

Furniture & Design Trends



Kitchen Ideas

Building or remodeling your kitchen is a big commitment, and you want to invest your money well.

Here are five areas on which to focus your resources:

LIGHT AND AIRY

It's all about bright spaces, and your kitchen sits center stage. A white kitchen is a classic choice. Gray and white are among the most popular choices for cabinetry, especially for homeowners looking for a modern touch.

In fact, 67 percent of members of the National Kitchen and Bath Association said white was their top choice for cabinets — a 20 percent increase in the last two years.

MODERN CABINET TECHNOLOGY

Speaking of cabinets, hydraulic, easy-close doors are all the rage. Cabinets are turning on their sides, and doors fold up and out of the way — perfect for smaller kitchens and tight spaces.

Instead of the traditional “door-style” lower cabinet, consider drawers. We are used to seeing drawers for silverware and kitchen towels, but longer, larger drawers are becoming more popular. They are wide and deep enough to hold stock pots, and since they pull out, you won't be down on your



hands and knees to reach the slow cooker that got wedged in the back.

OPEN SHELVING

You also can forego upper cabinets completely. A trend that is gaining serious head-nods, open shelving not only lends itself to the “light and airy” atmosphere, but allows you to display pretty crockery,

bowls, mugs and dinnerware.

Thinking outside the box with your cabinetry can make all the difference in achieving your dramatic design goals.

MAKE A SPLASH

Your backsplash is a place to show off your style and inject a dose of personality in the room. Too often, people see “light and airy” or think “white

kitchen” and end up with a more of a blank canvas than a room that is bright but inviting.

Choose a bold color for contrast or a tile with a unique print. Simple tile — including white subway tile — also can be made more exciting by laying it in an interesting way, such as vertically or in a chevron pattern.

BOLD DETAILS

A great way to update your kitchen to make the biggest impact with minimal effort is to focus on the details. Think architectural faucets and new pulls for the cabinets.

These touches are easy to change out and come in a variety of styles, making them fluid pieces of your overall design scheme.



Bathroom Design Guide

Every element in your bathroom can be functional and beautiful. If you plan to make upgrades, consider the following tips before starting a new project.

ADD INDULGENCE

Bathrooms are a utilitarian necessity, but we also associate them with self-pampering, which is why most swoon-worthy bathrooms remind us

of a spa.

Add a few indulgent features to your bathroom, such as a rainwater showerhead or a steaming system for your shower. Swap out your traditional bath faucet for a waterfall design for an extra touch of glam.

CONSIDER FURNITURE OVER CABINETRY

Using a piece of furniture in the more functional rooms of the house, such as the bathroom and laundry room, help those rooms feel like spaces in their own right and not something to be hidden behind a closed door.

There is something “Versailles-inspired” about using a dresser as a sink vanity. Place a nightstand-like table by the bathtub to hold hand towels and bath salts. Prefer a southern or country-inspired style? Use a wooden ladder over a towel bar and a galvanized milk can for your waste basket.

REFRESH THE FLOORING

Bathrooms are often smaller than most other rooms in a house, and so it is easier to purchase a more luxurious product because you don’t need very much.

Beige porcelain is out, and darker,

natural stone laid in a contemporary pattern is in. Slate is great choice for bathrooms because it is waterproof and slip resistant.

STAGE THE SCENE

Bathrooms often get overlooked when it comes to decorating. You should consider the space in a similar manner to every other room in your home.

Hang artwork and arrange your toiletries in attractive bottles on shelves or on the counter. Are your bath towels in plain sight? Consider rolling them instead of folding them for an easy spa-inspired look.

Splurge or Save?

Moving into your own place is a major accomplishment. Whether you are on your own for the first time, relocating for a job, or downsizing after retirement, furnishing your home and decorating is a large task and can be a little stressful.

Choose where and how to spend your money wisely. The right choices will make all the difference to your own comfort.

