

Whether you are preparing hamburgers and hotdogs, steaks and veggies or rib racks, grilling is a great way to spend a spring or summer evening. If your family is spending more and more time huddled around the barbecue pit, but you are the one going back and forth from your inside kitchen to the backyard, it may be time to consider an outdoor kitchen.

According to Rick Bivens of JMJ Custom Homes in Owensboro, taking the time to plan and define needs and

wants is the most important parameter before adding an outdoor kitchen to your home. "The benefits of cooking, eating and relaxing outdoors extend far beyond convenience," he says. "That only holds true, however, if the kitchen is designed for your individual needs and budget."

Whether you design and build an outdoor kitchen yourself, consult a specialist in the field or utilize the "how to" consultation services of a local home improvement store, keep in mind:

Budget

How much are you willing or able to spend?

Location

Close to your home (extended deck, for example) or freestanding at a distance? Consider which direction the sun shines. Will you need a permit to build?

Design

Wood? Brick? Perhaps a few water fixtures?

Utilities

How easy or difficult will it be to run water, gas and electricity to the site?

Appliances

In addition to a grill, do you need a refrigerator, sink, icemaker, smoker or fireplace?

Configuration

Keep appliances close to one another for convenience. Consider counter space for preparing and serving.

Roofing

Do you want an overhead covering for shade? Would you rather have an open kitchen to enhance the outdoor experience?

Dining and Relaxing

How big is your family? How often do you entertain? What types of seating and dining furniture will you need?

Once you've considered such options, get a few estimates and decide whether to do it yourself or hire a contractor.

Photos complements of JMJ Custom Homes



STILL THINKING ABOUT IT? THE BENEFITS OF AN OUTDOOR KITCHEN INCLUDE

- Convenience
- Increased time with family and friends
- Easier clean up
- Increased value to your home

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