



FREE HOMEOWNER PLANNING GUIDE

Kitchen Remodeling Guide

A clear route from daily routines and appliance choices to coordinated cabinets, systems, surfaces, and final fit.

USE THIS FOR

Better questions, clearer scope and more useful early conversations.

KEEP IN MIND

Every property, permit path and existing condition requires project-specific verification.

For homeowners planning a cabinet-focused update, a full replacement within the existing layout, or a kitchen reconfiguration involving walls, openings, appliances, and adjacent rooms.



START WITH PURPOSE

Good planning makes the unknowns visible.

How to use this guide

A kitchen is a network of clearances, storage, water, power, ventilation, light, surfaces, and movement. The visible palette matters, but the layout and technical decisions must work first. Appliance specifications and cabinet drawings need to agree before rough plumbing, electrical, ventilation, counters, and panels are committed. Use this guide to prepare for a useful conversation, not to diagnose the house from a distance. Write down assumptions as assumptions. When new information changes the plan, ask for the scope, cost, and schedule effect in writing before work continues whenever practical.

Six principles to carry through the project

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| 01 Define the result before the products. A strong brief describes what daily life should improve, what must remain, and which compromises are acceptable. | 02 Compare scopes, not just totals. Two proposals can look similar while assigning demolition, permits, protection, selections, restoration, and unknowns very differently. |
| 03 Make decisions in dependency order. Layout and performance choices come before finishes; products that affect rough-in or fabrication must be known before those steps are released. | 04 Treat unknowns honestly. Visible conditions, reasonable expectations, and concealed possibilities are different categories. Investigation can reduce uncertainty, but some conditions remain unknowable until opening. |
| 05 Protect quality beneath the finish. Structure, water control, fire and life safety, utility work, ventilation, and manufacturer requirements should not be traded away for a cosmetic upgrade. | 06 Keep one current record. Consolidated decisions, drawings, selections, questions, approvals, and changes help the homeowner and every trade work from the same information. |

Planning boundary: This document supports early discussion and decision-making. It is not a site assessment, permit decision, engineering review, estimate, contract, or substitute for manufacturer instructions.

THE PROJECT PATH

Decisions should create useful outputs.

01 Routine and storage study

Observe cooking, cleanup, groceries, coffee, recycling, homework, pet feeding, and entertaining. Inventory cookware, pantry goods, small appliances, and items that need easier reach.

HOMEOWNER DECISION

Rank workflow problems and identify must-keep appliances or furnishings.

EXPECTED OUTPUT

A functional brief, storage inventory, and list of layout priorities.

02 Existing conditions and measurement

Document walls, openings, floor levels, ceiling, utilities, ventilation route, electrical capacity, plumbing, adjacent finishes, and possible structural changes.

HOMEOWNER DECISION

Decide whether deeper investigation or engineering is needed for the desired layout.

EXPECTED OUTPUT

Measured base plan, condition notes, and technical questions.

03 Layout and appliance coordination

Test work zones, aisles, doors, seating, appliance swings, landing areas, fillers, panels, corners, sink and dishwasher relationship, and hood route.

HOMEOWNER DECISION

Select the layout and actual appliance models or dependable specifications.

EXPECTED OUTPUT

Approved plan, appliance schedule, cabinet concept, and systems coordination notes.

04 Cabinet and finish development

Resolve cabinet construction, interiors, hardware, counters, backsplash, flooring, lighting, plumbing fixtures, paint, and trim. Review samples in the home when practical.

HOMEOWNER DECISION

Approve storage features, material performance, edge and grout details, and owner-supplied items.

EXPECTED OUTPUT

Cabinet drawings, finish schedule, and documented selection status.

THE PROJECT PATH

Decisions should create useful outputs.

05 Scope, pricing, and preconstruction

Define protection, disconnects, demolition, structure, rough trades, permits, cabinetry, fabrication, finishes, appliance reset, and temporary-kitchen needs.

