



# Design Evolution

Key considerations for creating a multifunctional kitchen space

## INTRODUCTION

Back rooms of the house a century ago, kitchens are now the centre of attention in the modern home. Open-concept living spaces have transformed the area into a multipurpose room as much as a place for cooking as it is for dining, entertaining, relaxing and, more recently, even as a space for a makeshift work desk or study area.

Kitchens over the past century have reflected the evolution of our habits and lifestyle thanks to ongoing appliance innovation and style changes. They have evolved from bare workstations that catered to a single user to vibrant mod spaces to the modern-day trend of sleek, airy rooms that blend function and aesthetics.

Given today's fast-paced lifestyles, modern kitchen users have much more complex needs. Kitchen layouts and appliances must be adaptable and support a range of activities while still delivering on its core functions: the storing, cooking and serving of food.

In this whitepaper, we take a close look at the modern multifunctional kitchen, and the key design considerations that go into creating a functional space that meets the needs of today's kitchen users.









## WHAT IS A MULTIFUNCTIONAL KITCHEN SPACE?

A multifunctional kitchen is used for more than preparing and serving food. It may be used as a home office during the day and a cooking space in the evening. Maybe it serves as a breakfast bar in the mornings or a place for homework after the kids get home from school.

Traditional kitchens consist of a food preparation zone, a cooking zone, serving zone and cleaning zone. The expansion of the modern kitchen means the space must accommodate a wider range of activities. For example, a space for family and friends to congregate that is in close proximity to the cooking zone but safely out of harm's way. In open-plan homes, the dining area will likely be

placed close to the kitchen, and sometimes integrated within the kitchen itself. With today's focus on health and wellbeing, spaces for relaxation and privacy are also becoming a necessity. Similarly, the rise of remote working has seen home office space creeping into the kitchen area.

Depending on the needs and demands of the homeowner and end users, a multifunctional kitchen can take on any shape or size. The allocation of zones within the kitchen will depend on these factors. It is important to bear all of its many functions in mind when planning a new kitchen to make sure it works on every level.

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## LAYOUT CONSIDERATIONS: BEYOND THE WORK TRIANGLE

The triangular layout of the refrigerator, sink, and cooktop was the foundation of traditional kitchen design. When kitchens were confined to single-person, compartmentalised rooms, it was an efficient way of setting out work spaces, appliances and storage areas. But as the kitchen has evolved into the centre of open-plan homes, the kitchen triangle concept has become less and less useful.

As they serve multiple functions and are constantly on display, modern kitchens require a flexible, useful, and well-designed layout, which is why zone configuration should be considered. Zones are distinct work areas within a kitchen layout that are designated for specific tasks and activities. As noted, the primary zones are those for preparing food, cooking, serving and washing up, but depending on your space and preferences, further zones can be set up including dining, entertaining and quiet work areas.

Appliances, utensils and ingredients are distributed across the defined zones for convenience. Typically, your sink, dishwasher, and washing machine are located in the wash zone. The oven, cooktop and any other appliances used in the cooking process are typically found in the cooking zone. The preparation area should have plenty of work surfaces for performing regular kitchen tasks like chopping, peeling, mixing and more.

The best layouts result in an efficient flow of zones according to order of use. The typical kitchen workflow starts at fridge then to the preparation zone, moves to the cooking zone, then to the serving and dining zones, and finally ends at the cleaning zone after which all serving dishes and utensils are stored away. Zone overlapping typically happens when there is limited space, but is acceptable if there is enough room for both activities. Note that your kitchen layout does not have to follow the exact workflow set out above, but in general, the format will follow a similar concept.



# DESIGNING A MULTIFUNCTIONAL KITCHEN: WHAT TO CONSIDER

## Consider a kitchen island

For enthusiastic home cooks who enjoy entertaining, a freestanding kitchen island is a necessity. With its roomy counters and concealed chopping boards, it is the answer to all of your food preparation needs. You could use one side of the island for cooking and the other for eating. When not being used for cooking or eating, they can also be used as a temporary work space.

The multipurpose kitchen can be busy and noisy, making it challenging to create an atmosphere for relaxation and unwinding. Kitchen islands can serve as a separation point between the area used for eating and socialising and the area used for preparing food, creating a natural boundary between both spaces.

## Make hosting easy

When designing a multifunctional kitchen, you should ensure your appliances are up to the job of catering for large numbers and being used more frequently. While guests are present, the layout should allow you to move quickly and freely between your work zones while still providing seating areas and room to regularly serve food and beverages. It is a good idea to have a second sink for preparing drinks, or even a butler's pantry, which can serve the dual purpose of making entertaining easier by having a separate preparation area and a place to clear dishes.

