

## So you're planning your dream kitchen.

There's more to this than meets the eye – here are some great tips.

Allow at least six weeks to plan. Changing your mind in the middle of your renovation can add thousands of dollars almost instantly.

Be prepared to wait six weeks to several months for your custom countertop and cabinets – another reason to get the planning right.

Write down everything about your kitchen that you don't like; what works well; what is missing; how you use the kitchen; and your wish list. What activities take place in the kitchen? How do you see yourself there every day? What can't you live without? Use the [Renovantage Kitchen Planning Worksheet](#) to help.

Take the worksheet, along with a scrapbook of ideas on cabinets, backsplashes, lighting and hardware that you like; and a scale drawing of your current kitchen, showing where windows, doors, heating, plumbing and electrical outlets are to the Renovantage Décor Studio to meet with our Décor Specialist or have a Renovantage Architect or Interior Designer design your kitchen. No homeowner can match the knowledge and experience of a kitchen design pro – and your designer will keep you from making costly mistakes.

Keep talking with your designer until you have refined your ideas. Don't rush this process, or you'll be stuck with an expensive room that annoys you every time you enter it.

Ask your designer for a 3 dimensional cardboard or foam core mock up. You'll immediately "get" any space or work flow issues.

Speaking of flow, note the traffic patterns in your family: not just the classic stove to sink to refrigerator, but back door to desk; coffee maker to toaster; island to pots and pans to sink. Think in "zones": homework zone, snacking zone, meal preparation zone, baking zone, with items stored close to where they are used.

Now apply these insights to choosing appliances and cabinets. Before you fall in love with the bells and whistles, check that these pricey investments work the way you need them to:

- ✓ Cook top heat: standard cooking requires a low of 2,000 Btu to a high of 12,000 Btu. Only invest in a more sensitive range of 400 to 15,000 if you cook like a pro.
- ✓ Check Energy Star ratings.
- ✓ Easy-to-grip stovetop knobs, accessible refrigerator controls, a dishwasher a child can load easily
- ✓ A really good steam and smoke ventilator that's at least as wide as your cook top (6 inches wider if it's on an island)
- ✓ Do you need a \$6,000 pro-style range, or could you live with a pro-style cook top and mid-priced wall ovens – and save \$2,000?
- ✓ Do you need a wall of custom cabinets or would a walk-in pantry be better – and cheaper?
- ✓ Do you need granite everywhere, or just on a high visibility island?
- ✓ Would chrome faucet work as well as a pricey brass or porcelain version? (Always choose a faucet with replaceable internal parts.)
- ✓ If you go really trendy, can you afford to redecorate in 3 to 5 years?