

# Homeowner's Guide

## How to Plan a Kitchen Remodeling Project



McClurg

## Forward

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Brian Ciota, Vice President & Co-Owner

If a [kitchen remodeling](#) project is in your future, planning may seem overwhelming. Most people look at magazines and showrooms but find it hard to start their project. If you feel overwhelmed, you're not alone. Just take a deep breath and take your time. There's no need to feel pressured. Some of our customers have taken a year or more planning and reviewing details before starting their [remodeling project](#).

**So, where do you begin?** When we meet with customers we begin by asking a variety of questions designed to help us (and them) understand how they currently use their kitchen. We talk about what problems or obstacles they have with the current layout. And we discuss what they'd like to do

differently with their new kitchen. We also help them set priorities, which will factor into the project budget.

We have prepared this **planning guide** to address common questions we hear from homeowners as they begin a kitchen remodeling project. The guide discusses things to ask yourself before starting your project, features to consider as you plan your kitchen, setting a budget and priorities for your project, working with a kitchen designer, preparing your home for the work and surviving the construction phase of your project. We also invite you to visit our [kitchens photo gallery on our Website](#).

We hope you will find this information helpful. We would welcome your questions and comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brian Ciota'.

Brian Ciota  
Vice President & Co-Owner

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# 1. Questions to Answer Before Starting Your Project

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Below are some of the key questions that'll help you start planning your kitchen remodeling project. Consider these questions and make notes to share with your contractor and/or kitchen designer to help them plan and design a kitchen that best meets your needs.

## **How many people are in your household and how will they use the kitchen?**

If you are a working couple, it may be important to have a message center in your kitchen. If you have children, they may need a place to dine informally and perhaps do homework. Don't forget to include your pets. You may need a place for pet food dishes and, if you have a cat, a litter box.

## **Who is the primary cook?**

That person will want to specify how the kitchen should function for preparing meals and entertaining. The height and way the primary cook works in the kitchen, and whether he or she is left-handed or right-handed, should be factored into the design of the space and placement of cabinets and appliances. Should you design the kitchen for more than one cook?

## **How do you use your current cabinet storage space?**

What do you store, i.e., types of cook ware, utensils, dishes, food, cleaning supplies, etc.? How much do you currently store in your kitchen? Do you envision storing less, more or about the same?

## **Do any family members have physical limitations?**

If so, what accommodations will they require? Consider [Universal Design](#) and [Aging-in-Place](#) recommendations.

## **What type of cooking do you normally do?**

Heat and serve meals? Bulk cooking on weekends and freezing meals to be consumed during the week? Full course meals? Vegan meals? Gourmet or ethnic meals?

## **How often do you entertain?**

Are the meals you prepare for guests formal or informal? How many guests do you normally accommodate?

# 1. Questions to Answer Before Starting Your Project

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**Is your kitchen a place for socializing?**

If so, how?

**Where do you plan to sort recyclables?**

Will you need space in the kitchen or do you prefer to sort recyclables in the laundry or garage?

**What type of feeling would you like your kitchen space have?**

Design tastes can be contemporary, traditional, country, formal, industrial etc.

**What other activities will take place in your kitchen?**

Will you need space for dining, homework, a desk, a laundry area, a wine bar, a greenhouse window for growing plants?

**How often do you shop for food?**

How much space do you need for refrigeration and food storage?

**What do you dislike most about your current kitchen?**

**What do you like most about your current kitchen?**



**Elegant Rustic Kitchen with Tiered Island**

## 2. Remodeling Your Kitchen: An A-to-Z Wish List Guide

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Kitchen Addition

Most people begin a kitchen remodeling project with a “wish list” – everything you **NEED** and **WANT** in your dream kitchen.

To help start your wish list, we’ve developed this handy **A-to-Z Wish List Guide**. It includes many of the features you’ll want to consider as you plan and budget for your project.

