



Taste of Al Fresco

Design Considerations for Outdoor
Kitchen and Dining Spaces



A modern outdoor patio area featuring a hot tub with a wooden base and a grey top, set against a white wall and lush green trees.

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INTRODUCTION

As Australians, we love living and entertaining outdoors. Spending time outside is an intrinsic part of the Australian lifestyle, and our temperate climate enables us to do so for most months of the year regardless of season. It is also crucial to our health and wellbeing, providing us with a dose of fresh air while increasing our connection to nature. Creating an outdoor area that can be used all year round for tasty charred-cooked meals, relaxation and to enjoy the company of friends, is a necessity in the modern Australian home.

Today's outdoor kitchens and dining spaces are more than an extension of the indoor living area, they are a culinary amenity and must-have feature in home design. Expanding the usable space of the home outside its physical footprint not only lends functional and aesthetic appeal, but it also typically attracts higher property values.

Extending an indoor kitchen to the outdoors requires meticulous planning and preparation. A range of design considerations must be accounted for at the planning stage, such as access, layout, appliances, furniture, and style. Creating a seamless transition from indoors to outdoors is key to delivering a space that truly enhances the lifestyle of its users.

In this whitepaper, we look at why more Australians are extending their kitchen and dining spaces into the outdoors and the design considerations that can bring these spaces to life.

BENEFITS OF OUTDOOR DINING AND KITCHEN SPACES

Increase usable space

An outdoor kitchen or dining space expands the overall living area of your home. This gives homeowners more functional and adaptable layouts, and more usable space for different activities. If you add a shelter over the outdoor area, you can create a space that can be enjoyed throughout all seasons.

Increase property values

Even since the pandemic reminded us of the importance of the outdoors to our health and wellbeing, functional and stylish outdoor spaces have become in-demand features for new home buyers. An outdoor kitchen and dining space that showcases the property's ability to entertain friends and family outdoors can add significant value to a home.

Great space to socialise and entertain

Entertaining outdoors means easier clean-up and less worry about drink or food stains. The open space nature of most outdoor kitchens also means that the host does not need to be hidden away from the guests when they are preparing food.

Save on utility bills

During summer, cooking can cause excess heat to build up in the house, leading to an increase in air conditioner use. By cooking outdoors, any heat and odours generated by cooking dissipate into the open air. In the winter, the larger window openings and doors you install to extend your kitchen or dining space outdoors are good for maximising passive solar heating in the home.

Stress-relieving and wellness benefits

Studies have shown that individuals who spend more time in natural spaces are less likely to suffer from anxiety or depression.¹ Spending time in nature can also lead to increased life satisfaction, happiness and mindfulness.² While it is not possible to take nature excursions at a moment's notice, an outdoor kitchen or dining space is a good alternative as it allows people to spend more time outdoors and breathe fresh air from the comfort of their own home.

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PLANNING AN OUTDOOR EXTENSION FOR YOUR INDOOR KITCHEN

Location and size

One of the first questions to answer when you decide to add an outdoor kitchen and dining space to your home is: where do you want to put it? Building an outdoor kitchen can be expensive. One way to keep costs down is to build the outdoor kitchen as close to the interior kitchen as possible to provide easy access to existing water, electricity and gas lines.

The amount of space you need for your outdoor kitchen and dining space will depend on how you want to use the space. Will it be used for outdoor dining exclusively, or do you want to be able to cook and entertain at the same time? Are you planning on catering to large groups of family and friends, or do you want a smaller, more intimate setting? Will it be used more for weekend entertaining or weekday dinners?

Utilities

An outdoor kitchen will need to be connected to a supply of electricity, running water and potentially gas, depending on your choice of appliances. Plumbers will be required to install the relevant water and waste connections to the correct location based on the kitchen layout. If you plan to have an electric barbecue, fridge or wired lighting, you will need an electrician to ensure the electrical power supply and outdoor-rated sockets are connected to the correct locations.

It is advisable to have gas appliances checked by a qualified person and always use a licensed gasfitter to install, repair, service or remove gas appliances.

Layout

A good layout ensures a smooth working flow between your indoor kitchen, outdoor kitchen and serving area. When adding cooking appliances, the kitchen work triangle and traditional layouts such as L-shaped or linear arrangements are good guides to follow when arranging workstations and cooking appliances. To avoid running back and forth when entertaining guests, have the dining area close to the kitchen with ample storage space for tongs, plates, serving platters and napkins nearby.

For ease of use and safety, ensure all preparation, cooking and storage spaces are at accessible heights, floors are level and there is sufficient circulation space to avoid slips, trips and falls.

Outdoor furniture

There are a wide range of outdoor dining table and chairs, patio sets, lounge suites or breakfast bar stools available for selection. Choose the right size and configuration for the space available to avoid feeling cramped. Ensure any outdoor furniture can withstand the outdoor elements, and are easy to clean and maintain for maximum longevity.

Cooking appliances

The barbecue is the quintessential Australian outdoor cooking appliance, so it is likely to take centre stage in most outdoor kitchens. There are a range of barbecue options on the market, catering to a variety of cooking styles, fuel types and capacity needs. The size of the barbecue will depend on the available space in your outdoor kitchen, who you are feeding (e.g. just your housemate, or a full family), and whether you want it fixed or portable.

The main types of barbecue fuel types are gas, electric and charcoal. A large burner gas barbecue is the most convenient option for quick cooking. You may consider a charcoal barbecue or smoker as a complementary cooking option for slower-cooked meals. Look for special features such as grill and hotplate combinations, side burners, hood and control options, depending on the types of food you will most likely be cooking. A barbecue cover is a good idea to add protection from Australia's harsh weather when it is not in use.

