

Get in the ZONE

Careful planning and organisation will result in a super-efficient kitchen experience, writes **Guinevere Davies**



Practicality has always been central to kitchen design, but that doesn't mean it can't be improved on. As an ever-evolving space in the modern home, the kitchen needs to be able to adapt accordingly, allowing us to cook and socialise simultaneously without breaking a sweat.

WORKING SMARTER

We have technology to thank for turning our kitchens into the hubs of convenience we know and love today, says Lusso's Laura Hayward. "Kitchens are getting smarter and the rise in technology in kitchen design is all about convenience and connectivity. >



LUSO



nuuma

“Devices are used for everything from finding recipes to connecting appliances to users via mobile apps. Food can be cooked faster, dishes washed with more speed, foodstuffs preserved more effectively.”

The design team at nuuma adds: “We have seen the kitchen space become much simpler over the years but at the same time more adaptable to what is needed from this essential space. Removing the clutter and providing a space that is organised, while at the same time a pleasure to work in, is the driving force now.”

According to blu_line’s Philip Richards, “We believe that the kitchen space needs to act as the architectural anchor in the home, meaning it can adapt to the various demands made on it. We focus on designs that are wrought with interest and intrigue, ensuring a space that is highly functional while also being dramatic in nature. Essentially, we are always managing the tension between form and function.”

THE LOGIC OF LAYOUT

For FABRI’s Erin Braithwaite, kitchen convenience comes down to layout. “Kitchen spaces need to be designed to enable quick access to storage facilities while offering proximity to the main cooking appliances. The idea is to always minimise motion around the kitchen area by ensuring that working countertops, prep bowls and cooking areas are all positioned in a way that makes them more intuitive to use.”

Valcucine’s Mathilda Venter says, “First consider the basic design layout to optimally use the space at hand. Then start with placing out separate units and incorporate the appliances once the layout is agreed on. I would often consider the cook top first, as this is sometimes a consideration for being able to communicate with your guests while cooking, and then position the prep bowl next.”

If you're still a bit unsure of where to start with your layout, Slavin's Daniel Slavin recommends allowing the surrounding architecture to act as your guide. "More often than not, the bones of the kitchen dictate where certain items will work best. For example, a wall with a window makes a good spot for a prep bowl or sink.

"Once the core items have a general spot you can start planning your counter space and storage needs. The cabinetry should be filling the gaps between the cooking appliances and water points and making the most of the space dictated by the architecture of the house."

SHAPE-SHIFTING DESIGN

Previously the secret to kitchen efficiency, the traditional "work triangle" has had to evolve for modern living. "The 'work triangle', an imaginary line drawn from the cooking to washing up and refrigeration stations, is a concept that was useful in the past for those who used the kitchen in a traditional way. But now that the kitchen area is more a living space in addition to a place for cooking, we prefer to think of it more as a polygon," says EuroCasa's Melanie Stein.

EasyLife Kitchens franchisee Jean-Pierre van Hell is a big proponent of Blum's concept of Dynamic Space. "We prefer to look at the kitchen in terms of five zones rather a 'work triangle', and it consists of the cooking, cleaning, preparation, consumables and the non-consumables zones.

"I believe one of the most important zones to consider in developing a super-efficient kitchen is the preparation zone. The prep zone is where most of the work is done when cooking meals, so you would want this area to be as efficient as possible." >





Lusso



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FABRI

Lusso's Hayward explains, "The idea behind these zones is to store everything in your kitchen as near as possible to its corresponding station. Your dishwasher and sink is your cleaning zone, so naturally your everyday dishes should be stored in close vicinity to that zone. By recognising your stations and organising accordingly you'll be set for maximum efficiency in your kitchen."

PREP-ZONE FOCUS

When it comes down to it, the cooking prep zone is where most attention to detail needs to be paid. Ideally, your prep zone should be situated between your food-storage and cleaning-up zones.

"A well-planned prep zone should have at least 900mm of clear work space. All utensils and paraphernalia that you would use during food preparation should be kept close at hand, including cutting boards, mixing bowls and so forth," says Blum's Wesley Wild.

"For an optimal layout, install a small prep bowl and waste solution close to this area. If your space and design allows it, the addition of a spice/bottle drawer would be the 'bridge' between the cooking and prep areas."

According to Exotic Kitchens' Jocelyn Jones, "Your counter space should not be too cramped. We would recommend making the countertop from composite stone as there is now an amazing range of designs and colours providing the effect of real marble or natural stone, but with the added benefits of being non-porous and antibacterial, providing ease of mind with regards to food preparation." 🏠

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