

Frequently Asked Questions About Kitchen Remodeling

How long does a kitchen remodeling project typically take from start to finish?

At the risk of sounding elusive, we really must say that “it depends.” The scope of the kitchen remodel dictates how long the project will take. For example, if you are removing a wall or tow to open up the kitchen, which is a very common trend now, the actual construction will obviously take a little bit longer. Once demo begins you should anticipate 6-8 weeks of construction.

1. **Meet with a remodeling consultant for a Free Design Consultation and get proposal – 1-2 weeks.**
2. **Meet at our showroom, finalize the scope of the project and the terms of a Remodeling Agreement – 2-3 weeks.**
3. **Select all the materials for the project – 1-4 weeks.**
4. **Materials are ordered and delivered – 4-8 weeks.**
5. **Demolition and removal of old materials and appliances – 1 week.**
6. **Installation of new materials and appliances, flooring, plumbing and electrical work, painting – 3-4 weeks.**
7. **Finishing touches and clean-up – 1-2 weeks.**



What do I need to do to prepare for my kitchen renovation?

You can start by getting a good idea for the type of look and style you want. If you don't know yet, look at some magazines, websites, or watch some home remodeling shows to get some design ideas. Then, contact us for a Free Design Consultation with a Remodeling Consultant. You will be instructed by your Remodeling Consultant as to what exact steps you need to take. But, generally speaking before construction begins, you'll want to clean out the area being worked on of all your personal belongings that can be removed. Although we cover the areas surrounding our work area, you'll want to protect your furniture from dust with plastic and/or sheets.

What is the typical workflow for a kitchen renovation?

1. Select your remodeler
2. Create design
3. Select and order materials
4. Building Permits applied for
5. Demolition
6. Deliver materials
7. Framing if needed





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8. Rough electric
9. Rough Plumbing
10. Inspection required before walls are closed up
11. Wall preparation
12. Sub floor preparation
13. Cabinet installation
14. Countertop template
15. Flooring installation
16. Priming and painting
17. Countertop installation
18. Backsplash installation
19. Finish plumbing – dishwasher, sink and faucet installation
20. Finish trimming out cabinets
21. Door hardware installation

22. Finish electric – light fixtures, outlets, under cabinets...
23. Final inspections
24. Touch-up items

Do I have to pull a building permit?

Yes- New Leaf remodeling always pulls building permits and gives proof of insurance with every proposal.

Given the various consequences that can result from failure to pull required permits you should wonder why any licensed insured General Contractor does not. Maybe they are not properly licensed. Or, it may be that his installation practices routinely ignore code and he simply doesn't want to get flagged in an inspection. Take the contractor who, instead of venting a bathroom fan outside, as code requires, routinely vents it into the attic (where warm, moist air will, in time, wreak havoc on framing).

A building permit protects you as a homeowner- Permits require a code-enforcement inspector to sign off on work at various stages, depending on the scope of work. That provides assurance that the framing, plumbing, electrical or other work meets code.

A lack of required permits may affect your home's insurance coverage. If no permit was pulled on the roofing work, and a claim is at some point filed with the company that wrote the homeowners' insurance policy because for any reason the roof failed, the insurer is perfectly within its rights to deny the claim.

Do I have to buy everything?

NO – That is a major component of what makes us a full-service firm. The fact that we are able to design everything for you, help you choose the materials, and place orders with our preferred suppliers, makes it very convenient for clients and gives you piece of mind knowing we will ensure accuracy, take care of delivery and handle warranty claims.



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What features should I plan to invest the most in for my new kitchen?

From a functional standpoint, cabinetry is probably the most expensive item in the kitchen, mainly because of its sheer volume. However, you can also spend a lot of money on your countertops and flooring, depending on the style and materials you like.



What type of return on investment can I expect from remodeling my kitchen if I sell my home?

According to Remodeling magazine's annual Cost vs. Value Report, for the year 2019 American should expect to make back 66.1% of the money they spend on renovations – a slight bump from last year's 65.8%. The national average return on investment for kitchen remodeling is between 62% and 81% depending upon whether it is a major or minor project and whether the budget is upscale or moderate.

Is re-facing a good solution when your budget is tight?



Of course, re-facing is less expensive than replacing cabinets – but it is not recommended by New Leaf Remodeling. If you are planning to replace doors and drawer fronts, you'll also need to replace the front face of the cabinet frame to make sure the doors and visible parts of the cabinet match. Re-facing the frame is where the problems usually occur. If the laminate shifts or peels away, an unattractive seam shows. This is the most typical complaint among re-facing clients.