HOMEOWNER DECISION

Approve scope boundaries, allowances, exclusions, and selection deadlines.

EXPECTED OUTPUT

Construction proposal, permit plan, procurement log, and baseline schedule.

06 Build and critical measurements

Protect the home; complete demolition, framing, rough systems, inspections, drywall, flooring as sequenced, cabinet setting, field templating, counters, tile, trim, and paint.

HOMEOWNER DECISION

Review discoveries and avoid changing appliance or cabinet choices after dependent work is released.

EXPECTED OUTPUT

Inspected rough work, level and aligned cabinetry, fabricated surfaces, and completed finishes.

07 Commissioning and handoff

Test appliances, plumbing, disposal, lighting, outlets, hood, drawers, doors, hardware, and caulk; review care for surfaces and filters.

HOMEOWNER DECISION

Confirm punch items and learn operating and maintenance needs.

EXPECTED OUTPUT

Working kitchen, completed punch list, manuals, warranty information, and finish references.

Before construction is released

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| ☐ Current drawings and written scope agree | ☐ Permit, inspection, and consultant paths are identified |
| ☐ Approval roles and communication channel are clear | ☐ Long-lead status and decision dates are visible |
| ☐ Critical selections and owner-supplied items are documented | ☐ Site logistics, protection, and change approval are understood |

SCOPE, COST AND TIME

Compare what is included—not just the total.

Existing and demolition

- ☐ Access and dust protection, temporary kitchen, appliance disconnect and protection
- ☐ Cabinets, counters, backsplash, flooring, drywall, soffits, and defined removal limits
- ☐ Structure, walls, openings, floor or ceiling repair, haul-away, and adjacent restoration

Layout and trades

- ☐ Cabinet sequence, fillers, panels, island, seating, clearances, storage, and appliance fit
- ☐ Plumbing, sink, dishwasher, refrigerator, electrical circuits, lighting, controls, and ventilation
- ☐ Gas or HVAC impacts where applicable, permits, inspections, and structural engineering

Finishes and closeout

- ☐ Cabinets, hardware, counters, backsplash, flooring, drywall, paint, trim, and sealants
- ☐ Appliance delivery, installation responsibility, protection, and final connections
- ☐ Testing, cleaning, manuals, spare finish material, and care instructions

What commonly moves budget or schedule

Layout change

Relocating walls, sink, range, hood, refrigerator, or island affects several trades and finish areas.

Cabinetry

Construction method, customization, interiors, panels, trim, finish, and lead time often shape both cost and schedule.

Appliances

Model dimensions, power, fuel, ventilation, water, panels, and delivery timing drive cabinet and rough-in decisions.

Counter and backsplash fabrication

Material, edge, seams, support, slab layout, field templates, and installation sequence create dependencies.

Electrical and ventilation

Added loads, panel capacity, dedicated circuits, lighting layers, and a practical exhaust route can expand scope.

Flooring continuity

Extending or patching flooring into adjacent rooms may require broader removal, refinishing, or transitions.

Existing walls and floors

Out-of-level or out-of-square conditions become important when long cabinet and counter runs are installed.

Selection timing

Cabinet release, appliance specifications, sink, faucet, hardware, tile, and lighting must be settled in the right order.

BEFORE WORK BEGINS

Prepare the household and the decision path.

Homeowner preparation

- ☐ Choose one or two household decision-makers and agree on how approvals will be given.
- ☐ Create a short priority list: must solve, would like, and can wait. Use it when scope or budget choices compete.
- ☐ Gather surveys, plans, past permits, product records, repair history, and any photos of earlier work.
- ☐ Remove valuables and fragile items; discuss furniture, artwork, window coverings, and stored belongings before mobilization.
- ☐ Plan for children, pets, parking, deliveries, work hours, bathroom access, and any needed temporary kitchen or living setup.
- ☐ Tell the team about alarms, gates, neighbors, HOA rules, home-office hours, allergies, or access restrictions.
- ☐ Keep project decisions in the agreed system rather than splitting them across texts, calls, and side conversations.
- ☐ Expect some disruption. Decide in advance when you need notice for noisy work or utility shutoffs.
- ☐ Set up a safe temporary kitchen with only approved appliances and a realistic dishwashing plan.
- ☐ Make an appliance and storage inventory before approving cabinetry; do not assume everything will fit later.

