

The Eleven Most Problematic Kitchens And How to Solve Them

Most of us are collectors and gatherers of all kinds of cooking gadgets, countertop appliances, things that slice, that dice and Hey! It even makes Julienne Fries! Not to mention that fabulous and seldom used set of pot and pans you purchased and paid an extraordinary amount of money for. Lest we forget the antique rolling pin that Grandma (on your mother's side) left you even though she knew you never bake. Who can resist those late night infomercials with Ron Popiel cooking all those tasty looking roasts and chickens that go round and round, after all dinner was five hours ago and by this time you're hungry again. After twenty minutes of "Set it and Forget It" you're ready to pull out the credit card and buy.

Have you ever noticed that even though you have all those specialty appliances and pots and pans, you seem to use only a few "Favorite" ones over and over, day after day? The others just take up valuable countertop work surface and cabinet storage space. There is an array of storage solutions to organize your kitchen on the market today, but the real solutions come from the cook. I can't tell anyone how to cook, what pot to use or what's for dinner tonight. However I can share with you the ideas and lessons I've learned by listening to my customers, women as well as men over the course of my thirty one plus years in the kitchen business. How you use your kitchen is personal and unique to each individual. I have designed kitchens for gourmet cooks who spell out in great detail what they want and where they want it. To the other end of the spectrum where the customer wants a beautiful kitchen to entertain in but could really care less how functional it is. Their idea of preparing dinner consists of a call to the restaurant to make reservations, and this is ok as well. A kitchen should reflect the owner's personality and lifestyle.

I have determined the eleven most common problems cooks encounter in a typical kitchen and with tongue in cheek have given them names as follows.

The Way Back There Kitchen

1. Before going to the grocery store, you rummage around in your cabinets trying to determine what is needed. After several minutes of trying to get way back there to see what you have, you give up in frustration go to the grocery store and buy one of everything just in case.

The George Foreman Kitchen

2. George Forman and Ron Popiel, et al have taken over your kitchen countertops, so that all you have left for a work station is the edge of the countertop.

The Oh Where Oh Where can it be Kitchen

3. You open the base cabinet door to get your favorite Pasta Pot at which time two sauce pans and one glass lid falls out onto the floor scaring the cat and making it jump on the drapes. The dog decides to get into the action by barking. At this point you give up the search and simply accuse your husband of using it for some unsanitary purpose such as using it to change the oil in his truck.

The Twilight Zone Kitchen

4. You go into a section of your kitchen that you never use and for the life of you, you can't figure out why it is there or what purpose this area serves. At this time you ask yourself "Is it just me or am I in the Twilight Zone?"

The One Butt Kitchen

5. Everyone is over for the big holiday dinner at your house, you are busy in the kitchen and your mother in law absolutely insists on helping. After bumping into her at least four times and waiting what seems like an eternity for her to move so you can use the sink, you inadvertently blurt out a comment to her that only your husband will regret.

The Hotel California Kitchen

6. When you are working in your kitchen, separated from your family or friends you feel isolated, trapped and unable to get out.

The Marathon Kitchen

7. While cooking in your kitchen your appliances are so far apart you must run from the refrigerator to the range to the sink in an endless circle to accomplish any task. Having no warm up or cool down sessions between laps.

The Planned Obsolescence

8. Your Kitchen appliances have aged, sometimes not well. Only three burners on the range operate properly, the fourth can be used, must be watched continually and usually has only one setting which is HIGH. You occasionally must chip dried on food off the clean dishes in the dishwasher whose pot scrubber cycle sometimes sets itself. The ice dispenser on the refrigerator only works when it's spitting ice cubes on the floor and the appliance repairman has informed you it's not cost effective to repair.

The Darkside Kitchen

9. You walk into your kitchen flip on the light switch; the problem is its still dark even though the light is on. Shadows are cast wherever you are working making it making it even more difficult to see what you are doing.

The MacDonald's Kitchen

10. If on the other hand you flip of the switch, the lights come on and are so bright you feel like you've just walked into MacDonald's.

The Leave It to Beaver Kitchen

11. You look at your kitchen and realize that it resembles a cross between the kitchen sets used on television shows such as, "All in the Family", "Roseanne", "Friends", or "Everybody Loves Raymond". Remember if you wait long enough everything comes back in style.

Yeah Right!

What type of kitchen or combinations of kitchens do you have? But seriously, at the heart of almost all these problems is the lack of organization. First identify the source of the problem and then think it through to a logical solution, a solution that works for you. Whether you are designing a kitchen from scratch for a new home (this is the ultimate possibility) a major renovation of your existing kitchen (this is the next best thing) or a scaled down remodel simply to update the area, there are opportunities to organize and maximize your space making time spent in the kitchen more efficient as well as more enjoyable.

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