

A high-end kitchen featuring white cabinetry, a large stainless steel range hood, a marble countertop, and a chandelier. The kitchen is well-lit and has a classic, elegant feel. The range hood is a prominent feature, with a large, dark, textured surface and a white base. The countertop is made of light-colored marble with a subtle pattern. The cabinets are white with a classic design, including a large window with a decorative metal frame. A chandelier with multiple lights hangs from the ceiling. The overall aesthetic is one of sophisticated and timeless design.

DRURY
DESIGN

Kitchen & Bath Studio

5 Must Ask Questions Before Remodeling Your Kitchen

Let's Build Something Beautiful Together



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About the Author

Gail Drury is the president and creative director of Drury Design, a boutique kitchen and bathroom studio in the Glen Ellyn, Illinois. For more than 30 years, Gail and her team of designers have transformed living spaces across the Chicago area. Gail is a repeat winner of both the American Society of Interior Design's Best Kitchen Design award and the National Kitchen and Bath Association's Best in Show award. She holds the industry's highest professional design designation: CMKBD, certified master kitchen and bath designer.



Gail Drury, CMKBD | President, Drury Design

“Designing a kitchen is the most complicated project many of our clients will ever undertake, we begin by gathering information – about your space, your family’s lifestyle and your cooking personality. Then we detail it all into concepts, allowing you to select the elements you like from each. The final design reflects who you are as a chef, entertainer, parent or home manager. Your kitchen becomes your home’s signature”.

Your Perfect Kitchen Starts with You.

For more than 30 years, that's been our guiding philosophy at Drury Design. I built it into my personal design process and built a career and business around it. And I make it a mantra for every new designer from the moment he or she first joins our team.

If you've started dreaming about what your kitchen could become, then I want to make it your mantra too.

You don't have to be unhappy with your kitchen. After all, we're talking about the room you spend a huge part of your life in. A great deal of relationship time happens in the kitchen. Major family memories are built there. Homework and holidays, spirited parties and intimate conversations, all revolve around this single central location in your home. If you don't like it, you have the ability to change it, and we're experts in planning and providing the solution to do so. With the right design and strategy, you could be beyond happy with your



kitchen. But that only happens when you plan a smart remodel. Know what the possibilities and options are – then piece together your optimal remodel plan.

What does that kitchen remodel look like? That's what this ebook is about. Over the next few pages, I'll share insights and advice from my entire design team on what you as a homeowner should consider before you plan your kitchen redesign – before you even call a kitchen design firm like mine, in fact.

We'll identify the **5 questions you should ask yourself** before you get started. We'll look at them, one by one, to understand why each question matters to your final kitchen plan.

Then, at the end, I'll tell you **how to get started with your redesign the right way.**

Grab a pencil if you want and jot your answers to these questions as we go. I think you'll be surprised how easy – and how fun – designing your kitchen can actually be.

And it's worth the effort. After all, it's your home!





What's Your “Why”?

Let's get some misconceptions off the table: Your kitchen redesign won't be as fast or easy as you've been led to believe on those “home makeover” TV shows. It's a serious financial investment, and it's a serious time investment. The construction process can shake up your life for several months – and the design process, while fun, takes even longer in many cases.

QUESTION 1

Why are you willing to put yourself through that?

Don't get me wrong – creating a new kitchen is a blast! That's why I've devoted my career to this process. But if you don't have a clear sense of what you're trying to accomplish, it can be more difficult.

In my experience, most homeowners redesign a kitchen for one of three reasons:

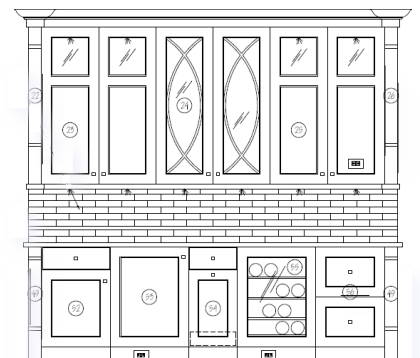
1 Your design is dated. If your home was built decades ago, the design of your kitchen is decades old as well. While some kitchen designs are timeless, many are not. If cooking in your kitchen makes you think involuntarily of bell-bottoms, denim jackets or grunge rock, perhaps you're ready for a change.



2 Your kitchen isn't working for you. Sometimes it's easy to identify what's not right with your kitchen: Perhaps there simply isn't a gathering space for family or homework, or two cooks to work together, or maybe you love entertaining but there's no good way for guests to flow in and out of your current kitchen, or the kitchen is too closed off to adjoining areas for everyone to join in.



3 A major appliance breaks down. This often leaves you with no alternative but to remodel, as today's larger modern appliances just don't fit into your existing cabinetry. Plus, you may want to include other new appliances to update the look of your kitchen.





4 You're preparing to sell. Designing a kitchen for the market is a little different from designing it for yourself; if you're clear about this motivation now it will help you as you plan your redesign.

