



KITCHEN DESIGN THROUGH THE AGES

When we sit in our kitchens it is hard to believe that they were once a dark and dingy place seldom visited by anyone other than women or servants. Today's kitchens are the hub of the home and tend towards furniture installations rather than practical cabinetry. So, how did we get to the stunning open plan, clean lined kitchens we enjoy? Over the decades trends and styles have shaped the kitchen's development and we can still see many of those influences today.



1930's – It was in the 1930's that we saw the kitchen take its first real steps away from the hovels of the past to make it an integrated part of the home. For the first time the kitchen became more than just a place to cook food but a functioning and accessible part of the house. It is here we see the first breakfast bars making an appearance, some even folding out of cupboards, as well as the first real glimpses of colour. Paint and the invention of Bakelite allowed homeowners to bring their kitchens to life with splashes of colour and colourful accessories.



1940's – World War two forced kitchen design to stand still. With all resources and man-power being directed at the war effort the idea of updating your

kitchen became not only frivolous but impossible. This forced reservedness in the 40's only helped to bolster the explosion of developments in the 50's and 60's.

1950's – Kitchen developments in the 50's were huge. It is here that we saw the arrival of the fully fitted kitchen as we know it today. Despite being small kitchens in the 50's became a place of expression. Colours became brighter with a focus on 'bubble-gum' shades of pink and blue as well as the iconic combinations of red, white and black. Colour even spread to the appliances. Formica or laminate tops came to the fore and cabinets were often painted. We also see the first glimpse of 'open-plan' design with American 'diner-style' eating areas and seating.

1960's – Nature inspired the colour pallet for the 60's. We see a focus on earthy browns, greens and yellows combined with natural materials like timber, brick and stone. As homes increased in size so did the kitchen. The kitchen island makes its first appearance increasing the focus on the kitchen as an entertainment area. The 60's were all about convenience and with the advent of the microwave the kitchen became a trophy room rather than one focused on food preparation.

1970's – Bold patterns were key to 70's design. These patterns added to heavy wooden panelling, dinettes and cabinetry made the kitchen a busy if somewhat dark space. This was offset by the introduction of large windows to the kitchen. The need for extra light to offset the dark colour palette spurred the opening of the kitchen to the garden to allow it to become a true entertainment area.

1980's – With the increase of middle-class disposable income kitchens became bigger and better. There was a move away from flat-panel, painted and laminate cabinets to solid timbers in warm hues. There was a move back to the sturdy and practical. The classic 'country' kitchen became popular inspired by shaker doors and florals. Laminate tops remained popular due to the developments of the material allowing it to be manufactured in a diverse range of colours and



patterns. Geometric patterns were also popular graduating from the bold patterns use of the 70's.

1990's – A sense of calm arrived with the 90's. There was a move to lighter colours with timbers



like beach and maple becoming popular. Walls were returned to white and there was a greater focus on clean lines. Integrated appliances made their first appearance removing the bulk of visible appliances to the design. The kitchen island once again became popular. DIY upgrades by painting drawer front, door inners or frames became common. The influence of Scandinavian design could be felt with the advent of monochrome kitchens where white or light cabinets were offset by black granite. Here is where we see the move away from laminate tops to the luxury of stone. We also see the kitchen truly opening to the outdoors with the addition of sliding or folding doors.

2000 to present – The millennium saw the move to the kitchens we know and love today. Clean lines, ergonomic design, lots of light, natural materials and colours, beautiful stone, engineered stone, timber or solid surface countertops.... A place where we can live, work and entertain would not have been possible without the developments of the past and the designers who imagined them.