- A. **Appliances.** Research appliance makes and models. Your choices will impact the design of your kitchen and your [budget](#).
- B. **Built-ins.** Make a list of items you would want built into the design of your kitchen. Appliances now are made in counter depth sizes to fit into standard cabinetry. Other types of built-ins to consider are banquettes for breakfast areas and appliance “garages” to house microwave ovens, coffee makers and mixers. Don’t forget to factor in a broom closet if your space allows for it.
- C. **Cabinets and Countertops.** Visit showrooms to identify the type of cabinets and countertops you want to use in your project. Note the line, style, material, color and finish for cabinets and type of material, edging and colors for countertops.
- D. **Drawers and Desk Areas.** Pull-out drawers are great for under-countertop storage. Check them out when you visit showrooms. Many kitchens feature a desk area for a computer and for doing paperwork such as bill paying or meal planning. On the desk you could add a charging station for cell phones.
- E. **Electronics.** In addition to appliances, computers and flat screen televisions have found a home in the kitchen. Think about adding these to your space along with a cable service.
- F. **Flooring.** Flooring in kitchens includes wood, ceramic tile, vinyl, laminate, concrete and carpet. Other materials used are granite, bamboo and marble. Flooring should not only be attractive but easy to maintain and practical. Go to showrooms and read product reviews.

## 2. Remodeling Your Kitchen: An A-to-Z Wish List Guide

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- G. **Galley or Gathering Space.** Think about the space in your home. An efficient galley kitchen is a great asset for food prep for a serious cook while space for informal meals and family gatherings is important to households with children and for those who like to entertain. To achieve extra space you may have to extend the kitchen by adding an [addition](#) or reconfiguring an underused dining or living room in your plan.
- H. **Hardware.** Select hardware that is attractive, easy to clean and fits within your budget. If you're planning to live in your home for a long time consider easy to use products like cup shaped pulls on drawers and lever handles on doors where appropriate. "[Universal Design](#)" ideas can be implemented in your project to create a space that can be used over the course of a lifetime.
- I. **Islands and Peninsulas.** Islands and peninsulas are the work stations of a kitchen. Generally they are designed for food prep, informal dining and storage.
- J. **Jewels of the Kitchen.** "Jewels" of a kitchen are items you add for aesthetics like pendant lighting, glass cabinets, custom tiles on backsplashes and areas for display of collections.
- K. **Kitchen Triangle.** The [kitchen triangle](#) considers the placement of the stove, refrigerator and sink/dishwasher area in the design of a kitchen so that a cook can work efficiently. Read our kitchen triangle article for more information.
- L. **Lighting.** Lighting is essential to the function of a kitchen. In your plans consider natural sunlight. If your kitchen needs more sunlight, consider [skylights and sun tunnels](#). Your plans should also take into account lighting over work and dining areas and under cabinets. Options for lighting include florescent, halogen and LED. Fixtures to consider for the kitchen are pendant lights, under cabinet units and recessed lights.
- M. **Moldings.** Moldings add architectural interest to a kitchen but also finish off cabinetry, doors and flooring. Pay attention to ornamental moldings when you are looking at photos of kitchens.
- N. **Nooks.** Nooks or alcoves are recessed areas of a room that can be used for dining or displays. They add interest to a kitchen but also provide functional space.
- O. **Outlets.** Add extra outlets to your wish list. If you don't, you'll wish you had considered the height and placement of outlets as well as the number to include when you operate small appliances and gadgets in your kitchen.

