

46 Ways to Modernize Your Kitchen

Modernizing your kitchen can take one of two routes. The first route is less expensive, but may take more time. It includes, painting, wall papering, and re-decorating to give your kitchen a modern facelift. The second route can be much quicker, but also much costlier. This route includes new appliances, new cupboards or even a new layout. Your only limit is how much money and time you have to give.

1 – Major Renovation

A major renovation is very expensive and would include changing multiple facets of your kitchen. A major renovation could include your cabinets, the layout of your kitchen, new appliances or windows. A contractor or subcontractor is usually needed to handle the arrangements if your modernization includes wall movement. You may be able to hire a project coordinator from a home improvement store to handle the details if you do it yourself and buy the supplies from them. Don't undertake a major renovation without a plan in mind.

2 – Paint

New paint can add a quick boost to an old and dull kitchen. To properly apply new paint, make sure the walls are clean. Remove all nails, hooks or other protrusions from the wall. If they leave numerous or large holes, be sure to fill with spackle so it is flat with the rest of the wall. Allow the spackle to dry and sand until it is even with the wall. Apply primer or paint and then enjoy your new color! Light colors will make a room appear larger if you are having a color choice dilemma.

3 – New Wallpaper

In addition to or in lieu of new paint, wallpaper adds texture to your kitchen walls. Pick a design that coordinates with the other objects in your room or what compliments the new paint color. Wallpaper styles now include designs for borders, half walls, whole walls and even mural scenes. Certain wallpaper borders have scalloped or fluted edges to add texture to a design. Small patterns in the wallpaper are best if you have a small kitchen. Large patterns make a room seem smaller and darker.

4 – New Theme

Another way to give an old kitchen a modern facelift is to change the theme. Some kitchens follow an elaborate theme, such as using all red appliances or having grapes on everything. Whether you have a strict code or not, look for modern replacements to the old rooster that's been sitting on top of the cupboard for twenty years or whatever your theme was. Items to replace can include towels, trinkets, wall decorations and rugs. Trendy new themes include chili peppers, cherries, frogs, and bugs.

5 – Door Handles

Another small facelift can provide big and lasting results. If your cupboards are flat, try putting handles and knobs on them. If you already have doorknobs and handles, find a new design. Handles come in a multitude of colors and metals, including bronze, copper, gold, silver, pewter and titanium. Many styles ranging from ornate to basic can match the décor you add to your new kitchen theme.

6 – Faucet

Faucets are no longer just a spigot that provides water. Faucets are pieces of artwork now that have multi-functioning capabilities. Some of them have removable ends that spray water. Others have tops that lift off and move over. Water softeners and filters can be placed over nozzles to provide safer and tastier water. The selections are endless. Faucets can also come in plastic or metal, so the colors are changeable too.

7 – Clean the Clutter

A modern look is having the bare essentials or minimalist approach to kitchens. Very few knick-knacks are on shelves and the countertops are cleared off. Hardly anything is out to look at, keeping your view clean. Besides providing a new look, less clutter holds less dust, which requires less cleaning. Less small appliances and items on the cupboard make the room appear larger too.

8 – Ultra Mixer

Get rid of your tiny hand mixer and get an ultimate machine. A stand mixer has a lot more capacity and power if you are a faithful baker or cook. The price has lowered tremendously in recent years making them affordable. You can justify the price by how much that speed up your activities in the kitchen. Ultra-mixers have multiple speeds, attachments, and controls to mix virtually anything. The mixers are available in a rainbow of hues to coordinate with new paint or wallpaper too.

9 – Microwave

The big, boxy and expensive microwaves that first came out are gone! Or they should be. If you have a large, bulky microwave, it is time to upgrade. Microwaves now come in all sizes and colors, not to mention power levels. If you only need one to warm up food occasionally, a small one is for you. If you do a lot of cooking with the microwave as the source, you will need a sturdier one. Microwaves can be purchased at any department store, appliance store or even a grocery store. They can be plastic, metal or stainless steel.

