Episode 27: Kitchen Design Essentials

How to determine what you need in your kitchen

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Hello, and welcome to My Forever Home the podcast. And this is episode two of the Kitchen Design Essential season. We've had some great response already to what's going to be in store for this kitchen design essential season. So I'm really excited to now bring you today, how to determine what you need in your kitchen.

And this is really all about what you need and around your lifestyle and how you're going to be using your kitchen, rather than thinking about all the other things that people may have. Now, I go back to this time and time again, not only, if you've been following me for a while, you know that I say this a lot, but I also say it to my clients very often.

And that is, don't worry about what everyone else is doing, because this is a home. Your forever home is for you. And you need to design it around your lifestyle. You need to design it around your needs. And so the kitchen is really important. In terms of making sure that it's going to work for you and not what everyone else is doing and not what they're doing up the road.

And they've got a steam oven and they've got a teppanyaki grill, just focus on what you need. One of the biggest joys in creating a home that you know, you're going to be in for a long time, your forever home, as I've always called it is that you get to design it. For you, and that it's specifically bespoke for your requirements.

So stick with that mantra and you really can't go wrong. So what I'd wanted to talk to you about today was really around determining what you need in your kitchen. So I'm going to talk about storage. I'm going to talk about your cleaning requirements. What sort of cook are you? What sort of bakery you and what sort of functionality and lifestyle requirements do you need to make sure that this kitchen is going to serve you exactly as it needs to.

Kitchens are the hub of the home. since we've been living in open style homes for quite a few decades, now they need to work super hard because they sit in the center of our home more often

than not. They need to perform multiple functions. It's not just about cooking anymore. Their breakfast bars, entertainment areas.

There. Baking spaces, their homework areas, their workspaces, they are so many different things for so many different people. And so we need to make sure we think about what we actually need in our kitchen. So what we do, as part of a service to our clients is we do what I call a kitchen deep dive, and that's basically an assessment to work out all the different requirements, that our clients need for their kitchen.

So it's not just about the aesthetic. It actually forms a foundation of the design. And so for me, the design of the kitchen is not just about. Well, this is the space. And so let's stick some cupboard there and a couple of drawers there. And then when we move in, we'll work out where all of that stuff goes.

No, no, no, no. We actually go back to that at the start. And before we even put pen to paper, or we go to the computer and start designing a kitchen, we've actually assessed with the client, where are they going to store their things? Where ideally, should things go. Where are their appliances go? How do they, you know, how do they operate as a family?

I know some families will have a very specific area to prepare breakfast. They might have a coffee station area. How do they ideally want to be able to store things and where do they need to go? And so there's a lot of thinking that is involved before we even start the design process. And that's what I want you to think about to the thinking before you actually start is critical.

To what your outcome is. And I suppose this is also where if you've got an external party that can assist you to think outside the box and provide solutions that you hadn't even thought of, or when you available, that's where you're going to get really good value. Add. So think about what your ideal is when you're doing your assessment.

Try not to think about how you live in your kitchen now. and don't be constrained by your current situation. I know I've had clients, I need to really get them to visualize and think, you know, I suppose it's thinking blue sky. So if I could have any sort of, environment in my kitchen, as I, as I could, what would that be?

And then we try and work. to that as much as we possibly can. So think about that and try not to be constrained about how things are set up at the moment and how you store things at the moment. Think about, well, if I could start from scratch, what would be my ideal? Where would I want to store my plastic containers?

Where do I want my source spins to be? Do I want them all just lay it out in one layer or am I happy to have them stack? So think about, what your ideal ease. However, if there's something in your current kitchen that really works for you and you love the way that operates, don't discount, that makes sure that that then gets taken over into your new design.

But I really want you to remove yourself from what the Joneses are doing. And if you could see me now, I've got my inverted commas up because I'm, you know, as I said to slightly earlier, don't worry about what the Joneses are doing. And I suppose the difference here between. Your forever home and a home that may be being renovated to flip is when you're doing it to flip your thinking about what the target audience is going to want in their kitchen.

