

Rethink your kitchen layout

Kitchens are the most popular rooms in many homes. Even though The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics states the average person spends just 68 minutes each weekday consuming food, and around 37 minutes preparing meals, the kitchen is not just a spot for food. It also is a gathering place for conversation, homework and family time.

In recognition that so much time is spent in this heart of the home, many people are embracing some of the more popular trends concerning kitchen layouts to maximize the comfort and efficiency of these rooms.

Communal zones

Unlike the days of yore when the kitchen was utilitarian, today's home floor plans make kitchens a focal point of a home. Food preparation also is no longer a solitary task. Thanks to larger kitchen footprints and multiple zones set up for meal creation, a great-

er number of people can hang out in the kitchen and help with meals. You'll find multiple sinks, large islands and more counter space are key components of modern kitchen layouts.

Dining nooks

Kitchen designs are bringing back banquette seating in a cozy nook. This design is a practical use of space, and can fit in large and small kitchens alike. It also can give a kitchen a high-end look, as built-in banquettes can highlight a bay window or seem custom-made for the space. Banquette seating can fit a number of people comfortably and provides a sensible and casual dining spot solution.

Family table

The trend experts at Southern Living magazine indicate that formal dining and living rooms are now used infrequently. As a result, kitchens have evolved to accommodate meal prep and dining. A large family table in the center of the

room brings people into the kitchen to get more involved with food, according to San Francisco designer David Kensington.

Counter culture

Taking a page out of a favorite corner diner or bar, kitchens are increasingly outfitted with a large island flanked by chic counter stools, according to the design pros at Domino. Family members can pull up a stool and grab a quick snack. It's also a great place for friends to engage in conversation while a host or hostess prepares cocktails and appetizers for an evening soirée.

Work zone

Many families like to have an area of the kitchen set up as a tech zone where kids can do their homework and even parents can do some work, such as paying bills. Setting aside an area of counter space as a small desk area can be a great idea. Such areas also help parents keep a watchful eye on children while

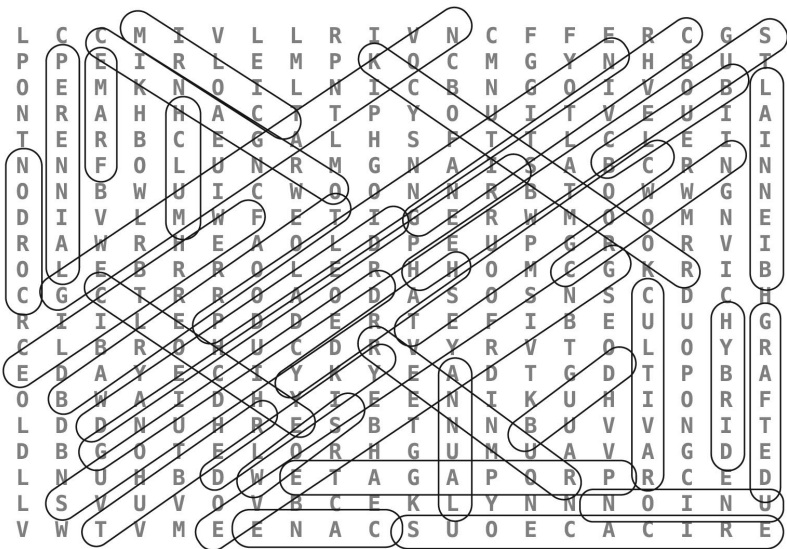


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they're surfing the inter-
net.

the household, and modern design trends cater to

a growing need for a multi-purpose space.





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