10 – Cooking Gadgets

Every modern cook needs the newest cooking gadgets. Whether you use them or not is up to you, but displaying them may make you seem like more of a modern cook. One such tool is the corn husker. It is a square brush that fits in the palm of your hand with small bristles. The bristles are soft as to not damage the kernels of corn on a cob, but they grab the corn silk from between the rows before it can get stuck in your teeth. Cool, huh?

11 – Flooring

Does your floor seem dingy and gray, even after you just mopped? It may not just be the cleaner or water in the bucket. It may be that your linoleum floor is out of date. The linoleum or laminate floors hold up to wear and tear, but do need replacement after several years go by. Find replacement flooring that matches your colors to brighten the room. There are many styles to choose from, including laminate, laminate wood, wood, vinyl and linoleum. The price can vary to, so make sure you have a budget in mind before shopping.

12 – Table

If there is a Formica topped table in your kitchen, it is time to modernize. There are many more new, family friendly tables on the market that look pretty. Wood tables have a protective covering you can have applied on the wood, which is clear, so you can still see the beauty of the wood underneath. The covering is waterproof, so any spills will not harm it and they can be wiped right off. There are also coverings that prevent nicks, dings and scratches from showing on the surface.

13 – Chairs

Are the chairs at your kitchen table showing their age? To modernize them, you can either give them a facelift or opt to buy completely new. If you don't feel like a project, head for the store. If you do like improvement projects, find some sandpaper and begin. Sand off any old paint or stain on the chair so that the new stuff will stick to it. Pick your color or stain and then begin. Follow all directions on the paint or stain labels to see the best results.

14 – Bar

An addition of a bar or center island will give you much more working space in your kitchen. It can be a place to cool cookie trays, hold mixing pans or store the mail from the day. A bar also works as a place to do homework or to have an evening snack. Whatever you use it for the most, it will make you have much more space in your kitchen. The island or bar usually has cabinets underneath for additional storage. A modern kitchen is a kitchen with lots of cupboards and cabinets!

15 – Bar Stools

Refinish or recover the bar stools at the island. Material can be bought at a fabric store to recover worn or faded old covers. The material is sturdy and will hold up for many years, or until you decide to modernize again. If you want a complete new style, bar stools come in many heights and colors. Department stores and home improvement stores carry a wide selection in many price levels. Stools can be plastic, wood, metal or a combination of materials.

16 – Breakfast Nook

A breakfast nook is a modern invention. The breakfast nook is a cozy alcove, where there is a table and bench seating where breakfast is enjoyed. Realistically, any meal or snack can be eaten there. The breakfast nook is just a place where meals that are more informal are held. A dining room is considered formal and where dinner typically is served.

17 – Rugs

A rug is a simple way to modernize your kitchen. If you have old, dirty and faded rugs, it's time to replace them. If you've never had rugs in your kitchen, they are another avenue to add color and design to the room. Buy a large rug that covers the eating area or a runner for the high traffic areas. Rugs do more than just decorate; they can provide warmth over a cold kitchen floor and protect it from scuffs, nicks and scrapes. If your kitchen is carpeted, a rug will keep obnoxious spills and stains off it.

18 – Crimping Can Opener

A modern convenience in the kitchen is also a safety gadget. The can openers of yesterday are old news. The newest style can openers cut right below the rim of the can. As they open, they crimp back the metal so there are no sharp edges to cut a finger on. The can is also safer to drop in the trash, since it won't rip bags or catch on something else. Crimping can openers can be in the electric form or hand held style.

19 – Bread Machine

Grandma used to make the best loaves of bread, however, Grandma had a lot more time on her hands. You can have the best of both worlds by buying a bread machine. This modern technology mixes the dough, lets it rise and cooks it for you. No hours wasted waiting for it to rise. Follow the recipe book, pour the ingredients and then press start. Nothing could be more modern, yet taste so much like the "Old Days."