So if you're in a blue chip area, you may be expecting that those people are going to be wanting a Steve up and all they want the latest appliances and they want the latest gadgets. However, you can remove yourself from that completely because you're doing this for you. So design it for yourself, your family, what you need, not what other people's expectations are.

You know, I am, I can, you know, I can be quite crass here, but I suppose I'd say, you know, to hell with that, really? Because this is about you. You don't need a steam oven. If you don't cook, you don't need a wok burner. If you don't cook Asian cuisine, or you don't use walk in your cooking. So. That is what I really want to hone in for you.

You can have all the bells and whistles, but if you're not really going to use it, it's an absolute waste of money and it's a waste of space. Let's get this kitchen working super hard. So that for me is the beauty of what separates a forever home and designing for a forever home and a house that flips.

So determine what type of cook you are, so that we can work out how you need your kitchen to work. So do you entertain often, do you bake often, do you make jam and preserve food? Do you make your own pastry? Which means you need a big long lateral bench space? Do you have a, you know, a kitchen that is not going to be used that often.

And so the materials you're going to be used that you're going to choose could be completely different to a cook. That is a really, you know, a really frequent cook. So think about the type of cook that you are, but also think so that you're future-proofing okay. Look, this is my lifestyle now. you know, we're professionals, we go out a lot.

We don't really cook that much at home. Think about how that may change if you do end up having children and your lifestyle is going to change. Because for me, it's also about future proofing, not ridiculously in terms of having every gadget, of course, but making sure that you're, you know, able to think about, well, what may change if we are going to have children or we may have pets or whatever it is, how might that.

Change how we're using that area. cause it's not just the kitchen itself, but it's that whole area, the dining area, the dining, the dining table. And all those sorts of things. So, but working out the type of cook, you are actually determined the space that you'll need the appliances that you'll need, where you're going to store things.

And also how much storage you're going to need for particular things. Then you need to think about how does your kitchen need to perform for you and your family. So if you've got a show kitchen,

because you really don't cook very often, as I was saying earlier, that is going to determine, the materials that you can choose.

You won't need to be as cautious around materials that may be, you know, Like a Kara Carrera marble is quite porous. And so they're great for show kitchens, but if you're someone that's going to cook frequently and lemon and red wine and not going to be its friend, because it's so poorest, then you know, that is also going to determine then what materials you're going to use.

If you know that you're going to have kids bashing into that. The side of the bench all the time and kicking their feet underneath, you know, that's going to also determine really hard-wearing materials that are not going to stress you out. because the kids are being, you know, a bit rough and tumble.

We things. I think about how this kitchen is going to perform for you and your family. So if you don't cook that frequently, you know, you can have more of a show kitchen, how much lateral space do you need and not just lateral space for pastry and baking and things like that, but also lateral space for having it as a, a breakfast bar, having it as a wine bar, when your friends come over and they're all leaning over the bench because that's really the hub of the home.

but think about the lateral space that you may need when you're entertaining and that, that big. Island bench can actually become a buffet area where all your, food is prepared and people can serve themselves. So this lateral space is really important. And is it an entertainment zone? Is it going to be a casual dining area and a breakfast bar?

Is it going to be an area where you may end up doing the bookwork? is it going to be where the kids are going to do their homework so he can keep an eye on what they're doing on their screens? So what are other. things does your kitchen need to do, rather than it being just a food preparation area.

And we also need to be really, considerate and very, I'd say plan in terms of what storage do we need. And interestingly, I just did a podcast last week with the art of decluttering and we talked around. How, today, Claudia, but we also talked about, how to work out and design around your storage needs.

So rather than, as I was saying before, having cabinetry for cabinetry sakes, it's working out, what do we need to store? How do I need to store it? And where do I need to store it? And I was talking on that podcast about that in terms of a whole home perspective, but think about it from a kitchen perspective, what do you need to store?

