



KITCHEN LIVING INDOORS TO OUTDOORS

When it comes to the South African home, we can truly say the kitchen is the heart. As South Africans our lives and cultures revolve around family, food, friends and our glorious weather. As such it is not surprising to see that more and more South African homes showcase a seamless transition from indoors to outdoors.

Outdoor living and entertaining are integral to the modern South African home. The ability to feel like you are outdoors when you are indoors as well as the ability to have indoor amenities when you are outdoors makes a property very inviting.

The most common way to do this is by bringing the outside inside. Clever design with large windows and good landscaping can make it feel like your kitchen and entertainment area are actually outdoors. Add to this fold-back glass doors and your indoors has a seamless transition to the outdoors. It is vital that your kitchen is the central hub of such a space to ensure it is practical for entertaining and that the host is never far from the guests. To hide the dirty dishes and clutter in

this open environment a scullery is an important addition. The scullery becomes a pivotal part of the kitchen, offering a secret hide away for those unsightly pots and pans leaving your kitchen clean and tidy.



The much beloved braai kamer, is one of the most common ways of achieving this indoor/outdoor transition. This room uniquely combines normal kitchen cooking with a braai. It is important to consider how you do this. Having a traditional braai indoors requires an effective chimney if the smell of braai smoke isn't going to permeate the whole house. For the non-purist there are a large range of gas braais available on the market that will facilitate indoor braaiing without the hassle of smoke. To make the design seamless and contemporary these braais would usually be built in. If you are using a gas braai built into a countertop it is important to realise that these units generate a lot of heat. This means that if your surfacing is granite or quartz it will need some insulation from the heat generated to avoid the surfacing going into thermal shock and cracking. You should also



check your local fire regulations about an indoor open flame. Where there is a chance of a flame flair-up, fire legislation may insist a good quality extractor with metal filters, ducted to the outside, be installed above the grill / gas braai.

A successful braai kamer will always have basic kitchen elements to make it properly functional. Worksurface for food preparation, a water point and a bar fridge are a must for a good entertainment area. The key is setting this up in an elegant and sophisticated way so that it doesn't look like you have parked part of your kitchen in your entertainment area. Placement of the sink should be subtle and the finishes you use should tie in well with the décor of the rest of your home as well as to the outside. Materials used should be practical, resilient and easy to clean.

Bringing the indoors outdoors is not quite as easy to achieve. The materials usually used to make an indoor kitchen will not have good longevity to the outdoor elements. Wind, sun and rain will take its toll. To create a good outdoor entertainment area that features a cooking station you need to think practically for materials with good longevity when exposed to the elements. You want the area to have minimal maintenance. Look to materials like concrete and timbers that are commonly used

for all weather situations like Balau and Teak. Use top quality stainless steel and if you are wanting to include decorative surfacing like quartz, granite or sintered surfacing first check that the material can be installed outdoors without compromising the guarantee.

It is important to choose the right location for your outside cooking station. If it is too far from the house and its amenities it may not be used as regularly as you had hoped. It will also make the supply of water and electricity difficult and expensive. While a braai is always a natural inclusion for an outdoor cooking station if you want the area to be truly versatile consider some form of hot plate for slower cooking or warming of side dishes, and don't forget a facility for that South African favourite – the potjie. The inclusion of good lighting, a small sink, bar fridge or cooler box and storage facilities for braai grids, utensils etc will help make the area a practical space. You don't want to have to keep running back to the main house to fetch things. It is also advisable to have some cover from the elements whether that be natural cover from trees or your own cover included as part of the design of the space. This way, rain or shine, you can make use of the area.

We are truly blessed to live in a country with such wonderful vistas and weather and it's fantastic to see kitchen designers celebrating this in their designs. This celebration of indoor/outdoor home living is pushing South African kitchen designers to experiment with different materials and to challenge their designs to be more organic and to seamlessly link the interior of the house to the exterior experience. For a family that likes to entertain and the outdoors this multi-functional idea of bringing outdoor cooking inside and facilitating kitchen cooking outside makes your home truly versatile and the real heart of the home.