Questions worth asking

- 01** Who will be the day-to-day contact, and how often will we receive progress updates?
- 02** What is included, excluded, allowed for, owner-supplied, or still awaiting a decision?
- 03** Which drawings, engineering, permits, inspections, or specialist reviews are likely to be required?
- 04** How will concealed conditions be documented, priced, approved, and scheduled before added work begins?
- 05** Which selections have long lead times, and what are the decision deadlines?
- 06** How will occupied areas, pets, children, furnishings, landscaping, and daily access be protected?
- 07** How are schedule changes communicated, and what owner decisions could affect the critical path?
- 08** What quality checks occur before framing, waterproofing, wiring, plumbing, or other concealed work is covered?
- 09** Who coordinates trade partners and confirms that their work is ready for the next trade?
- 10** What permits, manuals, warranties, finish records, and maintenance guidance will be provided at handoff?
- 11** Who checks appliance specifications against cabinet drawings and utility rough-ins?
- 12** When are field measurements taken for cabinets, counters, glass, or other fabricated pieces?

PAUSE, VERIFY AND FINISH WELL

Quality includes what happens before and after the visible work.

Red flags and unresolved unknowns

- ☐ A price presented as final before the existing conditions, design, selections, and scope boundaries are understood.
- ☐ A proposal that omits protection, demolition disposal, permits, supervision, finish restoration, or final cleanup.
- ☐ Pressure to start demolition while drawings, key selections, or responsibility for open items remain unclear.
- ☐ Verbal changes with no written description of added scope, price, and schedule effect.
- ☐ No clear plan for dust, noise, temporary utility interruptions, weather exposure, or safe homeowner access.
- ☐ Assurances that hidden areas are fine without investigation, documentation, or an appropriate contingency plan.
- ☐ Products chosen for appearance without checking substrate, exposure, maintenance, installation, or warranty requirements.
- ☐ No defined inspection hold points before important concealed work is covered.
- ☐ Cabinets ordered from an unverified plan or before appliance specifications and fillers are coordinated.
- ☐ A recirculating or exterior-vented hood assumed without discussing performance, route, makeup air questions, and current requirements.

Closeout and handoff

- ☐ Walk every work area in good light and record remaining items in one shared punch list.
- ☐ Confirm that required final inspections and permit signoffs are complete or that any open item is clearly assigned.
- ☐ Operate doors, drawers, windows, fixtures, lights, fans, controls, appliances, and safety devices included in the work.
- ☐ Review cleaning, curing, ventilation, seasonal adjustment, and maintenance instructions before normal use.
- ☐ Collect approved plans, permits, inspection records, manuals, warranties, finish schedules, paint colors, and spare materials.
- ☐ Photograph shutoffs, access panels, concealed blocking, and key rough-in locations when documentation is available.
- ☐ Confirm the final change-order record, owner-supplied item status, and any remaining delivery or service appointment.
- ☐ Check that debris, temporary protection, keys, access codes, and contractor-owned materials have been addressed.
- ☐ Understand who to contact for a question, warranty concern, or urgent issue after completion.
- ☐ Store the closeout package with the home's permanent records for maintenance and future resale.

Professional verification: Kitchen work can involve structure, electrical service, plumbing, gas, ventilation, fire safety, and permits. Product specifications, manufacturer instructions, approved drawings, licensed-trade requirements, and local authority decisions control the work. Have suspect hazardous materials evaluated before disturbance.

Start with an honest conversation.

Bring the way you cook—not just inspiration images—to the first conversation. Ideal Construction & Renovation can help connect layout, cabinetry, appliances, systems, and finishes into one buildable kitchen plan.