Where do you want it to be stored? So it's really easy for you to access. So things that you're going to need on a daily basis. A weekly basis versus things that you only get out at Christmas time or things that you really only get out once or twice a year when you've got big entertaining, when, when you're entertaining for a large amount of people.

So how often you need to access, is it important? Cause that'll determine where, where it goes. the size of these and how much of it you may have, that will also determine the, where it needs to go, but also what it is. So things like these are things that I want you to think about. Where's your food going to go?

And it might be daily things like your oil and your spices that you need to access while you're cooking versus pantry store items versus fresh produce. so think about your food. Think about your appliances and I'm not talking about your stove and your dishwasher. they are also important and there's going to be a whole podcast just on appliances, but always smaller appliances, your kitchen, age, your toast star, your sandwich maker, your popcorn maker.

In our deep dive, we list about 20 different appliances that you may have in your kitchen. And we think about where are they going to go? One of the key ones is the microwave. you know, is it going to go in the, in the. Would you ideally like it in the pantry? So it's out of sight or do you want it in the kitchen?

Cause the kids use it all the time. We will be talking about, about that in the appliance episode, but are you after a teen coffee station where everything's together? So does that mean that where your counselees does that mean you want all your team coffee, right? Where the kettle, or do you want that in another location?

Is it going to be a kid's prep area so that they can easily access their cereals? They're toast? All those sorts of things. So that they're a little bit more independent and self sufficient. Where are you going to put all your baking items, your baking trays, your teams and all those sorts of things.

How often do you bike? Do you have much, in terms of bakeware that you need to store? Some of that stuff may be ideally stored upright. Some of it may be better in drawers. So think about those items too. What about your beans? How many bins do you need and do you, would you prefer to have them large or small?

They are going to be in a different drawer. You're happy to have them under the sink. How often do you want to go out to, to the bend, to actually take out your kitchen waste to the, to the bin that's actually going to be collected? Where are your chopping boards going to go? What about your detergents and your trays and your chopping boards?

your cookware. your crockery, your glasses and your mugs. Some of those things will be in cupboards. Some of those things will be in draws in you coffee station. You may have all your mugs right there. So effectively when you're at your casual, you and your coffee machine, everything is there. You don't need to take a step.

Other people like all those things to be together, depending on how often they are making tea and coffee. So this is where your frequency of access. What you're needing to access and what you need to store is so critical. And you can see just going through this process, what the impact on it. It has on the design of your kitchen.

And so I don't want you to go down the route of, yeah, we've got a whole lot of cupboards and we've got a whole lot of drawers and we basically are just going to do a bit of guesswork as to where this all all goes. And I see it happen so many times rather than designing right from the outset and assessing everything that you've got to, everything has a place.

And when you move back in. You will know where everything goes. We got even going into the detail of saying, every single cupboard and draw exactly. What's going to go in there based on the kitchen, deep dive, we know what's required. So we've got a place for absolutely everything. So you can assess it all at floor plan, stage, ideally.

and then you can make changes rather than moving in and saying, ah, I don't really have a spot for that, or it's not really where I wanted it to go. The thinking is, is critical. And for those of you who follow me as well, Well, I know that I say this a lot and that is floor plan is King. And so all these detail in your joinery design effectively determined how you're going to work and live and be in that kitchen space.

So getting back to what are other things that you need to store plastic containers? Do you want to have a utility drawer where you can have pens, paper, tea, towels. You know, close to hand, where your oven mitts going to go, you cooking utensils. you know, in my own kitchen, I've got utensils that I've got in my walking pantry for when I'm actually preparing, and baking in there because that's where the kitchen eighties.

But I also then have another set, next to the stove for different types of cooking. So. And I actually also have, and this is probably because my husband and I each had a set of, you know, really good nose when we met each other because we're both really big cooks. So we've got a block of knives in the walking pantry and we've got a block of knives in our actual kitchen space.