20 – Crock Pot

Another modern kitchen tool is also a time saver. The crock-pot of today allows you to have a family meal when you get home and still work a long day. In addition, to make it even easier, some food companies have pre-made meals frozen in a bag where all you have to do is open and pour into the crock-pot. Turn on low and let it sit for eight hours. Go and buy a new crock-pot if you don't already enjoy one.

21 – Automatic Coffee Timer

The newest and most modern coffee pots turn themselves on in the morning. You didn't know that? It is time to get rid of the old percolator and get modern. Automatic coffee makers are available in many sizes, from four cup to twenty-cup capacities. They also come in colors from red to blue to pink or stainless steel. The coffee pot color can even match the Ultra mixer. Get yourself a modern coffee maker and never have to remember to make it in the morning again. You will still need to remember to buy the coffee.

22 – Replace Old, Worn Towels

A quick way to modernize your kitchen is with a shopping trip. Throw out any towel that is ragged, worn or discolored and buy new. Buy new patterns and colors to match your décor or to compliment the wallpaper. Towels can come in different qualities of cotton, so make sure to read the tag. Not all blends have the best absorbency and you want to make sure yours do. Wash all new towels before the first use to get any residue off before using on your dishes.

23 – New Stove

One part of a major renovation may include buying a new stove. The choices are almost endless now, with convection ovens, convex ovens and side by side-ovens, it's hard to know what is what. Before you buy a new stove, list what your uses are with it. Do you have large family gatherings often? If so, you may want a dual oven that is placed in the wall. This way you have two ovens to cook with and they can be set at different temperatures, resulting in less burned food. If you only cook a little, a smaller gas or electric stove will work just fine. Stoves also come with different tops. Some are flat and can be wiped clean when they are cool and others have traditional burners.

24 – New Refrigerator

If you buy a new stove, chances are you will want a refrigerator to match. Refrigerators come in many new styles that weren't available just a few short years ago. Today, one of the most popular styles has the freezer portion on the bottom. A large drawer pulls out that has two or more shelves to hold your freezables. With the freezer on the bottom, your refrigerator is at eye level and is easier to get things in and out of. There are also side-by-side models and standard refrigerators with the freezer on top. Side-by-side refrigerators usually have an ice and water dispenser in the front. Many other styles of refrigerators have icemakers inside. Refrigerators can be purchased in an array of colors and stainless steel.

25 – New Dishwasher

Since you are spending the big money on a stove and refrigerator, you might as well make the set complete and look alike and get a new dishwasher too. Dishwashers are now made to operate very quietly. Some are so quiet you don't even know they are running. They have all sorts of models to choose from with two or three shelves, silverware trays, cup holders and extra large shelves. The outside colors are made to match the appliances or front panels can be bought to match the wood cupboards in your house.

26 – Facelift

If new appliances are way beyond your budget, give your current ones a facelift. One way to modernize the old appliances is with paint. Specialty paints are made for appliances that reach high temperatures. They also make a kind that will adhere to already painted appliances, such as microwaves or refrigerators, in order to avoid the sanding stage. If you decide to paint, make sure the area is well ventilated. Cover anything in the room since the paint only comes in spray cans and overshoot will fly around.

27 – Smoothie Maker

A hot, small appliance to have in your modern kitchen is the smoothie maker. The smoothie maker is replacing the blender of old. The only difference is smoothie makers only make drinks. Dump the contents of your desired drink into the container and press start. The blades will grind up the ice and ingredients and you will have your drink quickly. The smoothie makers have a spigot on the end, which pours the drink in your cup for you.

28 – Cutting Board

Today's cook needs a large cutting board to handle all of the food preparation. New materials in cutting boards are also safer than the wood ones of yesteryear. If you still use an old wood cutting board, time for a new one. Plastic or glass cutting boards are easier to clean and sterilize and safer to use in the long run. Wood boards can crack which lets germs get deep inside and are harder to kill. Plastic and glass can be placed in the dishwasher, cleaned, and sanitized quickly, without harming the material.