## 2. Remodeling Your Kitchen: An A-to-Z Wish List Guide

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- P. **Pantry, Pull-out Storage.** There is nothing more frustrating than reaching into the recesses of cabinets to find food, pots and pans and dishware. Look for drawers and cabinets that provide easy access to these items.
- Q. **Quick Access.** Consider adding carousels (Lazy Susans) to corner cabinets for spice and food storage. Under cabinet trash disposal and recycling pullouts should be included in your plan.
- R. **Recipes and Cookbooks.** Plan areas to organize cookbooks. Computerize your recipe files. Here's a tip for cherished family recipes - frame them; a favorite recipe in your grandmother's handwriting will be treasured for generations.
- S. **Sinks.** Sinks are the most important fixture of a kitchen. Choose them wisely. Consider depth, faucet styles, utility and ease of cleaning. Don't forget to select a waste disposal. If you have children, choose a waste disposal with safety features.
- T. **Tiles.** Floor and backsplash tiles can be used very creatively. If you are using tile on the floor, consider non-skid products. When you're choosing tiles, don't forget to select the grout as well.
- U. **Under Counter Appliances and Storage.** If you are adding additional refrigerator space consider installing a beverage refrigerator under a counter. A mixer can be stored in base cabinets with a pop-up shelf to free counter space.
- V. **Ventilation.** When selecting cooktops and ovens consider ventilation. Ventilation hoods come in a range of styles and some cooktops use down-draft ventilation. Your choice should be factored into your kitchen design.
- W. **Wet Bars and Wine Storage.** A space dedicated to beverage storage and glassware is always a plus in a kitchen.
- X. **Xtra Ideas.** A kitchen remodeling project is a big investment. Take the time to read product reviews especially when it comes to appliances and consumer information about kitchen remodeling projects. Read what others are saying. Sources you may want to check out are [Better Homes and Gardens' Kitchen Bath Ideas](#), [HGTV Kitchens](#) and our [Kitchens Gallery](#).
- Y. **Your Personal Touches.** Choose colors fabrics, wall decorations, kitchen collections and other items that reflect your likes, interests and lifestyle.

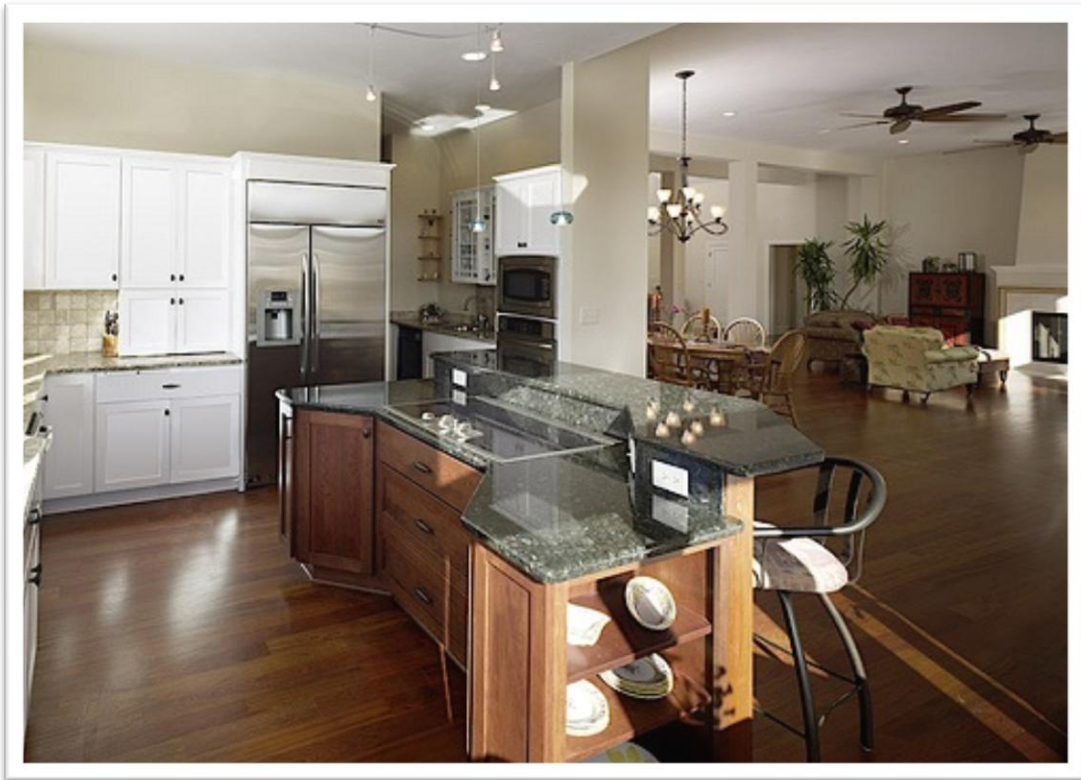


## 2. Remodeling Your Kitchen: An A-to-Z Wish List Guide

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- Z. **Zones.** When you put together the plan for your kitchen think about the way you want to use your space and plan around “zones” for food prep, clean up, dining, storage, baking, beverages, paperwork, etc. The National Kitchen and Bath Association offers an online “[Kitchen and Bath Workbook](#)” to help you plan your project.

