

A Guide to Plumbing Fixtures for Kitchen & Bath Design

Water is at the heart of a kitchen or bathroom design's functionality, and your plumbing fixtures are essential tools to deliver water when and where you need it. They can also serve as accessories, matching your design aesthetic in terms of both the lines and finish of the fixtures. Once you have decided on your preferred design style, color scheme, and budget, you can select the ideal fixtures to enhance your remodeled space.

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

Every kitchen design or bathroom remodel is different since it must meet the unique requirements of that home and family. The first thing you must consider is what you need for your family.

- For example, if you are a busy young family you may want to choose fixtures that are easy for small hands to operate and do not easily show up fingerprints. For a bathroom design, ensure you have at least one bathtub that is simple to use when bathing small children. A hall bath design with an alcove tub is ideal for this, as it is easier to lift kids in and out.

- Likewise, in a home designed for aging in place you should focus on fixtures that you can easily reach and operate if you have issues with gripping handles. Touchless faucets or simple single-handled faucets are ideal. Be sure to include a handheld showerhead, which makes it easier when family members require assistance to shower and consider a curbless shower to avoid trip hazards.

- Look at how you use your kitchen to determine what type of sink and faucet combination you need. Should you also include a pot filler or a separate beverage bar sink? This all depends on the size of your kitchen design, how often you cook and entertain, and your budget.

- Depending on the size of your home and family, figure out whether you need a tub, shower, or both in your bathroom remodel. If you have more than one bathroom, then you could replace the bathtub in one bath design with an extra-large shower. Figure out how many people will be using the bathroom. If space allows, include a larger vanity with two sinks to leave plenty of space for two people to get ready at the same.





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WHAT IS YOUR STYLE?

What is your home's style and how does this affect your fixture choices? If your home tends toward a traditional style, then go for more ornate faucets with cross-handles or a showerhead with extra detailing. For a contemporary design style think simple, straight lines with more angular features. If your style falls somewhere in between, consider a transitional style where simple curved faucets and single handled levers accent your design style. Likewise, sinks and bathtubs all come in a wide selection of styles to enhance any design aesthetic from farmhouse to industrial.

Next, what is your home's color scheme? While your faucet does not have to match your cabinet hardware and light fixtures, they must complement each other. You should either choose to accessorize your room in a single metallic tone, for example matte black, or else choose a shade that makes a statement in a contrasting (but still complementary) tone to other features.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN BATHROOM MUST HAVES?

SINKS:

Bathroom sinks come in a wide variety of options, from purely functional to fun focal points. The most common bathroom sinks are white undermount models in vitreous china or enameled cast iron. They can be found in a range of shapes including circular, oval, and rectangular. These sinks are durable and go with any style bath design.

For a spa style bath remodel or a powder room where you want to make a statement, consider installing a vessel sink, which sits on the countertop. These sinks are meant to take center stage, so consider going for an asymmetrical shape, a unique material such as glass or wood, or a bold color.



FAUCETS:

From a practical standpoint, bathroom faucets are there to deliver hot and cold water on demand to your sink. The more you spend, the better quality the internal workings, and therefore it will function better and last longer. Make sure you also choose a faucet that is sized appropriately to your sink and positioned so it hits the sink at the correct angle. Consider the best way to mount the faucet (wall mount or deck mount), as well as how many holes the faucet has and how this fits with your chosen sink.

On the outside, faucets come in a range of styles and finishes that bring them into the forefront of your bathroom design style. From angular to curved models, single handle or two-handle, plain or detailed, there are many faucets to choose from. Your faucet finish should also be selected to complement your bathroom design, either to match other metallic features like hardware or lighting, or in a complementary shade.



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TUBS & TUB FILLERS:

When choosing a bathtub, the best place to start is by examining your available space and your room's layout. In a spacious master bath, you may have room for a large shower and a freestanding tub, in which case go for it and create your ultimate luxury bathroom design. In a smaller master bath or a hall bathroom remodel, you may have to choose between a shower or tub/shower combination. If you only have one main bathroom or have small children, consider sticking to a standard alcove tub/shower combination to save space and make bath time easier.