29 – Pantry

A pantry is needed in your modern kitchen, especially if you have children. A pantry is a quick and easy way to store boxed and canned food for the long term. You could even hold a month's supply if you had a big enough pantry! Pantries can be as little as two shelves or as large as a closet. Make sure to have adequate shelving to keep the contents organized and neat. If the cans are all just dumped in, you may keep buying what you already have. At the end of the year when you clean out the pantry, you may find eight cans of kidney beans. Yuck!

30 – Potted or Fake Greenery

Nothing brightens up a room like a potted plant or greenery. If you have a soffit above your cupboards, sprinkle with artificial greens and knick-knacks. Follow a theme and use items to match. For instance, place a fern inside a blue vase that matches your new wallpaper. Throw a couple of silk flower stems in a basket that matches your paint color. A potted plant can even stand alone in the corner of the room. Remember to water the plants if you opt for real ones. Dead plants don't do anything or the ambience of a room.

31 – Family Pictures

Modernizing your kitchen with family pictures seem like a contradiction, but it is not. You can even use old photographs, of grandparent and great grandparents with a twist. Buy new frames to coordinate with the metal or colors in your kitchen. Pewter frames are a hot new trend, as well as silver and bronze. Use a mixture of colors and materials when displaying your beloved family members.

32 – Florescent Lights

Florescent lights are a great way to modernize your kitchen and improve its look. Florescent light bulbs are brighter than regular candescent lights and use much less energy. The florescent lights also give a more realistic color and are truer to natural light. Having brighter and more light in your kitchen makes it appear bigger and more spacious.

33 – SAD Lights

SAD lights can help many a person who lives in the north or wherever daylight hours are short. SAD stands for Seasonal Affect Disorder and millions of people in the United States suffer from it. When the winter months arrive, daylight is short. The short daylight hours mixed with cloudy, wintry days can affect a person's mood. When the person's mood is affected day after day, and their normal lifestyle changes, SAD may be the culprit. A doctor will prescribe a special light or light therapy to combat this problem. Getting a SAD light is possible without a prescription, however, they are a more expensive form of florescent lighting.

34 – Skylights

Skylights provide natural light into an otherwise dark area. Adding skylights to your kitchen is a major renovation, and one that should only be done by an experienced builder. Adding skylights can only be done in a house where the kitchen has no rooms above it. If you have a two-story, you're out of luck. If you have a ranch style, prepare to knock out the roof and ceiling and rearrange the support beams. The skylights you add can have fancy features such as automatic shades, or covers or be just plain glass. Make sure they are installed by a professional properly so they remain airtight. A water leak can be hazardous to your new kitchen.

35 – Shelves

There are two types of shelves. Those tucked away in cupboards and closets and those that are on walls to display items. Shelves that are hidden behind closet doors can make the appearance of the kitchen bigger by hiding any unused appliances. They can keep all of the clutter inside where it is nicely stored. Shelves hung on the walls are meant to display family pictures, heirloom cookware, such as teapots, antique utensils or whatever collection you posses. The materials that shelving is made of can be wood, metal or even plastic.

36 – Silicone Cookware

One of the hottest modern trends is the invention of silicone cookware. It can be used just as metal and glass cookware, but with better results. The silicone weighs much less and is flexible. Your cupcake pan can be completely folded in half! It won't burn, melt or burn its contents inside. The silicone can be hand or dishwasher cleaned, and it will not rust like metal! It will not shatter like glass. It can be cooked at the same temperatures as any other material and it has been proven to last longer. The silicone can be purchased in several different colors.

37 – Cookbooks

Betty Crocker used to be a hip and modern gal, but there is a whole new wave of cooks who have written cookbooks that are more modern. If you're going to be a modern cook in a modern kitchen, you'll also need modern recipes. If you don't want to spend a lot of money first, hit the library and read their titles. Check out the books that catch your eye without spending any money on them. When you do find a favorite or two, then hit the bookstore to make it a permanent fixture in your modern kitchen.