Take your time when planning a kitchen remodel to address all the details. If the list seems overwhelming, consider hiring a design/build contractor to walk you through it.



Open Kitchen with White and Cherry Cabinets

### 3. How to Set a Budget and Priorities for Your Project

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We're often asked [how much should be budgeted for remodeling a kitchen](#)? The answer, in our view, depends on what you plan to do with your home and over what time period. Some remodeling "experts" suggest your budget should not exceed a certain percent (e.g., 15 percent) of the current value of your home. While that may be a helpful guideline for someone planning to sell their home in the near future, it doesn't apply to all situations.

To get started in **setting a budget** for your kitchen remodeling project, you'll first want to answer the following questions:

#### **First and foremost, what are your plans for your home?**

If you purchased the home as a "fixer-upper", remodeling may have been factored into the price you offered for the home. You may be planning to raise a family in the home or you may be designing the space for your retirement years. The house may be a starter home or it may be your dream home.

#### **Is the home a long-term or short-term investment?**

If you plan to live in the home for more than five years you may want to add amenities that you will enjoy over time. If the home is a short-term investment, and you plan to sell within five years, you will want to plan your project to appeal to prospective buyers.

#### **Is return on investment a primary concern for you?**

If so, you will want to maximize the home's equity by considering recent sales of comparable homes in your area, the price you paid for your home and the money you have already invested when budgeting for your project. For guidance look at the [2010-2011 Cost versus Value Report published by Remodeling Magazine](#). A minor kitchen remodeling project averages \$22,325 and the return on the investment that you can expect is \$15,241 or 68 percent. The average cost of a major kitchen remodel \$60,710 and the [payback](#) at resale would be \$38,214 or 67 percent. The average cost of an upscale kitchen remodeling project is \$116,763 with a payback of \$64,968, 56 percent.

#### **Do you plan on renting this home in the future?**

If this home is an investment property, your remodeling project should address a renter's basic needs as well as the period of time you can expect "payback" on your investment. Some of your investment can be recouped but you also want to make a profit.

### 3. How to Set a Budget and Priorities for Your Project

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#### What do you like about your kitchen?

There may be items that you will want to use or salvage as you plan the project. Listing your likes and dislikes will also help you to determine a design for the space.

#### What do you dislike most about your kitchen?

The answer to this question will help you to decide what changes you will want to prioritize in planning a budget.



White Kitchen with Island

### 3. How to Set a Budget and Priorities for Your Project

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The next step is to **set priorities** for your project by determining “needs” and “wants”. Needs are the things that are essential purchases for your project. Wants are things that are desirable but optional to your plan and budget. Here is a checklist of items that typically are part of a kitchen remodel:

	Need	Want	Make	Price
New Cabinets				
New Countertops				
New Flooring				
New Oven(s)				
New Refrigerator				
New Freezer				
New Cooktop				
New Microwave				
New Dishwasher				
New Sink(s)				
New Lighting Fixtures				
New Cutting Surfaces				
Waste Disposal System				
Trash Compactor				
Recycling Bins				
More Workspace				
More Storage				
Pantry				
Wet Bar				
Window(s)				
Eating Area				
Media/TV Center				
Other:				

The final consideration is your timetable for the project. When do you plan to get started and when would you like to complete the project?

Answering the questions above will be helpful when you [talk with a contractor or designer](#) about your plans.

## 4. Six Things to do Before Meeting with a Kitchen Designer

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After you have made a kitchen **wish list** and considered a **budget and priorities** for your kitchen remodeling project we recommend working with a professional kitchen designer to create a plan for the project. Consulting a designer doesn't have to be costly. Many kitchen showroom and home centers offer design services. Some designers offer an initial "free" home consultation. There are design/build remodeling contractors, including McClurg Remodeling & Construction Services, who will include the cost of design service in the total cost of the project.

