

# Kitchen Ideas

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## Kitchen Overview By Lisa Montgomery

Think entertainment, information and efficiency when selecting technologies for the most popular room of the house.

One of the most important rooms in which to integrate technology is the kitchen. Why? Because more than any other room of the house, your family probably spends the most time there. And, even if they don't stop here, they at least pass by the kitchen several times a day as they enter and leave the house. What's more, it's a comfortable place where people like to entertain, read the news and surf the Internet. For each and every activity you might perform in the kitchen, there's a piece of technology that can dramatically enhance the experience.

### Entertainment

In the early '80s people began bringing small TV sets into kitchens; and cable jacks soon joined the standard electrical outlets found on the slice of wall between the counter and the cabinets. While a regular TV works well in a kitchen, it eats up plenty of valuable counter space.

Enter the flat and under cabinet TV models of the late '90s. A flat-screen TV, or a monitor that hangs from the underside of a cabinet, takes up hardly any room and requires no special modifications to the construction of a kitchen, except for mounting a cable jack nearby (we suggest installing an outlet that houses two cable jacks, a data/computer jack and a telephone jack). A screen that's too tall to fit underneath a cabinet can be integrated into a kitchen too, by placing it on a wall mount or having your builder construct the appropriate-sized bay into the kitchen wall.

Complement the TV with speakers planted into the ceiling of the kitchen. Place them in any location where you might need to hear the TV or music: near the table, the sink, the stove and the workstation, for example.

### Computers

Speaking of workstations—now that the computer has become such a helpful tool in the kitchen (dispensing recipes, storing the family schedule, emailing a note to Grandma), remember to plan a space for a monitor, as well as a printer, scanner and any other peripherals you think you might use there. (By wiring your home with a computer networking system, you can store all the peripherals in another room or closet.) Be sure to plant plenty of phone and data jacks, as well as electrical outlets, near the workstation.

Doubt you'll ever sit down long enough to need a dedicated workspace? Then consider a portable Web tablet in lieu of a traditional computer. This small device, usually designed for Internet access only, can plug into any data jack in the kitchen.

### Big Appliances

You've probably heard about the smart refrigerator that prints out a grocery list based on the contents of its insides. Although they may not be intelligent enough yet to do just that, refrigerators, stoves, dishwashers and other appliances that connect to the Internet are a reality today. Even if you can't envision a day when your stove would need to download a recipe, at least have your home systems installation firm mount a data jack on the wall behind every big appliance. It'll ensure that your kitchen is always cutting-edge.

5 Things to Consider for Your Kitchen Remodeling your kitchen? Here are 5 things that would make even The Jetsons jealous;

- Internet appliances designed specifically for the kitchen
  - Link the kitchen to your whole-house system
  - Install a TV with access to video as well as security cameras
  - Distributed audio for the avid cook
  - Internet access for quick news reports and recipe help
- Top of page » Kitchen FAQs Why would I possibly need technology in the kitchen?

- When you think about it, is there an area of the house that you and your family use more than the kitchen? This really makes it a prime area to add technology.

- What's a smart refrigerator?

There are a variety of current refrigeration products that could be considered as "smart." Some can tell you when it's time to change the water filter, while others can access the Internet and display news and recipes.

- Where can I get an automated food dispenser like on The Jetsons?

Unfortunately, we're still waiting on that one! However, there are new ways coming out to automate the kitchen every day. The most recent advances include Web-enabled refrigerators and ovens that cook at the speed of a microwave. Maybe The Jetsons really aren't that far behind after all.