastly, note any of the existing mechanical locations, like sink plumbing, radiators, or can lighting.

Sample Kitchen Measurements
SAMPLE FLOOR PLAN

FURNITURE PLAN

ISLAND: SINK & DISHWASHER

RANGE W/ HOOD ABOVE

FREESTANDING HUTCH W/ BIFOLD DOORS
SAMPLE ELECTRICAL PLAN

FAMILY ROOM:
F1—RECESSED CANS, QTY: 4

KITCHEN:
FX-1—DECORATIVE PENDANTS QTY: 3

FAMILY ROOM:
FX-2—DECORATIVE FIXTURE—LOCATION CENTERED BTW CANS QTY: 1

KITCHEN:
FX-1—RECESSED CANS, QTY: 3

OUTLETS EACH SIDE

KITCHEN AREA 2:
F1—RECESSED CANS, QTY: 2
**Designer Tips: Mixing Metals**

**Designer Tips:**

- **General:**
  Don’t be afraid to mix metals. It is a good way to add some character to your kitchen and make it more YOU!

- **Mixing yes’s:**
  - Mix brass and dark bronze
  - Mix brass and chrome
  - Mix brass and nickel

- **Mixing no’s:**
  - Don’t mix nickel and chrome
  - Select 1 main finish and accentuate it with up to 2 others, including appliance finish.
Designer Tips: Kitchen Sinks

**Designer Tips:**

- **Top Mount Sink:**
  Otherwise know as “drop-in sink”. It is relatively easy and inexpensive to install. It also doesn’t require an internal support system under the counter, making it a good choice for DIY people on a tighter budget.

- **Undermount Sink:**
  Mounted underneath the counter, providing a clean, modern look. Edge of the counter drops off directly into the sink basin. They typically require more work to install because the sink must be glued to the underside of the counter. For most sinks of that type you need to have holes cut into your counter top to install your faucet.

- **Apron Front:**
  Features a large forward-facing section that replaces a portion of the counter. Typically used in farmhouse style or more traditional projects.
**Designer Tips: Hanging Lighting**

**Designer Tips:**

- **Island Pendants:**
  For best visual and functional effect we recommend installing ceiling fixtures 30”-36” from the surface of your kitchen island. If there are multiple pendants being installed, the widest part of the fixtures should be spaced a minimum of 30” apart.

- **Linear Pendants:**
  Best choice to light extra long surfaces. Selecting a fixture that’s about 2/3 the size of the kitchen island or a dining table is the key to achieve a perfectly lit surface.

- **Lighting at Round Dining Table:**
  Choose a fixture that measures between 1/2 and 3/4 of the table diameter. We recommend its installation at 32”-36” from the surface of your dining table.

*Play with scale! Lighting can make more impact when it’s oversized, or it can be more subtle if petite.*
**Designer Tips: Bar & Counter Stools**

- **Counter Stools:**
  A typical counter stool seat height should fit between 23” - 28” off the floor to the top of the seat. These will work perfectly with a counter height of 35” - 37”. These are most commonly used in kitchens.

- **Bar Stools:**
  A typical bar stool seat height should fit between 29” - 32” off the floor to the top of the seat. These will work perfectly with a counter height of 41” - 43”. These are most commonly used in bar areas, or raised island counters.

- **Spacing:**
  Measure your overall island size and divide it by 24 to determine the optimal number of seats.
Designer Tips: Hardware Count & Placement

Designer Tips:

- General:
  Sketch your hardware on a cabinetry shop drawing or a photo and make sure to count it twice before you place an order! Don’t be afraid to mix hardware finishes and styles.

- Cabinet Knobs:
  Very commonly used for top cabinets. Typically more traditional in style, most used sizes are 1.25” & 1.5”.

- Cabinet Pulls:
  Can be installed horizontally or vertically, depending on a cabinet type. Install handle pulls on all drawers for easier use, especially if any of them will hold heavy items. A good rule of thumb for pull sizing is 1/3 of the cabinet size. Ex: 24” cabinet = 8” pull.

Sample Hardware Placement Sketch

Sketch out hardware to help with accurate count, ex: here we have:
- 12” Appliance Pulls, Qty: 4
- 1.25” Cabinet Knobs, Qty: 4
SECTION IV
- SAMPLE KITCHEN DRAWINGS SET -

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- Existing Floor Plan
- New Floor Plan
- North Elevation
- South Elevation
- East Elevation
- Island - East Elevation
- Island - North Elevation
**North Elevation**

- New window (6' W) height to match staircase window height.
- Mirrored glass cabinetry w/ shelving.
- 3.5" painted beadboard.

Dimensions:
- 7'-11"
- 3'-0" - 3'-7" - 1'-0"
- 2'-0"
- 5'-4"
- 2'-0"
- 4'-6"
- 2'-6"
- 4'-5\(\frac{1}{4}\)"
- 9'-4"
- 3'-4\(\frac{1}{4}\)"
- 21'-5\(\frac{1}{2}\)"
South Elevation

PANTRY W HIDDEN MICROWAVE

HOOD

RANGE

19'-7 1/2"
EAST ELEVATION

7'-11"
5'-9 7/8"
4 1/2"
3'-1 1/2"
1'-4"
3'-0"
7'-5 1/2"
ISLAND - EAST ELEVATION
SECTION V
-COMPLETED KITCHEN PROJECT-

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Additional Resources:

- **Centered by Design Online Shop**
  https://centeredbydesign.com/shop/homeowners/
- **National Kitchen & Bath Association**
  https://nkba.org/
- **National Association of the Remodeling Industry**
  https://www.nari.org/
- **Unique Kitchens and Baths**
  https://www.uniquekitchensandbaths.net/
- **Stoffer Home Cabinetry**
  https://stofferhome.com/pages/cabinetry
- **Circa Lighting**
  https://www.circalighting.com/
- **Top Knobs**
  https://www.topknobs.com/
- **Rejuvenation**
  https://www.rejuvenation.com/
- **Waterworks**
  https://www.waterworks.com/us_en/
- **This Old House**