We also recommend consulting a professional who is certified by the [National Kitchen and Bath Association](#). NKBA certifications are based on written exams and industry experience. Always check the credentials of the designer you consult to verify that they are trained, certified and experienced.

NKBA suggests preparing for your project before meeting with a kitchen designer. Here are things they suggest to prepare for that meeting:

1. **Make a checklist** of major and minor problems that you have with your current kitchen. Consider the following:
  - Are you happy with the traffic flow through your kitchen? Is there adequate counter, storage and floor space in the present configuration of your kitchen?
  - Is your kitchen efficient? New appliances may have more efficient features and can save money on energy costs.
  - Are there individuals with impairments living in your home? If so, the kitchen design should address safety and access for these individuals.
  - Do you like the location and design of your kitchen? What are the best features? What do you want to change?
2. **Collect ideas and information.** Read magazines and books for ideas and visit online galleries to view kitchen projects. Here are some resources:
  - [Better Homes and Gardens Kitchens](#)
  - [National Kitchen and Bath Association Kitchen Inspiration Gallery](#)
  - [HGTV Kitchens](#)
  - [Traditional Home Magazine Kitchens](#)
  - [House Beautiful Magazine: Kitchen of the Year](#)
  - [McClurg Remodeling & Construction Services' Kitchen Gallery](#)

Make a clip book of the pictures and ideas that reflect what you want to include in your project. Bring the idea book to your meeting.

## 4. Six Things to do Before Meeting with a Kitchen Designer

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3. **Visit showrooms and retailers** and make a list of appliances, cabinetry, counter surfacing, flooring and other products you plan to use in your kitchen. Gather information about dimensions and installation if you can. Many retailers offer product information brochures to consumers and most manufacturers have product information posted on the Internet. It is helpful to identify appliances because the dimensions will be factored into the design. A good designer will address this with you.
4. **Discuss your budget expectations with the designer.** Your designer will make suggestions to help you achieve your desired outcomes and will help you keep within the limits you set for the project. A designer is knowledgeable about product lines and can save you money.
5. **NKBA has designed a [Kitchen and Bath Workbook](#)** that includes a handy worksheet to prepare for a planning meeting with a professional designer. Complete the information as you do your research and make a copy to share with the designer.
6. **Questions to ask your kitchen designer:**
  - How can the efficiency of my kitchen be maximized?
  - Where can appliances be placed?
  - What built-ins can be used in the design?
  - How should a pantry be incorporated in the lay out?
  - How should cabinets be organized? Discuss the purpose of each unit. Consider stackable shelves, roll-outs, cup and plate racks and dividers to meet your needs.



**Paul Thompson, McClurg's Kitchen Designer**

## 5. 13 Tips to Help Prepare Your Home for Construction

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You have your plan in hand, you've hired a contractor and now the day for beginning your remodeling project is quickly approaching. You need to clear the kitchen and organize the contents. If this seems overwhelming, follow these steps to simplify the process.

1. **Gather supplies.** You will need boxes, newspapers, packing materials, packing tape, masking tape, quart size and gallon size plastic storage bags and markers.
2. **Pull out items that you use every day** such as the coffee maker, tea kettle, pots, skillets, mixing bowls, can openers, vegetable peelers, cooking utensils. During the course of the remodeling project you will need these essentials. To make life easier, use disposable cups, plates and dinnerware. Set aside storage containers for leftovers, food storage bags, foil and plastic wrap. Also, make sure that you have cleaning supplies on hand.
3. **Pack canned and boxed foods in categories** such as breakfast food, canned goods, sauces, pastas, spices, baking supplies, drinks, pet food and cooking oils. Use low-sided open boxes to keep items organized and at-hand during the construction activity.
4. **Collect items you use infrequently** such as holiday dinnerware, specialized bake ware, punchbowls, platters, etc. Pack, mark and store these items in a closet or basement.
5. **Keep like items together** when clearing out your cabinets.
6. **Set aside things you don't use anymore for donation.** Make a list and estimate the value before you take them to your local donation center. Throw out anything broken or unusable like old plastic storage ware. This is a great time to reduce clutter.
7. **Reorganize cookbooks and recipes.** Create a computer file for your favorite recipes.
8. **Pack eating utensils in the gallon size plastic storage bags.** Use a bag each for knives, forks and spoons. It will make it easy to unpack these items once the kitchen is finished. Do the same with cooking utensils and small gadgets.