SPLURGE HERE

Mattress: You cannot put a price on a good night's sleep. Not to mention avoiding a lifetime's worth of back problems, stiff muscles and achy joints. You don't have to blow your budget, but spend as much as you can reasonably afford. Your health is everything. If you aren't sleeping well, your mattress shouldn't be the culprit.

Sofa: Your sofa is not something you want to buy second-hand if you can help it. It will be one of the most-used pieces of furniture in your home, and your backside will thank you for not skimping in this department.

Rugs: A good rug will completely transform a room and generally is a key element to achieving the "cozy" feeling of a home. One with all natural fibers (think wool and cotton) will last longer than "blends" because they handle daily wear and tear like a champ. While size and material also affect price, a large natural fiber rug is an investment piece that will bring you years of comfort.



SAVE HERE

Accent furniture:

Headboards, nightstands, side tables and additional seating in the living room (outside of your sofa). There is no need to spend a lot of money on these items. Statement head boards can be DIY'd, and nightstands

and side tables can be found second-hand, or at inexpensive retailers for a fraction of the price. Remember, you will only be setting small items, such as a drink or a magazine, on them, so sturdy construction is not a priority.

Accessories: These are the

pieces that update a room through the seasons and are normally fairly trendy. Don't spend a lot on these items because you will likely trade them out often.

Art: This is one place where you could splurge, but it depends more on your taste. Is

art your thing? While you might decide to splurge on one piece, not all art needs to cost a fortune. Many great prints are mass produced and can be digitally downloaded. The most important question: "Do you enjoy it?" If you don't enjoy it, it's not worth a dime.

Hidden Gems Near and Far

When it comes to finding that perfect piece of art for your living room or unique material for your backsplash, you might find what you're looking for in the most unique locations.

LOCAL LOVE

Show your appreciation this spring season by spending your hard-earned dollars with local shop owners. The best part of doing so is that more of your money stays local when you spend it in your neck of the woods, cascading down to make a positive impact on business owners, local schools and infrastructure.

Check with your downtown furniture shops for luxury pieces and decor. Shop your local home improvement stores to see what lines of tile they carry, and find out if they will install it for you.

Even if you can't necessarily find the materials you're looking for in a local store, most businesses can custom-order what you're hunting.

MAGNOLIA MARKET

If you're up for a trip to Texas (or if you live there already), Magnolia Market should be on your list. Chip



and Joanna Gaines of HGTV's Fixer Upper have opened their newest venture at the Silos in Waco, Texas. The property, which opened to the public in 2016, boasts two grain silos and a 20,000-square-foot barn along with the main buildings.

Walking into the storeroom of Magnolia Market is like stepping foot into one of the Gaines' Fixer Upper homes. It is soothing and inviting, and makes you want to duplicate the seemingly effortless designs.

The shop is sweetly

arranged, making it super easy to curate a cohesive look for those of us who are "design challenged." There are even model spaces — including entryways, a kitchen and a dining area.

At the Market, you can swoon over white pitchers,

tin signs and wooden bowls — just to name a few of the home decor items available for purchase. The best part: There is a FedEx store inside the Market, eliminating the need to contemplate how to get things home if you live far away.

Arranging Your Furnishings

Arranging your space can be the most fun aspect of decorating a home. Small accessories can bring a room together and take a space from just being a house to becoming a home.

Best of all, there are no rules. Here are a few tips to get you started, but possibilities are limitless:

USE WHAT YOU ALREADY OWN

It can be tempting to purchase every trendy new item to hit the shelves of your favorite local furniture business, but you would be surprised what fresh new looks you can achieve with items you already own.

Go through your books and create unique arrangements by subject, or by the color of the cover. Think outside the book shelf and arrange your favorite reading materials in stacks on side tables, dressers and nightstands. Reuse the photos on a calendar, or be brave and dismantle a coffee table book and display the art in cheap frames to create a statement wall.

