

## **A NEW KITCHEN**

If you are looking for the best bang for your renovation dollar, kitchens and bathrooms are still considered to be the projects with the highest potential to add or maintain value in a home.

If you are considering selling your home in the near future, talk to a REALTOR® for tips on how to make your home more appealing and “saleable.” You may find that a new kitchen is not in your best interests and a fresh coat of paint and some minor repairs are all that’s needed. Because renovating a kitchen can be one of the more expensive projects a homeowner will undertake, you’ll want to consider the length of time you expect to stay in your house.

According to the Appraisal Institute of Canada, if you are remodelling your kitchen as a face-lift prior to selling it, it’s recommended that you spend no more than 10-15% of the cost of your house. If you are going to remain in your house for more than five years, you can spend 25% or more – and in most cases you will recoup the cost of the renovation when you sell.

### **How much will it cost?**

Kitchen renovations can cost you anywhere from \$2,000 to \$3,000 for a cosmetic facelift with no new cabinets, plumbing or electrical changes. Look to spend at least \$10,000 if you choose new low-end cabinetry, counters, appliances, flooring, paint, and some minor structural changes. However, the sky’s the limit when it comes to a new kitchen and you can expect to pay \$20,000 and up for high quality cabinets, custom work and many upgrades.

### **Keeping costs down**

There are ways to cut costs when updating your kitchen without sacrificing quality.

Regardless of what you do budget, don’t skimp on design, appliances, or labor. These are the basis for a functional kitchen and you should get the best you can afford. To keep costs to a minimum, use stock cabinets instead of custom work, laminates instead of solids, and hang on to your current appliances, if you can. Also try to keep your existing plumbing and electrical and don’t make structural changes to the room.

Planning ahead in detail will also save you money. Any changes or corrections halfway through the process will be expensive.

### **Tips for low cost kitchen makeovers**

If your budget is tight and smaller projects are what you’re aiming for, here are a few ideas:

#### **Resurface or repaint old cupboards**

Paint is inexpensive and can transform wooden cupboards in a matter of hours. Try a new painting technique, or a textured look, or a zesty combination of colours. You can also resurface old cupboards with wood laminate, or one of the new, non-traditional plastic-based materials that resist chipping, denting and staining. Formica counter tops, for example, provide the look and feel of expensive solid surfacing at about half the cost.

#### **Use more glass**

Replace a few cabinets with glass ones. Glass and mirrors in a room add the illusion of more space, as well as glamour -- especially if you add interior lights to your new cupboards.

#### **Change your hardware**

Simply adding new cabinet and drawer handles can change the look of a kitchen! With the many choices in colour, size and style of drawer knobs and handles, there’s no limit to what you can achieve.

**Floor and wall facelifts**

Paint, wallpaper and flooring in a variety of textures, styles, colours and patterns can easily spice up a bland kitchen. Stencil a border around a window, below a ceiling, or between the cupboards and the counter tops and you can change the mood overnight.

**Be innovative**

A good kitchen should not only look great, but stand up to daily wear and tear. It should function well and enable people to move freely between it and related areas of the house.

If you plan to completely remodel the kitchen, be honest about your ability. You may want to leave this important job in the hands of an expert who can do the work quickly and professionally. A kitchen designer/contractor can suggest unique ideas and come up with creative solutions to particular problems. Finally, be sure to get at least two bids on the work you plan to do and compare these carefully.

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