## 5. 13 Tips to Help Prepare Your Home for Construction

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9. **Pack glassware and dinnerware carefully.** Even though you are packing these items for a short period of time, things can get broken in the process of storing them. Wrap fragile items in newspaper or bubble wrap to protect them and seal your boxes with tape. Mark the contents on the outside of each box.
10. **Take down blinds, curtains, rods and wall decorations.** Place the hardware in plastic storage bags and label with masking tape or directly on the bag is there is a place for writing contents. Clean and dust these items if you will be using them again in the remodeled kitchen.
11. **Cover computer and electronics** to protect from dust. You may also want to cover furniture in adjacent rooms that may be affected by dust from the construction area.
12. **Take down valuable pictures and wall hangings** in adjacent rooms that can be knocked off the wall or damaged during the remodeling process.
13. **Protect your pets.** Keep them away from the work area. Dogs and cats can be a danger to themselves and the work crew if they are underfoot. The best option is to keep them in a closed room away from all the work. You can also hire a pet sitter to look after your pets during an extensive remodel.



Kitchen with Central Island



## 6. How to Survive the Construction Phase of Your Project

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When work begins on your [kitchen remodeling project](#) you and your family don't have to starve but you will have to make other arrangements for meals, especially if it will take several weeks or a month or two to complete the job. Eating out every night is an option but an expensive one.

The key to surviving the [construction phase of your project](#) is to plan ahead. It's also important to talk with your contractor about your plans and any special family needs.

Here are some tips to help you and your family survive:

1. **Set up a temporary kitchen.** Find a space, preferably with a sink like a laundry room or basement, that will be out of the way of construction. Be sure there are outlets for appliances.
2. **Keep it simple.** Your temporary kitchen should be set up to prepare simple meals. You will need a microwave oven and small appliances such as a coffee maker, electric griddle, toaster, electric tea pot or electric wok if you have one. Electric woks are great for times like this because you can brown meat and cook vegetables and noodles in them. They are also easy to clean. A panini maker is also a useful appliance. A crock pot is a must have when your kitchen is out of commission.
3. **Have other supplies on hand.** These include a manual can opener, a few knives, spatulas, microwave cookware, a cutting board, plastic wrap and paper towels.
4. **Talk to your contractor** about finding a place for your refrigerator, maybe in the garage or an adjacent room so that you can use it for food storage. **To help our clients we provide two burner stoves, hook up temporary sinks and ovens, and sometimes set up counters and cabinets depending on their situation.**
5. **Set up an area for small appliances.** Ask your contractor to help. A work station could be made of old cabinets or a piece of plywood could be used for a counter.
6. **Minimize cooking by making meals in advance**, freezing them in small portions and reheating them in the microwave.

## 6. How to Survive the Construction Phase of Your Project

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7. **Grill outdoors** if you can and use your patio and deck furniture for dining. Simple, nutritious meals can be made on the grill and clean up is easy. Try boiling water on the grill for pasta. Put soap on the bottom and external sides of pans to keep them from charring on the grill.
8. **Use disposable plates, cups, napkins and dinnerware.**
9. **Store food in plastic storage bags** that can be thrown out after using.
10. **Make cleanup easy.** Minimize the use of dishes and keep paper towels, liquid dish soap, a kitchen towel or two, a scrubber, surface cleaner spray and hand soap near your sink area.
11. **Keep your canned, boxed food and sauces organized** in low sided boxes in your temporary kitchen. You will want easy access and to be able to see what you have on hand for meals.
12. **Budget for eating out** on the days when demolition or installing hard wood flooring or other construction activities create dust and fumes in your home. Talk with your contractor so that you will know when to plan on dining out. Clip restaurant coupons to save money.
13. **Be patient.** Remember that the end justifies the means. Your remodeled kitchen will make life enjoyable in the years ahead.



**Kitchen With Commercial Refrigerator**



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