Other times, the problem is more subtle: You know life could be better in your kitchen, but it's hard to put a finger on exactly why. Maybe your kitchen used to work great, but your family has changed and now it doesn't suit you. Maybe you've just got a sense that this space isn't "you."

This is where a good designer can be really helpful – he or she can help identify the problems you want to solve, then solve them in your new design. At Drury Design, we developed our own questionnaire for this very purpose. It serves as a guide when we first get to know our clients, helping to

identify their tastes and preferences and put into words the things they most want to accomplish with a redesign.

Imagine yourself living in your new, better kitchen. What's different? This vision will help you name your goals in redesigning – and that, in turn, will help you boil down your options and choose the best approach to make it happen.



What Happens in This Room?

More day-to-day life happens in the kitchen than you might think! If your current kitchen isn't working for you, there's a good chance it just wasn't built with your lifestyle in mind.

Your new kitchen can fit you like a

glove – if we identify the ways you want to use it.

Here's a partial list to get you started. Which of the items below describes the way you use your kitchen?



What activities should your kitchen be designed around?

- Multiple cooks
- Fixing bag lunches
- Entertaining a few guests
- Throwing large parties
- Family dinners
- Conversing with guests while cooking
- Quick, on-the-go snacking
- Doing homework
- Reading quietly with your morning coffee
- Tea with friends
- Feeding pets
- Opening mail
- Leaving notes
- Payin bills

This list will be different for every person and every family. The more clearly you can think about what happens in your kitchen, the more you'll be able to design a new room that fits perfectly with the way you live your life.



What's Not Working with Your Current Kitchen?

If you've asked yourself the last few questions, answering this one should be a breeze. Before remodeling your kitchen, it's important to identify specific problems that you'd like to correct with your redesign. As you ask

yourself this question, don't forget to think about what is working in your current kitchen as well! While it's important to solve problems in your redesign, it's also valuable to enhance the things you already love.



Almost anything could go on this list, but here are a few common complaints to get you started:

- The fridge, stove or cabinets are broken and failing
- There's not enough space for multiple family members to work together in the kitchen
- It's cut-off from adjacent living areas
- When we have guests over, it's hard to get from the kitchen to the living room.
- Not enough counter space where you need it most - between your sink and cooking area
- It's difficult to get to food or spices
- When we have parties, traffic flow is awkward
- A bad prior remodel that doesn't meet your family's needs or your personal tastes
- Your kitchen is a "catch-all" for everyone's stuff when they walk in the door
- The pets make a mess in the kitchen
- The view from the kitchen sink is terrible



What's on Your Wish List?

Many homeowners have a “wish list” they’ve accumulated since they started thinking about remodeling the kitchen. What are the specific appliances, materials, features or ideas you hope to have in your new kitchen?

Maybe it's a brand you love. Do you have your heart set on a Subzero refrigerator or a specific Wolf or Viking

range? Or, other must have favorites like a Miele built-in coffee maker or a Dacor Wine Station and preservation system?

Perhaps there's a palette of colors and textures, or a floor-plan you already have in mind: Will your next kitchen be all-white, or will you choose a darker theme? Are granite countertops a

must? Or are you hoping for a more open layout than in your current kitchen? Do you want direct lines of sight into your family room for the big game? Or, maybe better lighting with more windows?

Sometimes the wish list is all about particular ideas or features. Maybe you've decided that you need two ovens to make cooking large meals easier, or perhaps you love the idea of a family message board you saw featured in a photograph online.

This list is different for every person. If yours is empty, never fear – your designer will have lots of ideas for you to consider when you meet for the first time! But if you're like many of my clients, you've already started a book or board full of photographs you like and kitchen ideas to include.

This wish list will be really helpful as you start on your new kitchen design. Just remember to keep an open mind! If you're hiring a professional designer, he or she may have alternative ideas for how you can accomplish the things you want to accomplish. You'll want to consider all the possibilities before you make final decisions about any details for your final plan.





How Long Are You Going to Live Here?

There are two kinds of kitchen remodels. You can update your home to appeal to the person who's going to buy it in a few years. Or you can update it to make life better for the people who actually live there now. Usually, the difference between these two comes down to this question: Are

you going to stay in your house for more than 5 years?

If the answer is no, it's likely you're remodeling to sell. You're going to invest some money, sure – but you want that investment to come back to you in the form of a better selling

price, broader marketability, an easier time on the market, or a more competitive listing. That means you're going to redesign your kitchen with an eye toward what appeals to the average homebuyer, and focus on those features that are likely to bring a financial return for you in just a few years.

Remodeling to sell can be fun, but you will need to be a bit objective. You won't want to personalize your kitchen too much – after all, you won't always be the one cooking, eating and living life there.

