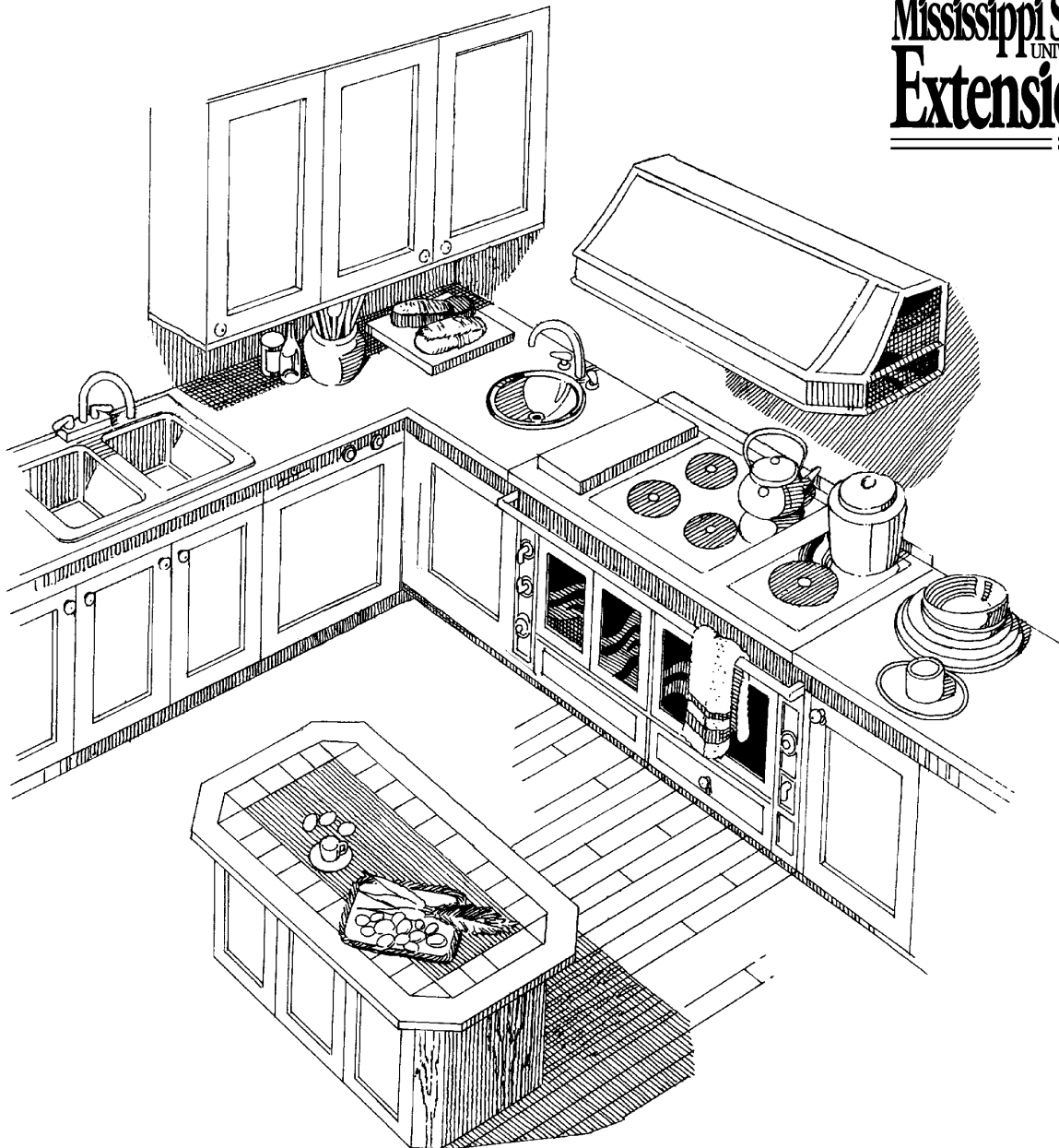


Planning Your Kitchen

Mississippi State
UNIVERSITY
Extension
SERVICE



The kitchen is the most popular area for family and friends to visit and share treasured moments. It is also the area where much work goes on to prepare meals and snacks. It is, therefore, important that you plan for efficient floor space and for the activities that will take place in your kitchen. This publication will help you look at the various work centers within the kitchen and determine how best to plan your layout.

