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Get the Kitchen You Want for Less

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Enjoy the best of today's popular kitchen remodeling trends without busting your budget. Here are 6 ways to get your out-of-date kitchen current -- and in some cases more functional -- for less.

1. White kitchens

White kitchens are classic and clean looking (at least in pictures). And if Pinterest is an accurate gauge, white kitchens, white cabinets, white marble counters, and white subway tile backsplashes (<http://www.houselogic.com/photos/kitchens/backsplash-ideas/>) are swooned over as much as white wedding dresses. But, there's no need to redo the whole kitchen.

Get the trend for less:

Paint (<http://www.houselogic.com/home-improvement/painting/>) **the walls white**. A fresh clean coat of pristine white paint may be all you need to make your kitchen feel shiny and new. Avoid a stark "builder white" and go with a slightly warmer white instead.

Paint the cabinets

(<http://www.houselogic.com/home-advice/kitchens/how-to-update-kitchen-cabinets/>) **white**. The real question is, to DIY or not to DIY

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(<http://www.houselogic.com/home-advice/maintenance-repair/when-it-pays-to-do-it-yourself/>)? Painting cabinets is a time-consuming job that requires a lot of prepping and priming. All the doors need to come off (where will you put them?), and you may not have the right tools or skills. Intrepid DIYers: See what's involved in painting cabinets:

On the other hand, hiring pros can cost \$100 to \$200 per box, depending on the cost of labor in your area.

Alabama kitchen designer Nick Lovelady, owner of Cupboards Kitchen & Bath (<http://www.cupboardsonline.com>), recommends buying new, especially with old cabinets that aren't built well and lack interior accessories. When clients insist, though, his company does paint cabinets. Doing the job right, he says, can pay off by extending your cabinets' finish 15 to 20 years. Lovelady recommends using a sprayer rather than a brush to avoid lines, especially on hard-grained woods.

Stone counters

(<http://www.houselogic.com/home-advice/kitchens/update-kitchen-on-budget/2/>)

Minimalist kitchens

(<http://www.houselogic.com/home-advice/kitchens/update-kitchen-on-budget/3/>)

Layered lighting

(<http://www.houselogic.com/home-advice/kitchens/update-kitchen-on-budget/4/>)

Space for connectivity

(<http://www.houselogic.com/home-advice/kitchens/update-kitchen-on-budget/5/>)

Color

(<http://www.houselogic.com/home-advice/kitchens/update-kitchen-on-budget/6/>)

2. Stone counters

Most show kitchens have stone counters, whether they're made from

engineered quartz, exotic granite, or a highly veined marble. But stone is expensive.

Get the trend for less:

Create a stone look by using granite tiles instead of a granite slab. At $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thick (instead of 2 to 3 cm), tiles cost less and make for easier carrying and installation than slabs. They can also be laid over an existing countertop. However, grout lines break up the appearance and can be tough to clean. 12 in. x 12 in. tiles roughly range from \$2 to \$17 per sq. ft.

Laminate counters

(<http://www.houselogic.com/home-advice/kitchens/laminate-kitchen-countertops-perfect-fakes-low-cost/>) now have more realistic patterns and patterns than before. Here's your chance to get that white "marble" counter. (Note: They cost more than standard laminates.)

"Manufacturers are increasing their offerings and products look much better than they used to," says Judy Klein of JK Design (<http://www.judykleindesign.com>) in Wilmette, Ill. One new option for laminate is curved edge treatments, such as bullnoses and ogees (<http://www.formica.com/home/ideal-edge/new-laminate-decorative-countertop-edge/>), which eliminate those telltale dark lines where edges meet, making it hard to identify a laminate counter as such.

By the way, laminate holds the U.S. countertop market share at 56%, with solid surface (12%), natural stone (9%), and engineered stone (7%) bringing up the rear, according to recent research by The Freedonia Group (<http://www.freedoniagroup.com/brochure/27xx/2788smwe.pdf>).

