

## ASK THE DESIGNER: Recipe for a Kitchen to Love

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?I'm planning a kitchen renovation for the fall but I'm not really sure what I want out of it. Where do I start??

Feel free to send me your comments or questions to [askjean@nichedecor.ca](mailto:askjean@nichedecor.ca)

I once told a woman at her dinner party that she had the most beautiful kitchen and that she must really love to cook.

She said ?No, but I love to feed people?.

The kitchen shouldn't only be a place to prepare food. It should be about a lifestyle ? in this case, the woman's love for entertaining.

I never ask my clients what they want in a kitchen. For me, it's more important to find out how they want to live in their kitchen.

How do you see yourself in the space? Are you wearing a black dress, martini in hand, surrounded by friends while the caterer is at work, or are you in your favourite robe and slippers, clutching a mug of coffee while things are being stewed?

Once you've decided what life in your kitchen looks like, you're ready to begin the planning stage.

Here are some important things to consider when you start the design process. The kitchen is the main hub of most homes so what do you use yours for the most? We have many kitchen projects on the go right now. We've partnered with a local manufacturer who does beautiful custom work and made-to-order cabinetry and he has shown us that if you can dream it, you can do it.

Do you entertain? Add an island and counter stools to create extra seating. Do you have your meals in the kitchen? Create a custom-dining nook for cozy family dinners. Is it where your kids do their homework? Why not design a built-in desk and shelving unit? Or, turn an old telephone table into a work centre or charging station! You can customize your space to suit any of your needs.

The kitchen is where everyone wants to hang out, so avoid isolation. Open concept kitchens are in hot demand right now so consider taking down a wall to accommodate more people in your space. This will bump up your re-sale value as well. (It's never too soon to think ahead!)

Pay close attention to how you work in your kitchen. Do you constantly find yourself reaching for things that aren't conveniently located? Is the microwave eating into your counter space? Are your pots and pans near the stove? Do you find yourself running around between the sink, the oven and the garbage?

Compile a list of nagging issues in your kitchen and be sure to go over them with your designer when the time comes. A functional layout is key, and the classic sink-fridge-stove triangle doesn't work for everyone and in all spaces.

With our seemingly never-ending cold weather we want to make the most of beautiful, sunny days. A recent kitchen renovation we completed included turning an oversized window into a walk-out with a patio. The client loved having the extra space for entertaining as well as the extra natural light in her kitchen year round. Don't be afraid to make structural changes, but always consult a professional before starting a job like that.

Like all design, what you put into it is what you'll get out of it. The more you think about things and draw out your thoughts, the more tailored to your needs your kitchen will be. Careful planning will go a long way in ensuring that you love every inch of your kitchen!