Freestanding tubs come in a range of styles from more traditional to contemporary and become an automatic design focal point. Make sure you have plenty of room to accommodate your chosen model and consider the material and weight before making a final decision. Tub materials range from porcelain and acrylic to unique stone. You could also add whirlpool or massage jet features to create a truly spa style bath design.

Tub fillers are specialty faucets designed to fill a bathtub quickly with a high flow of water. Based on the position, style, and size of your bathtub you may opt for a deck mount, wall mount, or floor mount variety.



SHOWERHEADS:

When choosing a showerhead, think about who will use the shower and your preferences. Do you like a massaging shower, or would you go for the soothing feel of rainfall when showering? Perhaps you like the option of a handheld model to assist when bathing kids or the dog? Select the model that will meet your needs, from standard fixed showerheads to handheld, rainfall, massaging shower panels, and more.

There are also digital controller, voice, or phone-controlled shower systems that allow you to remote start the shower, control temperature and other settings, and save personalized settings. Discuss the options with your bath remodeling expert and remember the more you invest, the better the internal components are, and the better it will function over time. Once you know the type of showerhead you need for your bathroom design, then choose a style and finish that complements your design aesthetic.

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TOILETS:

Toilets are a necessity for any bathroom design, from the smallest powder room to the largest master bath. At the most basic level, toilets are either one or two-piece, with the former being a single streamlined unit and the latter having a separate tank and bowl. One-piece toilets are more expensive, but also a sleeker style and easier to keep clean, which is a major bonus in a busy bath design! Another option is to go for a wall-mount toilet, where the tank is concealed within the wall and the toilet is mounted leaving the floor around it clear. Today's toilet options also come with remote or app-controlled technological innovations, such as self-cleaning, spray jets, heated seats, lights, noise-masking and much more.



WHAT ARE THE MAIN KITCHEN MUST HAVES?

SINKS:

The kitchen sink is arguably one of the hardest working tools in any kitchen design. This is the focal point of many key jobs in the kitchen from food prep to clean up and more. Sinks are classified by their shape, the number of bowls, and by the installation method. The most common are top mount, undermount, and apron front, each with its own pros and cons.

Kitchen sink materials are typically stainless steel, cast iron and quartz composite, which all vary in price, durability, and maintenance needs. Each also brings a unique style to your kitchen remodel. There is no perfect sink, but there are some that will work for your lifestyle better than others. Consider whether you would want a large single bowl sink, or a double bowl sink. If you select double bowl style, then you have the choice of a larger / smaller side, as well as whether you want a sink with a full height divider between the bowls, or one that is lower. Also, consider whether you want your sink to have a crisp, sleek look with square corners and a flat bottom, or if you prefer the traditional look with rounded corners and a sloping bottom for the best water drainage.

For a truly revolutionary kitchen sink, consider a Workstation Sink. This is more than just a sink, it is a multi-functional system that combines the sink with integrated accessories like cutting boards and colanders that neatly slide in and out to take you from food preparation to cooking, serving, entertaining, and clean up.



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FAUCETS:

Just like bathroom faucets, kitchen faucets serve the purpose of delivering hot and cold water to your sink. These essential fixtures come in a range of styles, sizes, and finishes to complement your kitchen design. Brushed nickel finishes are a classic choice and less likely to show fingerprints or water spots. Oil Rubbed Bronze is available for traditional styling. Matte black, black stainless and gold are also trendy finishes that are sure to enhance a stylish kitchen remodel.

Kitchen faucets also come with a wide array of potential extra features from pull-down spray faucets to motion sensor controls. Most faucets are a high arc with a pull-down spray. Faucets often offer two different kinds of sprays beyond the standard stream.

Also available for your convenience are reverse osmosis faucets or instant hot water faucets. You can have an in-countertop soap dispenser, which keeps soap handy and a bottle off your countertop. If your sink is in an island, we recommend an air switch button, which turns your garbage disposal on and off easily.

In a busy, multi-functional kitchen design you may want to incorporate more than one sink and faucet combination. For example, if you install a beverage bar, it is handy to have a smaller beverage sink and faucet. Some homeowners opt to include one sink set up in the perimeter cabinetry and another in the island, which allows more than one person to work at the same time, or to have one sink for food prep and the other just for cleanup.