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3. Minimalist kitchens

Whether driven by a desire to simplify or by simple economics, kitchens look considerably more minimalist

(<http://www.houselogic.com/blog/kitchens/minimalist-kitchen/>) than a decade ago. Rather than showing stuff off, we're hiding it. In appliances, that means paneled, integrated refrigerators and dishwashers. Cabinets not only look less showy with simpler door styles and less moulding, they have more interior organization accessories to keep clutter at bay.

To streamline the kitchen you already have, think low-cost kitchen storage.

Get the trend for less:

Rev-a Shelf offers an under-sink pullout

(<http://www.rev-a-shelf.com/p-230-undersink-pullout-u-shape-basket-sink-and-base-accessories.aspx>) (about \$300) that makes the most of underused space.

Cookware organizers (\$156 or \$284) eliminate the need for a pot rack.

Modular, stackable trays

(<http://www.containerstore.com/shop/kitchen/drawerOrganizers/modular?productId=10027695&N=183>) make drawers manageable.

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4. Layered lighting

There's more to lighting than one big overhead fixture or even multiple recessed ceiling lights. Designers like to incorporate ambient or general, task, and accent lighting. In the kitchen, this typically translates into ceiling lights (ambient), under-cabinet lighting (task), and in-cabinet or above-cabinet lighting (accent). Older homes often lack the last two layers, but you can achieve better optics simply.

Get the trend for less (in the long run):

Under-cabinet lighting

(<http://www.houselogic.com/home-advice/lighting/under-cabinet-lighting-your-kitchen-task-masters/>) options, like pucks and light strips, are plentiful, low-cost, and help you reduce the risk of chopping your fingers instead of your vegetables.

For accent lighting that adds drama, use inexpensive LED tape or strip lighting (uninstalled, it runs \$10-\$30 per foot) inside cabinets, says Designer Nick Lovelady. This can work equally well to illuminate a big pantry cabinet or to show off dishware in a glass-front cabinet.

If you're willing to spend some money up front to save money in the long run, consider replacing existing can lights with long-lasting, energy-efficient LED lights

(<http://www.houselogic.com/home-advice/lighting/led-home-lighting-tips/>).

Kitchen lights account for a great deal of home energy usage, and

eventually the savings cover the higher cost of LED bulbs.

Designer Judy Klein suggests looking for lamps with under 3,000 Kelvin to create a warm glow.

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5. Space for connectivity

As the role that smartphones, tablets, and laptops play in our life grows, so too does their place in the kitchen command center

(<http://www.houselogic.com/blog/home-improvement/kitchen-command-center-why-it-doesnt-work/>) - whether for doing homework, looking up a recipe, or listening to music. Some kitchens incorporate a charging center for just this reason. Heck, some appliances even come with computers: Samsung's Wi-Fi enabled refrigerator

(<http://www.samsung.com/us/topic/apps-on-your-fridge>) sports a built-in 8-inch LCD touch screen tablet and plenty of cool apps.

Back to reality.

Get the trend for less:

Install an outlet inside a cabinet to keep the countertop clear.

Switch a standard outlet to an outlet with USB ports

(<http://fastmac.com/usocket.php>) so you can charge phones directly without an adapter.

Then buy a countertop station like this one from Target, and position it by an outlet to hide cords.

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6. Color

We're pragmatists here at HouseLogic, so we advise against rushing to buy cabinets in Lemon Sorbet

(<http://colorchats.benjaminmoore.com/2012/10/color-of-the-year-lemon-sorbet/>) (Benjamin Moore's color pick for 2013) or installing a countertop in Monaco Blue (Pantone's leading color prediction for spring 2013 fashion).

Get the trend for less:

Paint the walls. It's much easier for you - or a potential buyer of your home - to repaint a wall than to repaint cabinets or replace a countertop.

Opt for colorful vases or serve ware. Target has affordable pieces in every shade of the rainbow.

Linens and fabrics make an impact, too. Klein recommends cotton, washable rugs from Dash & Albert (<http://www.dashandalbert.com>), and Ikea also offers a large selection of attractive rugs (<http://www.ikea.com/us/en/catalog/categories/departments/Textiles/10653/>). For placemats and table cloths, try Pier 1 (http://www.pier1.com/dining-entertaining/table_linens,default,sc.html).

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