

Kitchen Remodel Planning Checklist

Your Complete Guide from Vision to Completion

PHASE 1: PRE-PLANNING

Before you make a single purchase or meet with a contractor, lay the groundwork for a successful remodel.

Define Your WHY

- What's not working in your current kitchen?
- What do you hope to achieve with this remodel? (Functionality, aesthetics, resale value, etc.)
- Are you remodeling for resale or long-term living?
- What are your top 3 priorities?

Establish Your Budget

- Determine a total project budget
- Allocate your budget into categories (cabinets, countertops, appliances, etc.)
- Set aside 15–20% for unexpected costs
- Get pre-approval for financing, if applicable

Outline Your Timeline

- When would you like to start and complete the project?
- Factor in design, ordering, permits, demo, and installation
- Are there holidays, events, or vacations that may affect the schedule?
- Do you need a temporary kitchen setup?

Research and Hire Professionals

- Gather recommendations for designers, contractors, or design-build firms
- Check reviews and references

- Verify licenses and insurance
- Compare 2–3 bids
- Review and sign a clear, written contract

PHASE 2: DESIGN & PLANNING

Once your goals are set and team is in place, it's time to dive into the fun (and important) design details.

Layout and Floor Plan

- Keep or modify the existing layout?
- Identify work zones: Prep, Cook, Clean, Store, Eat
- Assess plumbing/electrical limitations
- Determine island or peninsula placement
- Confirm appliance placement for efficiency

Materials & Finishes

- Cabinets (style, color, material, hardware)
- Countertops (material, thickness, edge profile)
- Backsplash (tile size, pattern, grout color)
- Flooring (tile, wood, vinyl, etc.)
- Sink (single/double, undermount/farmhouse)
- Faucet and water filtration
- Paint colors and finishes

Fixtures & Features

- Lighting: recessed, pendants, undercabinet
- Ventilation and range hood
- Electrical outlets and USB ports
- Built-in organizers (lazy Susans, dividers, spice racks)
- Pantry and food storage solutions
- Smart home features (appliances, lights, etc.)

Appliances

- Refrigerator
- Range or cooktop & oven
- Microwave
- Dishwasher
- Beverage fridge or wine cooler
- Trash and recycling center

Permits & Logistics

- Confirm what permits are required
- Apply for necessary building, plumbing, electrical permits
- Schedule inspection appointments in advance
- Order materials (some may take 8–12+ weeks)

PHASE 3: DURING THE REMODEL

Keep everything on track and reduce stress by being prepared and communicative during construction.

Prepare Your Home

- Set up a temporary kitchen with basic appliances
- Move fragile items and valuables away from the work zone
- Seal off the kitchen to contain dust
- Plan meals or stock up on easy-to-prepare foods
- Notify neighbors (if noise will be an issue)

Communication

- Set clear expectations with your contractor
- Schedule weekly check-ins or progress updates
- Track your timeline and budget in a shared document
- Document decisions and change orders in writing
- Take photos of progress (and behind walls for reference)

Track Construction Milestones

- Demolition complete
- Plumbing/electrical rough-ins installed and inspected
- Drywall and wall repairs finished
- Cabinets delivered and installed
- Countertops templated and installed
- Flooring and tile completed
- Appliances installed and tested
- Painting and finishing touches applied
- Cleanup and dust removal

PHASE 4: FINAL TOUCHES & POST-PROJECT WRAP-UP

You're almost there! Here's how to finish strong.

Final Walkthrough & Punch List

- Walk through the entire kitchen with your contractor
- Create a punch list of final adjustments
- Confirm all outlets, lights, drawers, and appliances work
- Check for scratches, gaps, or defects
- Request final inspections if permits were pulled
- Collect all warranties and manuals

Cleaning & Organizing

- Deep clean all surfaces, inside drawers and cabinets
- Organize new kitchen zones for efficiency
- Add drawer liners and organizers
- Restock pantry and cooking supplies

Celebrate & Share

- Take final photos of your new kitchen

- Leave an online review for your contractor or designer
- Share your story on social media or in a testimonial
- Invite friends over to show it off and enjoy your new space!

Tips for a Smoother Remodel

- Keep a binder or digital folder with quotes, receipts, samples, and notes
- Don't rush the design process — quality takes time
- Always make sure your fire extinguisher and smoke alarms are up to code
- Ask questions — your designer or contractor is there to help
- Let your lifestyle drive the design, not just trends