

7 Ways to Spice Up Your Kitchen

Trendy kitchens have become open, inviting spaces for family and friends. Not only do they feature modern technologies and materials, they incorporate design that eliminates boundaries between kitchen and living areas. Open floor plans provide more cooking space and make for increased family time.

With the popularity of open floor plans on the rise, it's no secret that the kitchen has become the focal point of the home. Spacious and open kitchen designs with lots of counter space and seating area are proving more efficient and desirable for families.

Check out these seven ways to add more panache to your kitchen.



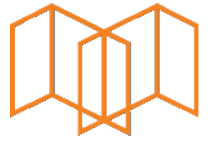
1 *Go Glossy.* Homeowners are migrating back to laminate cabinetry. Today's laminates and thermofoils are sleek and shiny. Choose from colors like blue, red and white. Or opt for luxe, striated designs in colors like warm gray, bronze or silver.

2 *Customize Your Hood.* Customize your range hood to complement the cabinetry and overall design of your kitchen. A painted wood hood looks great paired with traditional cabinetry. Opt for a sleek stainless hood in a modern or contemporary kitchen. The latest styles are wall-hugging and look more like artwork than workhorse.



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3 *Go Vertical.*

Modern cabinetry not only offers a huge variety of door styles and finishes, but also options for opening and closing your cabinets. Some line offer touch activated opening; others offer vertical open where the cabinet door lifts up instead of out on upper cabinets. It's a great option for a tight corner or just when you want something a little different.



Build a Banquette. Banquettes are making a comeback. Create a cozy dining experience for your family with a two- or three-sided banquette. Custom upholstery can be designed to complement your homes décor, or opt for simple covered cushions that can be removed and washed of necessary. Choose a round table for a small corner banquette or a rectangular table for a larger space.

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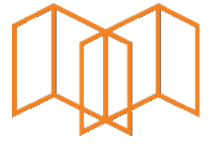
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Elevate Your Island. Create space for entertaining with a bi-level island. Friends and family can gather at the bar-height section while buffet service is set out on the cabinet-height top. It's a great place for kids to have an after-school snack and do homework while you prep for dinner.



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6 *Hang a Sliding Door.* Make a statement with a barn door to separate the kitchen from an adjacent room or to hide pantry items. Choose a rustic look with reclaimed wood and steel hardware or, for a modern look, opt for a door with translucent glass and sleek stainless steel hardware.



7 *Include the Pups.* Keep puppy clutter from ravaging your kitchen with a built-in dog station at the end of an island or perimeter cabinetry. Today's cabinet lines offer drawers specially designed to hold food and treats, too.

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