So, you know, where are those things going to go? And what do you want to have on show? You may have a magnificent coffee machine that you actually really want to be pride of place in the kitchen, or would you prefer to have that in the walk in pantry? What about your cookbooks? It's really lovely to walk into a kitchen where they have got other elements in there.

And it's not just cabinetry. You might have some open shelves for maybe beautiful kitchen artifacts or some antique scales, or to have a trailing plant or to have your cookbooks on display. It may even be the ones that you use really frequently. And the other ones that you don't use as frequently can be actually stored somewhere else.

So it all comes back to what do you want to be stored? And ideally, how would it all be configured? What are the cleaning requirements as well? So what drives you mad? Are there fingerprints on cupboards that are just gonna, you know, drive you absolutely bat crazy. Then we need to think about what the materials may be.

And there's going to be a whole episode just on cabinetry materials. and, and that's going to help you determine what are the materials that are really critical for you in terms of what are your bug bears for cleaning? You know, I've had a client who. Had a melamine kitchen and it was wide and it was really difficult for her to clean because over the years, all the little bits of grind basically get stuck in the particles.

it's not as smooth surface, so that drive her absolutely nuts. And so we absolutely made sure, that we weren't specifying a product that was going to drive her crazy. I mean, when you're building a new kitchen, you want to make sure that all those little bugbears from your current kitchen are absolutely eliminated.

But you also would want to think about, is the cleaning requirement more important than the aesthetics? And this will also come down to your durability requirements and whether they're going to be in functionality, going to be more important than aesthetics. Sometimes you need to weigh up and you may need to make a compromise in one area to fulfill your other requirement.

That is more important. So really how to determine what you need in your kitchen involves a lot of sitting down and working out what you need, what you need in terms of your, your storage requirements, what you need from a cleaning requirement, the type of kitchen that you're going to have, the lifestyle that this kitchen is going to give you the type of cook that you are.

but also. Really critically that you're not just putting in a whole lot of cabinetry to fill a space without it being analyzed in detail where everything goes for me, everything should have a place before the kitchen is even being before it even starts being built. So I hope that that has helped you in terms of thinking about.

And creating an analysis. If you do need some assistance, we've working out. Goodness, me. How am I going to know where everything goes? you know, we can perform a kitchen, deep dive with you and, and then you've got that analysis piece. So by all means, get in touch, you know, we're here to, to help you get the best out of your kitchen.

And as they always say, kitchen, sell homes, but also kitchens when it is your forever home. And we're not thinking about. Our resale value at that point in time, but kitchens are the absolute core to a home and because they need to perform so many different functions, you don't want to mess up the design and compromise on getting really good joinery design.

That's going to work for you so much harder than if it's just, you know, a plugin, you know, we're just going to do this cause we've always done it like this, in terms of your cabinetry. So, go away and have a really good think about what you have. And it's also an awesome opportunity to do a little bit of decluttering appliances that you really don't use for you use them once a year, but you could actually do without them get rid of them.

And I encourage you to listen to the art of decluttering, a podcast it's actually called your forever home. And it was launched on the 22nd of June. So you'll be able to find that on the art of

decluttering a website, because we do talk about how to design. The storage rather than the other way around trying to fit a square peg into a round hole.

So have some fun, doing a little bit of analysis on how you want your kitchen to be and how you're going to store everything. And where's everything going to have a place. And how often do you need to access it? Which will often then determine where it needs to go. So until next time, the kitchen design essentially season next week is going to be all about kitchen design layouts.

So what are the, the different designs and the different types of layout. And I'm going to be talking about the advantages and disadvantages. About that. And we're also going to have our first guest, so that's going to be exciting. And, I hope that you have got a lot of information now to go and do a little bit of analysis for your own kitchen.

And I look forward to having you here next week. Bye for now.

END OF TRANSCRIPT

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