## Maximising surface area

Ample surface area for other activities, such as kids doing homework or for a temporary home office, is a must. However, this does not necessarily mean increasing the actual physical footprint of the kitchen. Increasing the

amount of work surfaces in the kitchen can simply mean designing longer length counters, or adding compact benchtops in unconventional areas. Similarly, pull-out or folding tables are popular space-saving solutions.

## Use of materials, colours and textures

A well-designed multifunctional kitchen will get a lot of use, which inevitably leads to wear and tear. When selecting finishes and materials for your kitchen, prioritise durability and cleanability. Each material has its advantages and disadvantages, but in general you will want surfaces to be heat, scratch, impact and moisture resistant and easy to clean. Flat, smooth surfaces, such as granite, marble, porcelain, glass and steel are advantageous as they can quickly be wiped down. Note, however, that some materials, especially natural stone, are more porous than others, which means they will be prone to staining.

Your choice of materials and finishes should be consistent with the colour scheme of your home interior. Choosing complementary colours and materials will help the space have a uniform appearance and avoid looking cluttered.

## You can never have too much storage

In a multifunctional kitchen space, you want to maximise storage and reduce clutter. Make use of vertical space with cupboards that go up to the ceiling, or ceiling-mounted shelving. You can create additional storage space with deep drawers equipped with sturdy sliding mechanisms that allow you to store heavy items such as pots and pans. Specialty hardware such as pull-out racks, corner drawers, hanging rails and door fixings are also useful for optimising space usage.







## Accessibility

Providing an adaptive space that can be used by a wide range of users is essential. When designing your kitchen, ensure that work surfaces and storage are at suitable heights and appliances, doors and cabinetry can be operated by users of varying levels of strength and dexterity. The kitchen layout should provide easy access to the kitchen's critical functions, especially the fridge, sinks, taps and waste bins.

## Sustainability

When selecting appliances, opt for products that use less energy and water. In addition to performance and functionality, look for products with a high energy and water rating, both of which indicate whether a product is more or less efficient than other products in its category.

The choices when considering a sustainable kitchen design do not end with selecting efficient products. It is important to consider the environmental, social and economic impact of your chosen products and materials over their lifecycle, from production to final disposal. You should also consider what your chosen supplier and/or manufacturer is doing about reducing waste, encouraging a circular economy and reducing emissions across their entire operation.

The simplest way to reduce waste is to make conscious decisions to scale and use space more effectively. A kitchen tailored perfectly to the needs of its users, and nothing more, encourages efficient design and less wasted products and materials. In this regard, smaller is often better, with leading manufacturers offering a variety of compact appliances that offer maximum functionality with smaller space and energy footprint.

## APPLIANCES FOR THE MULTIFUNCTIONAL KITCHEN

### by Electrolux

A thoughtfully designed, multifunctional layout makes living easier, but the correct appliances are crucial to making the space work. Choosing cooking equipment with dual functions is a great way to save counter space. Electrolux's 90cm UltimateTaste 900 Multifunction Pyrolytic oven (EVEP916DSE) is a combined oven with air fryer that is ideal for making healthy meals for the entire family. 'Set and forget' cooking, thanks to its programmable timer and food probe, makes this oven ideal for fast-paced lifestyles, while the unit's sleek, slimline look fits seamlessly into modern interiors.

Induction cooktops are easy to clean, quick and many modern designs are easy to integrate into contemporary aesthetics. The 90cm UltimateTaste 900 hybrid gas and induction cooktop (EHH957BE) is a four-zone hybrid

induction with 24MJ/h DualFlame gas wok burner, SenseFry, Bridge zone, PowerBoost and Hob2Hood capability, which is perfect for those preparing many dishes at the same time or cooking for a dinner party. For added convenience, invest in a plate warmer to keep dinner warm while your kids are running around, and an integrated dishwasher, such as Electrolux's 60cm fully-integrated dishwasher (ESL51600ZO) with MaxiFlex, SatelliteClean and ExtraPower.

Perfect for those who love to entertain, the 609L UltimateTaste 900 french door refrigerator (EQE6870BA) offers a spacious interior that is large enough to fit even the biggest party platters. Multiple drawers and compartments, and doors that open in both directions, make organising fresh food easy, and keeps everything within easy reach.

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## ABOUT ELECTROLUX

Electrolux is a leading global appliance company that has shaped living for the better for more than 100 years. Reinventing taste, care and wellbeing experiences for millions of people, Electrolux is always striving to be at the forefront of technology and sustainability in society through their solutions and operations. Under their family of brands, including Electrolux, AEG and Westinghouse, they sell approximately 60 million household products in approximately 120 markets every year.

All information provided correct as of September 2022