DON'T TAKE YOURSELF TOO SERIOUSLY

The books on your bookshelf do not need to be lined



© FOTOLIA

up in neat little rows, and you can put more than books on a book shelf — a vase of flowers, family photos, candles or collectables. Even a toy from your childhood can bring a sentimental element to your design.

Don't be afraid to display

items you use daily, such as matchsticks in a cool jar or tea bags in a pretty bowl or wooden box. Have fun and play around. Some of the best designs have come from people letting go of pre-conceived notions of how things should be to see how things could be.

MIX IT UP

If a room starts to feel stale, switch out the accessories with those in another room. All too often we get stuck in our ways and categorize our belongings by room. Switching them up is a great way to refresh your house on a regular basis with-

out spending a dime.

Once you start to practice these behaviors they will not only become habit, but also addictive. You will find yourself constantly redecorating and rearranging your rooms, which will leave houseguests amazed at your design prowess.

Rug Basics

Rugs are complicated beasts. They are not a place to skimp, as a good rug will totally transform a room. But they can get expensive quickly, and choosing the wrong rug can actually hurt your design and make a room appear smaller than it is.

Consider the following tips and you are sure not to go wrong:

RUG SIZE

With very few exceptions, bigger is better. Smaller rugs can make a room appear smaller than it actually is. Big rugs are also more fool-proof: You can basically go almost wall to wall with a rug, leaving just a foot or two of border.

The only caveat to large rugs are expansive, open-concept spaces. In these types of spaces, you are better off using rugs to define each smaller space, such as a living or eating area.

RUG PATTERN AND COLOR

Rugs are a great way to add color and texture to a room. While solid-colored rugs have their place and can be stunning, patterns are often better at hiding wear, as well as dirt and stains.

That is until you get around to cleaning them, which is a must for those with kids or pets. Patterns provide visual interest to a room, as well, and are available in a bevy of unique options.

RUG MATERIAL

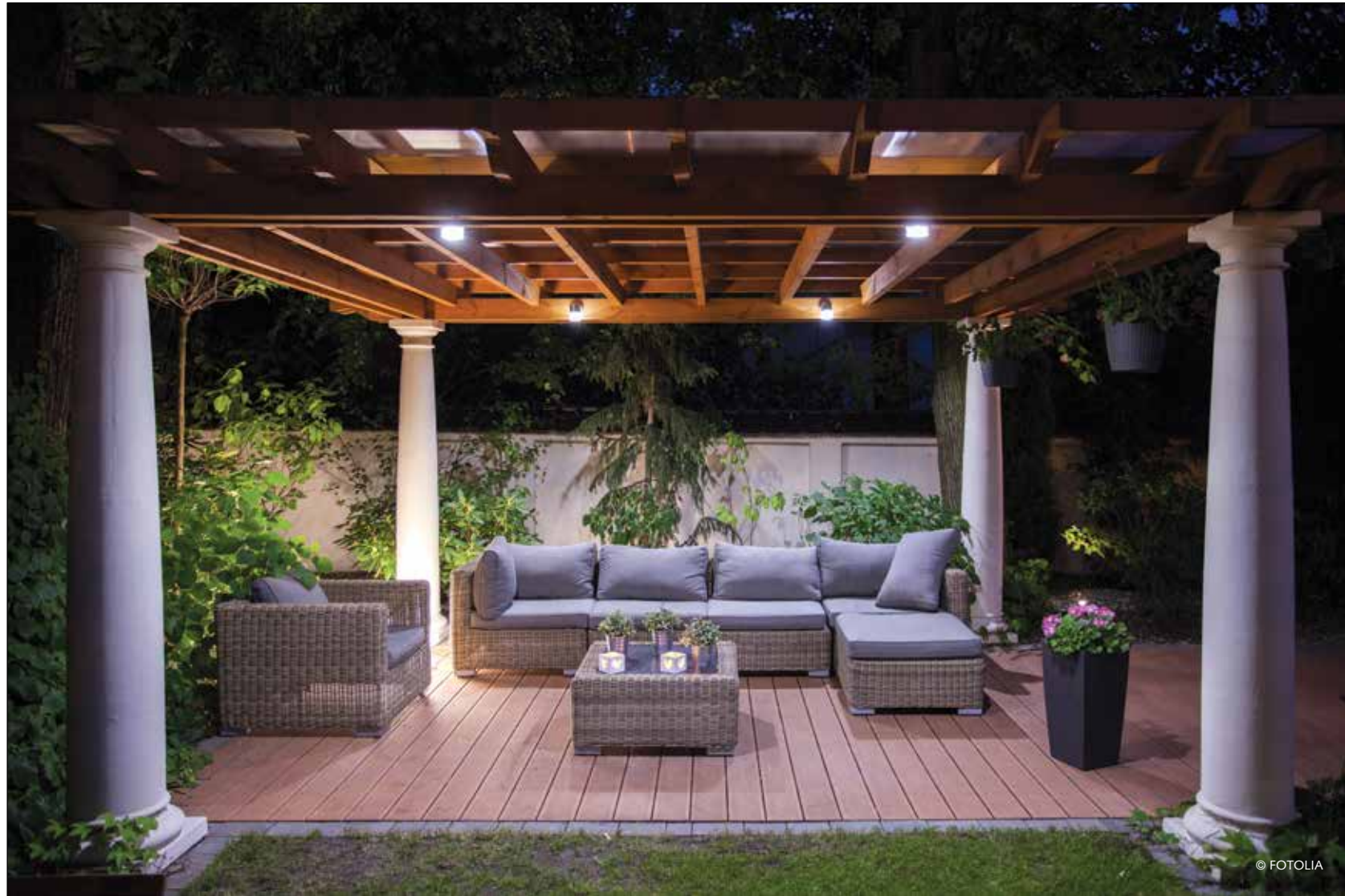
Natural fiber rugs are your best option for several reasons. They take