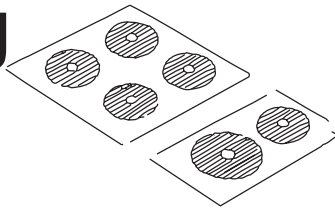
Preparation Center



Storage is usually located in this area for canned and dry goods, mixing bowls, casserole dishes, cookbooks, and small appliances.

- Plan for 36 to 42 inches of uninterrupted counter space close to the sink.
- Allow at least 15 inches of counter space next to the handle side of the refrigerator, or put a 15-inch landing area no more than 48 inches away from the refrigerator.
- The handle side of the refrigerator should open into the workspace. The door should not open into a doorway of the room.

Cooking Center

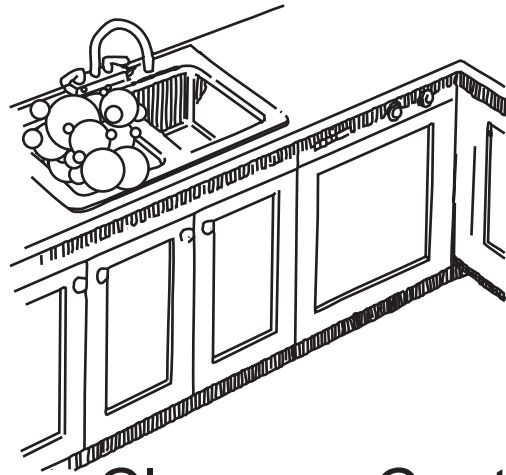


The cooking center includes the cooktop, range, and microwave oven. Storage for pots and pans, utensils, potholders, trivets, spices, and seasonings are located in this area.

- Plan 18-24 inches of counter space on each side of the cooktop.
- Plan 15-18 inches of open counter space near the microwave oven for hot dishes.
- Locate the microwave between 2 inches below the cook's elbow and 10 inches above.
- Do not place a cooking surface below an operative window unless the window is more

than 3 inches behind the cooking unit and 24 inches above it.

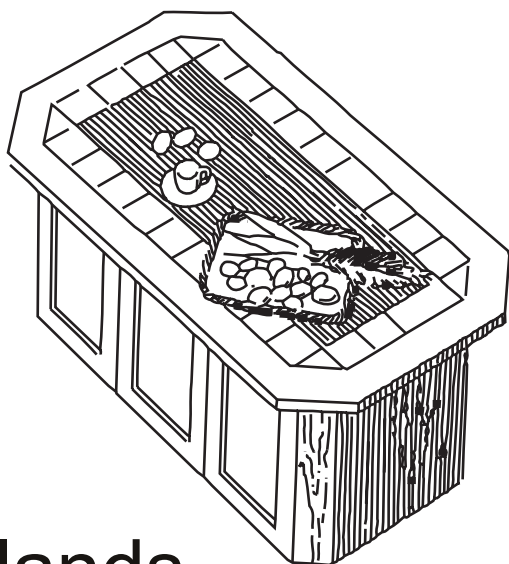
- A wall oven is used only about 15 percent of the time in meal preparation. Therefore, if space is limited, consider placing the oven outside the cooking center.



Clean-up Center

The sink, dishwasher, and garbage disposal are in this center. However, because the sink is also used to support activities in the preparation and cooking centers, it should be placed between the two. Plan storage for everyday glasses, dishes, dishtowels, cleaning products, trash, and recycling receptacles.

- Allow 21 inches of floor space between the dishwasher and adjacent counters, other appliances, and cabinets.
- Plan 30-36 inches of counter space on each side of the sink. If space is limited, plan 24 inches on the dishwasher side and 18 inches on the other side.
- Plan at least 14 inches of space between the center of the sink bowl and a turn of a counter.



Islands

An island is a very popular addition. It can direct traffic out of the work area and provide a point where other activities occur.

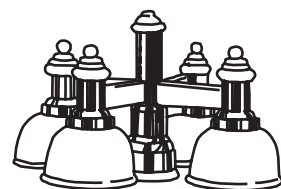
An island will not work in every kitchen, however. If the major work centers are on opposite walls, then the island simply becomes an object you must walk around. But if you place the clean-up center or cooktop on the island, then it will probably be an addition you will enjoy.