Another reason not to re-face is cost. The most expensive part – about 70% of a cabinet's cost – is the door. Consider this, if you are already paying for most of the cabinet, why not add a little more and upgrade to completely new cabinets?

There are many options available in cabinets for every budget. If you are already committed to spending time, money and effort on remodeling, consider the value and enjoyment you'll gain by opting for brand new cabinets.



What's the better cabinet choice – particleboard or plywood?

This is one of the most frequently asked questions when researching cabinets. There is a general perception that plywood is better than particleboard – maybe because plywood has the word “wood” in it. Most people figure plywood is real wood while particleboard is a cheap imitation. Surprisingly, in many cases particleboard is a much better option than plywood.



In order to make the best decision; let's define these two materials. Plywood is composed of thin sheets of wood glued together. Particleboard is made of tiny wood particles held together with adhesive. Both are strong, durable and make a good cabinet. Also, there are different types and grades of plywood and particleboard. High-density particleboard is

stronger and will last longer than plywood. All wood expands and contracts because of changes in humidity. Generally, particleboard is more resistant to expansion and contraction. So in areas with significant changes in humidity – like Illinois – particleboard is the better option.

Is it a good idea to purchase kitchen cabinets at Ikea?



We love Ikea. The Scandinavian design is beautiful and the prices are too good to be true. It's a great place to research European design ideas. Here's how Ikea works: Ikea is a high volume retailer offering low priced European-style kitchens. All Ikea products are manufactured in Sweden and shipped to the U.S to keep shipping costs low, all items are shipped and sold disassembled and the buyer must assemble the cabinets. This works well with tables or bookcases but is very problematic with kitchens.

Imagine purchasing a kitchen consisting of 10 cabinets. If you received 10 assembled cabinets, all you have to do is install them.

However, Ikea kitchens come in hundreds – even thousands – of pieces and there is a chance at least one piece will be missing. In addition, the assembly process takes time – which will be more costly if you are paying for labor. Another issue is the strength of the cabinet. A cabinet assembled on the job site will never be as strong and precise as a cabinet manufactured in a factory. In addition, Ikea uses very low-density particleboard. If you need to re-drill or nail the cabinet in the future, there is a good chance the low-density material will crumble.

Is a BOX Store a good source for purchasing kitchen cabinetry?

Box stores can be a great source. The huge stores are very convenient with everything found under one roof, and their prices are known to be the best in the market. This is not true, however, with kitchen cabinets. Kitchen cabinet prices are very similar to those of smaller kitchen cabinet dealers. Box stores like Home Depot has shown tremendous success as a high volume, low priced retailer, but if you are looking for personalized, high quality service, that's not where box stores shine.



The most common complaint about box store customers is that “you are on your own.” No one devotes time to your project – helping you understand, plan, design, price and make the best choices. To keep costs low and prices very competitive, their service must remain basic. Stores are generally understaffed, and most employees are not trained designers or contractors.

Is it a good idea to install wood flooring in the kitchen?

Wood flooring is not usually recommended for kitchens. That said, it’s still a very popular choice. If it works visually, go ahead and use it – especially if you are opening the kitchen into an adjacent space with wood flooring. Generally, designers choose other materials over wood because of both the “wear and tear factor” and possible exposure to water damage. Because the kitchen is a high traffic area, the finish will wear off a wood floor more quickly than in other low traffic parts of your home and will need to be refinished periodically. Also, because there is plumbing in a kitchen, wood floors are at risk for water damage. A tile floor is more resistant to leaks and humidity. There are several new wood floor alternatives to consider that will provide you with the look of real wood minus the worry.



I have a “popcorn” ceiling. Is it possible to make it smooth? Is it a good idea?

Popcorn ceilings are usually made of stucco or sand paint. This technique was used on construction during the ‘70’s and ‘80’s for the purpose of hiding imperfections in concrete slab ceilings that were never 100% level. In some cases, chunks of these ceilings are beginning to crumble. When repairing a popcorn ceiling, it’s nearly impossible to make the repair invisible.

There are two ways to make these ceilings smooth. One is to scrape and skim coat. This requires more work but will not affect the ceiling height. The second way is to frame and Sheetrock the ceiling. This technique is faster but will drop the ceiling height by at least a couple of inches. In some cases, it may be an advantage because new framing will allow you to run wiring for ceiling light fixtures or speakers. Wiring through concrete slab ceilings can be very challenging. In addition, some buildings do not permit running wiring in concrete slab ceilings. Changing a “popcorn” ceiling to a smooth surface ceiling is a popular trend. Not only does it allow for better wiring, it also makes the space look cleaner and less dated.

What’s the number ONE way to minimize costs in a kitchen remodel?

Not relocating walls, plumbing or electrical is the best way to minimize your expenses.

