

Designing Kitchens for Entertaining

by Sarah Day

It happens to everyone – the party ends up in the kitchen. Your guests want to be at the center of the action, which invariably leads them to the kitchen where you are working. So, why not design your kitchen to accommodate your friends.

The first step to designing the ideal kitchen is to review your needs. This is true for all kitchens, but especially for the entertaining kitchen. What type and size of party do you usually host? Are they small intimate dinner parties for a few good friends or more formal business gatherings? Are you planning a large holiday get-together this year or is your home the perennial fall back for Family Christmas? Do you want to entertain your kids and their friends? How about indoor/outdoor events?



Now that you've defined your general party profile, consider the space available in your home and how it will function. Do you have lots of space to dedicate to a large and well-equipped kitchen or are you limited to a smaller area? Either way, you will need to address the following items: circulation, food preparation, staging, and clean-up.

Circulation addresses the flow of people – both workers and guests – through the space. What is the most efficient route for the cook, where do you want your guest to gather and where will you all sit? Can you get in and out of the kitchen easily, especially while carrying that tureen of steaming soup? Does the cook have enough room to work? Where will your buffet be set up or are you planning for a sit down dinner and servers? Who's going to clean-up? Do you have a catering staff for this or will clean-up be family style with the guests helping out? All these questions should be addressed in the space planning stage of design .



Space planning – the large kitchen:

You have the luxury of space – use it! Separate work-stations and clean-up areas with multiple sinks, lots of counter space, and specialized appliances such as a warming drawer, steam oven, or salamander. Localize utensil and pan storage near the prep station and plan on a well-stocked and conveniently located storage pantry. Consider adding a secondary kitchen or butler's pantry for staging and party clean-up.

Space planning – the small kitchen:

A smaller kitchen must make maximum use of the space available. Often different work areas will have to overlap. Both your dinner prep and desert baking will need

to coexist at the same range. Your pot & pan drawers will also accommodate your mixing bowls and baking dishes. Store your cookie sheets and serving trays in the deep cabinet over your refrigerator – they're out of the way, but handy for use. Use the main sink for both prep and clean-up.



Obviously this is just a quick overview of the planning that goes into the design of the ideal entertaining kitchen. For a more in depth look at the design of your own (or your Client's) kitchen, just ask San Luis Kitchen for an appointment — we'll be happy help.