Your kitchen must be a minimum of 13 feet wide, or you will discover that an island will crowd you too much. L-shape kitchens or U-shape work areas with more than 10 feet between the "U" legs provide the best areas for islands.

- The minimum size for an island is 3 x 5 feet.
- If planning an eating area on the island, plan for 3 x 6 feet.
- Each seated diner needs space 24 inches wide x 12 inches deep.
- Knee space clearance:
 - 30-inch high table needs 18 inches.
 - 36-inch high counter needs 15 inches.
 - 42-inch high counter needs 12 inches.
- If you include a cook center, allow a mini-

mum of 12 inches on each side of the cooktop.

- Allow a 42- to 48-inch clearance around the island.
- You can gain additional workspace with the use of a sturdy butcher block, antique storage bins, or other furniture items.
- Install electrical outlets in the island for small appliances.

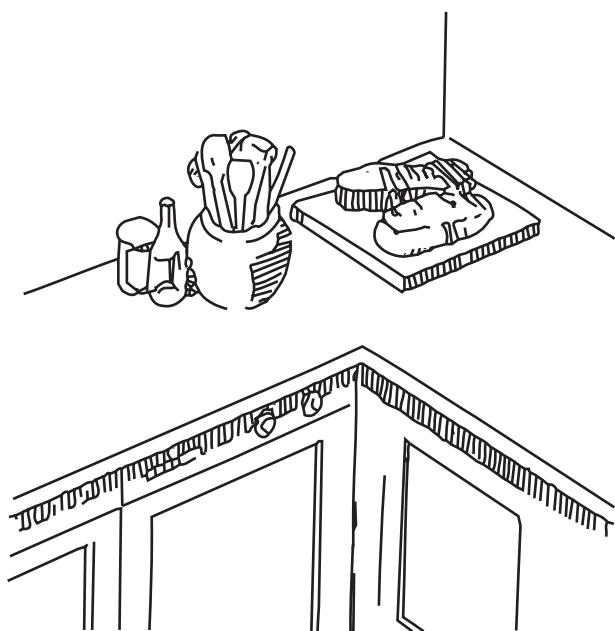


Lighting

Overhead lights provide the general lighting that you need in the kitchen. Recessed fixtures are probably among the more popular choices because they are small and can be fairly inconspicuous when equipped with white interior and exterior trim. Square fluorescent lights are also popular because they are energy efficient and don't cast many shadows or generate much heat. Track and suspended fixtures can also be used.

Fluorescent ceiling fixtures, down lights, and hanging lights such as single-arm or multi-arm lights are often used over an island, peninsula, or dining area to provide task light.

Place task-lighting fixtures above and in front of the areas that should be illuminated. Sink, stove, and counter space areas require additional light. Under-cabinet lighting in the form of strip fluorescent, halogen puck lights, or tape is also necessary for adequate lighting. Be sure the cabinets hide the fixtures from people seated in the area.



Countertops

Chopping, pounding, heat, moisture, and germs constantly come in contact with your kitchen countertops. Choosing a material that can stand the test and still look good is a challenge, but it is possible. The following comparisons can help you decide on the material that is best for your kitchen:

Laminate - $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch thick polymer bonded to $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch plywood. You can create a custom look with square or rolled edge or edges trimmed with beveled wood or metal inlays. Dark colors and designs will hide seams better than light solid colors.

Advantages: Most popular; inexpensive; low maintenance; variety in colors, patterns, and textures; resists grease, stains, and moisture; cleans up with soap and water.

Disadvantages: Can be cut, burned, scratched, chipped; difficult to repair; life expectancy 5 to 8 years.

Ceramic Tile - 1-inch squares to 6- x 8-inch

rectangles. The larger tiles with narrow grout lines simplify care.

Advantages: Durable; available in a variety of colors, patterns, and sizes; resists heat, stains, and moisture; cleans up with a damp cloth.

Disadvantages: Grout joint susceptible to stains; high-gloss glazed tiles show wear quickly; squared edges chip easily.

Solid-Surfacing Material - $\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick with color running throughout. Versatile molded synthetic surface can be fabricated with integral sinks and back splashes.

Advantages: Durability is greatest selling point; variety of colors and patterns; can be cut or molded to fit any countertop; can be routed, sculpted, inlaid and edged into various designs; nonporous, resists mildew and stain; most cuts, scratches, and stains can be buffed out.