wear and tear easier than fiber blends and are often softer than fiber blend rugs.

Going with all natural fibers is generally a pricier option — but worth it as a long-term investment.

RUG CARE

Rug care seems scarier than it actually is. Vacuuming regularly helps keep dust and dirt from hiding in the weave (which can weaken a rug over time). Most stains can be removed with a lot of water and a bit of gentle soap. Follow the manufacturer's instructions, as different materials may require special care.



Outdoor Transformations

A great outdoor space makes all the difference in a home. Give yours a makeover, keeping in mind the following tips and tricks.

CONSIDER YOUR NEEDS

First and foremost, designing your outdoor space requires careful reflection on how you intend to use the

space. Are you looking for a space to grill and prepare food? Or maybe you desire a comfy area to relax with your favorite beverage.

If your space is large enough, carve out designated areas for both.

TAKE THE INDOORS OUTSIDE

Pick furniture in a design similar to couches and inside pieces, and arrange seating areas like living rooms. On the same note, be sure that you bring nature into your

space.

If you are designing an expansive patio, consider adding a pergola with lush greens growing over a seating area. Add large planters spilling over with bright flowers to your deck. The idea is to meld the indoors with the outdoors in a way that marries the beauty of mother nature with the creature comforts of the indoors.

SET THE MOOD

Lighting sets the mood, and there are many options at

your disposal.

String bistro lights, add large lanterns to the deck and on end tables or trade outdated door sconces with new, contemporary ones.

Line walkways with solar lights for safe foot traffic and consider landscape up-lighting on bushes or larger arrangements. Tiki torches also can be a fun touch — and help keep pesky bugs away.

EMBRACE BOLD PRINTS

The outdoors is the space

to show off your creativity, so unleash it. There is something about fresh air and sunshine that pairs well with bright colors and bold prints. Look for an outdoor rug in a fun pattern and seat cushions and throw pillows in different, complementary hues.

Remember that you can replace items such as cushions and throw pillows every few years, so don't be afraid of picking something too bold or trendy. By the time you tire of a color or pattern, it will be time to get something new.