

SINK ABOUT IT

Your sink is one of the most hard-working items you have in your kitchen. A study shows that you can spend up to 5.5 hours at the sink per week if you don't have a dishwasher. It gets heavy pots and pans banged against it, it is used to stack large volumes of dirty plates and dishes, it handles daily exposure to grease, food, high pigment drinks and foodstuffs. This is why you should consider carefully what type of sink you will choose.

The right kitchen sink for your home depends on a variety of factors, including personal preference, aesthetic design, durability, maintenance, cost, lifespan, and resistances.



First thing to look at is the quality of the sink and the material it is made from. Some material options are more durable, allowing them to stand up to heavy-duty use in a busy household, while other kitchen sink materials are valued for the elegant finish rather than high use and functionality. Today we can find sinks made of stainless steel, copper and brass, enameled cast iron/enameled steel, fired clay, solid surfacing/acrylic resin, quartz surfacing, granite/stone composite, fragranite, tecthonite, acrylic, porcelain, sintered surfacing, and stone. When choosing the material your sink



is going to be made from you need to consider the following:

- Will it discolour - if exposed to things like wine and curry, environmental factors and chemicals?
- Will it dent, scratch or chip if you bump it, drop something in it or leave it full of pans and dishes?
- Do you run the risk of damaging your glassware or special dinnerware because of the sinks hard material?
- How easy is the material to keep clean and looking good?
- If you chip the sink or scratch it, does the colour of the material go the whole way through the sink or will the chip/scratch show another base colour?

There are a few important things to take note of when it comes to certain material choices. For stainless steel you must consider what grade of steel has been used to make the sink. You can also get some stainless-steel sinks in an anti-scratch finish. For copper and brass you need to remember that these will need regular polishing to avoid tarnishing. Your enameled sinks like a butler sink take up a lot of space and are very unforgiving if you drop something in them. Sinks made from quartz surfacing are a little controversial. While they look stunning and appear in a lot of magazines, they require the stone fabricator to contravene the normal rules of cutting and working with the



material to get that modern square look. You need to be aware that if you opt for this type of sink the material warranty on the stone will be void. If you opt for a sink made from sintered surfacing, you need to know that depending on how it is fabricated, it can be prone to chipping if it is bumped on the corners with a pot or a plate. If you are considering a stone composite sink, remember you get various qualities of sink in this style – make sure that the colour of the composite runs the whole way through the sink and is not just on the surface or, if the sink scratches, you will see a white scratch on a black sink. You also need to be careful about the chemicals you use on the sink, as the wrong ones can cause darker colors to fade and turn grey.

Next you need to consider the depth and size of the sink, how this relates to the space you have available and how you like to do your dishes. You need to think about the number of dishes that will accumulate in the sink at any one time. Do you have large pots and serving dishes that require extra deep bowls to allow you to clean them properly? Do you need a drainer to place washed goods onto? Do you need a single or double bowl sink to handle the washing load?



There are numerous sink configurations to consider. Single bowl sinks are ideal for smaller kitchens or a single person household. Double bowl sinks are ideal for families, people who like to wash and rinse, and those that generate a lot of washing. Triple bowls or sinks with a third area that can be used for rinsing, peelings, storing cleaning items are less common but useful. Corner units are ideal for making constructive use of awkward spaces in a smaller kitchen. You then need to decide if you want a drainer. If you do, do you want the drainer to be on



the left or right-hand side? For left-handed people a sink with a left-hand drainer will be a lot more user friendly. The third consideration is whether you go drop in, inset or underslung. Drop-in sinks are a lot easier to install whereas underslung sinks can cause issues if not installed correctly. They must be installed and fixed in place with the correct fixing solution or over time they will loosen and possibly drop out of place with a full load of washing. An inset or flush mount sink is one of the more complicated to install as the worksurface needs to be cut or routed to make the sink flush with the worktop. Very few fabricators and installers can get this right.

Finally, you need to consider the sink's aesthetic – how will the look of the sink tie into the overall kitchen design.

Once the choice is made you need to ensure you keep your sink looking its best. It is recommended that you clean your sink daily, even if it is just a quick wipe-down with a sponge or a rinse to remove any lingering food particles. Additionally, deep cleaning with a disinfectant should be done at least once a week to keep it sanitized. Remember not to store any harsh chemicals under your sink as these can cause corrosion. Also avoid defrosting directly on the drainer as condensation can form in the underside of the drainer causing spot rust.

The sink often gets the least consideration in a kitchen – the attitude is often, 'it's just a sink, we will pop down to the local store and make a choice'. But the reality is that if your sink is going to go the distance aesthetically and functionally you need to do a little research and put in some time and effort to ensure that you make the right choice for how you live and what you want the overall look to be.

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