Disadvantages: Dark hues are not recommended for kitchens because they show wear and nicks; hot pans and sharp objects can damage; can't be used as a cutting board.

Solid - Surfacing Veneer - $\frac{1}{8}$ - to $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick sheet adhered to a particle board substrate.

Advantages: Seamless and nonporous; resists stains; nicks and burns can be buffed out; variety of colors and designs available.

Disadvantages: Less durable; less easily renewed than the solid-surfacing material.

Butcher Block - Usually 1 to 1½ inches thick hardwood countertop. Select woods such as red or white oak, hardrock maple, or beech.

Advantages: Ideal cutting surface; renewable with sanding.

Disadvantages: Periodic treatment required such as re-oiling; must be cleaned thoroughly after being used for food preparation; stains easily; must be protected from standing water (Note: A finish that helps wood resist moisture may not be safe for food preparation.)

Stone - Start at a thickness of ¾ inch, but you may need a thicker slab to prevent breaking. Granite and marble are beautiful and durable. Limestone, slate, soapstone, and sandstone have an organic appearance and subtle coloration, but they stain very easily. Installation is costly.

Advantages: Granite is the more popular. It cleans easily, can handle water, hot pans, and sharp knives; resists most stains and can be sealed to protect against all stains; nearly impossible to scratch or chip; very stylish and elegant. Marble is a beautiful stone, but it must be resealed regularly.

Disadvantages: Requires regular waxing and polishing. Marble is susceptible to staining.

Stainless Steel - Presents a clean high-tech look. Specify heavy gauge steel, 16-gauge or better.

Advantages: Exceptionally durable, heat proof, and does not corrode; can be fabricated with integral sinks, drain boards, and

backsplashes; easily cleaned.

Disadvantages: Can scratch and dent; noisy; shows water marks and mineral deposits.

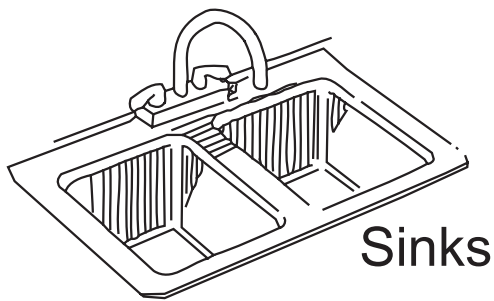
Concrete - Is a relatively new counter choice. Has a slightly rough, organic appearance that can be left natural or tinted.

Advantages: Can be molded with integral sinks and drainboards; a good substitute for stone.

Disadvantages: Requires sealing to prevent staining.

How much counter workspace is needed?

A simple rule to follow is if the kitchen is less than 150 square feet, 11 linear feet are recommended for countertop space. For kitchens more than 150 square feet, 16½ linear feet are recommended.



Clean, wash, scrub, and rinse are activities centered at the kitchen sink. Choosing a sink that looks good and performs all the required duties can be easy if you have a few basic facts. The following comparisons can help you decide which sink is best for your kitchen:

Size

A standard 33-inch double-bowl sink normally has 13-inch-wide basins that are 8 inches deep. A less expensive model may cut the depth to 6 or 7 inches. For filling or washing pots and pans, you may want a 10-inch deep sink. Consider a two-bowl unit with a shallow side and a deep side.

A standard single-bowl sink is 15-24 inches wide and makes a good second sink in most kitchens.

Three-bowl sinks often have a large bowl on each side and a small food-preparation bowl in the center.

Types and Finishes

Stainless Steel

- 22-gauge mirror finish stainless steel will show scratches, dents, and water spots.
- 19-gauge nickel and stainless steel with a brush finish resists denting, water spots, and hides scratches.
- Stainless steel is the least expensive material; very durable; lightweight; easy to install.

Stainless Steel Coated with Enamel

- Inexpensive; easily chipped and stained.

Enameled Cast Iron

- Resists chipping; will look faded after years of use; can be discolored by rust, burns, and stains.

Vitreous China

- Easy to clean; can chip.

Quartz Composite

- Resists scratches; resists stains; looks good with stone countertops.

Solid-Surface

- Easy to clean; durable.

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Research conducted by University of Minnesota in conjunction with National Kitchen and Bath Association.

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