38 – Spice Rack

With all of the new recipes you will be making in your modern kitchen, you will need new spices. Spices are no longer jars to be tucked away in the cupboard and never seen again. Now they are made into pretty sets to be displayed on counters and cabinets. The Spice racks can be ornate wood or stainless steel. They can hold 12 spices or 40 spices depending upon the model you choose. The only jars to keep hidden in the pantry are the refill jars.

39 – Clean or Dirty Button for Dishwasher

This new gadget will keep your modern kitchen running smoothly. No more dirty silverware accidentally slipped into the clean tray. Dirty plates will no longer be dropped in after realizing it is too late. The clean or dirty button is a magnet that can be displayed on the dishwasher or an appliance nearby. One side says clean, the other dirty. Whichever is in the dishwasher is the way the magnet is flipped up. The modern tool is also a great conversation starter since everyone will want to know where you found it.

40 – Tea

Even with a modern coffee pot in your kitchen, you will want to have tea on hand for those who do not indulge in the coffee habit. Tea is becoming more chic, as the positive health benefits continue to be discovered. Keep a variety of teas on hand, including bagged and loose tea leaves. A teapot or water kettle will keep water warm on the stove when a cup of tea is needed.

41 - Appliance Panels

One hot new trend is to make your appliances blend in the kitchen. Panels made of the same wood as the cabinets are cut to fit inside of the appliance front. Only the handle or the top part of the original color shows. Panels are magnetized or glued on and do not remove easily, which is good if you have small kids. If you want to modernize again, you may need to buy new appliances, as the panels do not come off easily.

42 – Garbage Disposal

If you rely on the family pet to eat your food scraps, it's time to modernize. It will be better for Fido's tummy and a lot safer too. A garbage disposal is easy to install under your sink with a few tools and some pipe. If projects aren't what you crave, it can also be hired out to a professional. Garbage disposals are made with different levels of horsepower, depending on how much and how often you will use them. If you have industrial levels of cooking in your kitchen, you will want the most horsepower you can buy. If you live alone, a small motor will do.

43 – Food Processor

A food processor is a handy tool to keep in your kitchen. No longer do you have to rely on cutting vegetables up with a cutting board and taking forever. Simply place the desired vegetable, or whatever food you need cut, into the container and press start. It can dice, slice, chop, puree, and mince in seconds. It saves you lots of valuable time when getting dinner ready.

44 – Cabinet Refacing

If new cupboards aren't in the budget, there is a cheaper way to modernize them. You can give them a facelift by changing the color. Sand off the old paint or varnish and put on a new color. Lighten the color or stain to brighten the whole room. You can even get creative and cut out part of the door and replace with glass or plexi-glass to give a new look to the room. The only problem with see through cupboards is that the insides need to be clean!

45 – Take Out Soffits

The soffit is the wall space between the top of the cupboard and the ceiling. If it is dry walled, it is wasted space that usually is only good for a wallpaper border. If you leave the soffits open, you can place items above the cupboard for decoration. The open space is good for holding vases, teapots, baskets, artificial greens, holiday décor or items from a special collection. The design opportunities are endless.

46 – Marble Rolling Pin

A modern spin on an old tool is the marble rolling pin. Cooks have discovered the marble is much easier to use than wood when rolling out dough. The marble can be placed in the refrigerator or freezer and have even better results. The cold material keeps anything from sticking. It is less messy than the flour on the wood method. Marble rolling pins also come with a holder so they can be set out and put on display.

Summary

The most important thing to remember when modernizing your kitchen is you. Do you like the new toys or look of your modern kitchen? Modernizing it isn't to keep the neighbor's, your friends or family happy – it's for you. Keep that in mind at all times when shopping for new things.