If you're planning to stay for more than 5 years – or if you don't have any plans to leave at all – then you'll approach your kitchen redesign quite differently. You and your designer can dig deeper and make things more personal. You can incorporate more custom features that might not work for every family but are a perfect fit for yours. You can express your personal taste. You can design for you – not for a realtor's listing.

While a portion of what you invest in a new kitchen should always bring





a return on the value of your home, that's not the sole focus with this second approach. Your investment isn't about getting a better asking price or having an easier time on the market when you decide to sell. It's about making life more convenient, more satisfying and more beautiful for you, your family and your guests.

Are you planning a kitchen to sell – or to live in? That's what this first question helps decide.



4 Questions to Get You Started with Your Redesign Right Now

So you've identified why you need a kitchen redesigned, named some of the things that work and don't about your current kitchen, and made a start on your wish list. Hopefully, you have a much clearer sense of exactly what it will take to create a kitchen that isn't just beautiful – but that's

actually perfect for you and your family. So are you ready to create that kitchen?

Here's what to ask when you're ready to start work on the kitchen of your dreams.

1 What do you want this experience to be like?

Are you the “do-it-yourself” type who is interested in saving money in exchange for spending lots of nights and weekends working on your home? Could you simply pick some cabinets and counters from a catalog and trust a contractor to put them in for you? Or are you looking for a full design-and-build experience, with a designer who can walk with you from first ideas to final installation to make sure the entire project is planned right?

Everybody's different. The kind of experience – and the kind of result – you want determines the kind of firm you will want to hire to help create it.



2 What's the time frame for your remodel?

You might be surprised to learn that while construction itself takes a month or two in most kitchen remodels, the entire project – including design meetings, drawings, component selection, and construction planning – can easily take 6 months from start to finish.

If you're working with a deadline or hoping to have your new kitchen ready to be lived in by a particular date, it's best to know that now and plan accordingly.



3 Which designer or design studio fits your needs?

Are you looking for a full design-and-build studio like ours, or is your kitchen a job for a few friends and a truck? The answer depends on how you answered the two questions above.

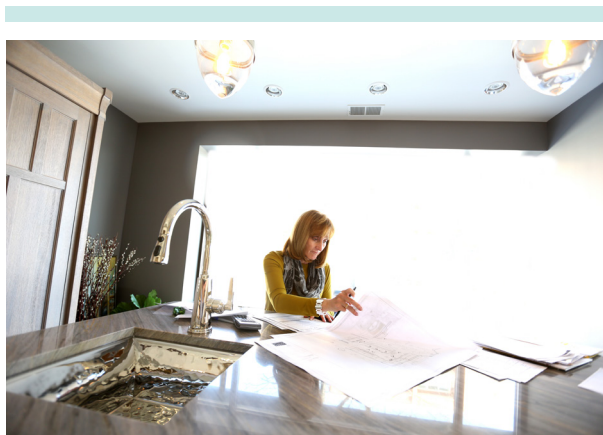
Once you know your expectations and your time-line, hit the Internet and do your research. Remember to look not only at the quality of design and construction a given firm can offer but also at the type of design experience each one delivers. This is a matter of more than taste – too often, the wrong process can actually get you the wrong design.



4 What's your personal taste in kitchen design?

If you're not there already, now is the time to start keeping your "idea book." Many homeowners use Pinterest or Houzz to flag photos of kitchens they like, while others prefer the more hands-on route, reading magazines and keeping a physical folder of photos that speak to them.

As you flag photos and ideas that interest you, take a moment to note what it is you liked about each one. Once you've accumulated a few dozen ideas, it won't be so easy to remember that you liked one picture for the lighting fixtures, while another





really had a color palette you were drawn to.

It's worth saving photographs of kitchens you don't like too! At your first face-to-face with your designer, he or she will be able to review all your ideas and help identify the design approaches you prefer.

And that brings you one huge step closer to a kitchen redesign that you can love and live with, for a long, long time.

About Drury Design

Drury Design is a full-service kitchen and bath design firm based in the western suburbs of Chicago. Since 1987, designers at Drury have walked with homeowners through the entire journey of home remodeling – from first ideas to final construction.

Drury designers follow a unique process we call Client Focused Design™. Rather than providing a summary “quote” up front based on incomplete information and unrealistic estimates, Drury designers work on retainer to create a complete customized design plan, providing options and suggestions at every step along the way. In the end, each kitchen, bath or other home design plan is perfectly personalized – based on a mutual understanding of each client’s needs and goals and presented in an easy to understand proposal to avoid any missed cues or misunderstandings.

Drury Design is the recipient of more than 70 design awards and recognitions, including the National Kitchen and Bath Association’s “Best in Show,” The American Society of Interior Design’s “Best Kitchen Design”, and repeatedly recognized by Houzz.com for both excellence in design and for outstanding customer service. For samples of the firm’s work, visit DruryDesigns.com/Portfolio.



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