Gas barbecues require sufficient ventilation to ensure there is sufficient air for combustion and to dilute the products of combustion to safe levels.³ When gas barbecues are used in an outdoor area, there is usually enough ventilation for safe combustion. Some outdoor kitchens are still classified as 'indoor areas' if they do not provide sufficient natural ventilation due to the design of the enclosure, in which case the use of an outdoor

gas barbecue is not recommended. One of the main reasons for this is that outdoor gas barbecues are not required to be tested to the same Australian Standards for combustion emissions and temperature hazards as indoor gas appliances. Note that regulations around the use of gas appliances vary from state to state.

Storage and accessories

Plan for storage and organisational necessities to be within easy reach. Cabinets or a moveable cart are good options to store grilling tools, utensils, plates, serving pieces and cleaning tools. Leading barbecue brands offer a range of cooking accessories such as pizza stones, tongs, and rotisserie baskets for avid outdoor chefs.

Outdoor fridges keep beverages cold and within arm's reach. It is very important that you assign space for an outdoor fridge out of direct sunlight. Placing a fridge in a sunlit area can lead to excess power consumption and increased workload on the unit, thus reducing its performance and longevity.

Lighting

Good lighting is necessary for outdoor spaces to feel inviting, safe and secure. You will want to plot your lighting out carefully to get the right amount of lighting for different uses. Areas for preparing and cooking food need to be well lit. Spaces that are reserved for relaxation and socialising may not need the same level of lighting as you would have indoors. In fact, doing so may be detrimental to the overall ambience of those spaces.

Construction materials

Outdoor kitchen surfaces must be rugged and sturdy enough to withstand the elements, particularly considering Australia's harsh climate. All benchtop surfaces, appliances and furniture should be graded for exterior use.

Materials such as stainless steel, stone, slate and tile have been proven to be durable for exterior use. The choice of such materials may come down to how they complement the surrounding environment. Stainless steel, for example, looks sleek and sophisticated, and complements contemporary landscaping. Wooden cabinetry can blend in with garden surroundings. Cement, brick and stone can match architectural elements of the home, while also being strong, durable and resistant to heat.



CREATING A SEAMLESS TRANSITION FROM INDOORS TO OUTDOORS

When you are planning an outdoor kitchen or dining space, it is important to consider the transition from indoors to outdoors. Achieving a seamless transition between these two environments is key to not only creating an illusion of more space in your home, but also ensuring your home remains visually consistent and aesthetically appealing.

Homeowners are relying on windows, doors and other clever design features to blur the line between indoor and outdoor areas. Different types of roof structures are used to achieve this effect. For example, adjustable roofs and windows that open and close to provide natural light and ventilation can add an outdoor element to the inside. You may consider glass roofing to bring sky views into the home, or extending a roof structure off the home over a patio or gazebo area to create a usable outdoor space that is protected from the elements.

Expansive window and door openings allow people to roam freely between indoor and outdoor spaces. Some door designs can functionally act as a wall when closed, then pushed aside to remove the physical barrier between the inside and outside environments. If doors are not preferred, large window openings with suitable glazing can provide the benefit of light and view.

The outdoor kitchen and dining space should add to the home's overall aesthetic, not detract from it. You can carry the same aesthetic from inside the home to the outdoor space through analogous furniture, colour schemes and decorative features. Incorporating finishes you would normally associate with the indoors in your outdoor space, and vice versa, will further blur the boundaries between both areas.

BEEFEATER BBQS

Life tastes better outdoors

BeefEater BBQs began trading in 1985 and quickly established itself as an iconic Australian brand, synonymous for top quality barbecues and barbecue products.

Australia's first BeefEater BBQ range was the three, four and five burner flat top built Deluxe Series. A tribute to the longevity of the product, BeefEater customers are still coming in looking for spare parts some twenty years later. Establishing the building blocks for its reputation, BeefEater is synonymous with barbecues that thrive in a hostile cooking environment, look great and flexibly deliver consistently high heat to cook the perfect meal under any conditions.

Rated Highly Commended for the Readers Digest Most Trusted Brands Awards in this category in 2022, BeefEater BBQs offer three main types depending on your outdoor space – Portable, Free Standing and Built In – as well as a wide selection of barbecue accessories and outdoor fridges for your entertaining needs. Each BBQ comes with their own features to enhance the outdoor entertaining experience, and all offer durability and flexibility to withstand the harsh Australian climate. A range of barbecue covers have been designed to complement each model to add further weather protection.

From durable stainless steel finishes to their sleek amber vitreous enamel hoods, BeefEater BBQs are built to last. As a much-trusted brand, BeefEater BBQs are at the forefront of grilling innovation, with features such as Quartz Titanium Ignition, Rust Free materials, Anti Flare, Flame Failure safety, and Infra-Red burners.

Made from high quality materials, BeefEater BBQs provide lifelong service – the key reason why customers cherish their BeefEater BBQ for many years rather than sending it to landfill. Choosing a beautifully crafted and durable product means you are not only helping the environment today, but also in the long term, by minimising waste and pollution.

As the boundary between the barbecue and the kitchen continues to blur, BeefEater BBQs continues its longstanding tradition of delivering the highest quality Australian barbecues and barbecue products.

Visit beefeaterbbq.com to find out more.





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- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Ibid.

All information provided correct as of June 2022

