

# Super Kitchens

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I've seen the term "Super Kitchens" bandied about in design articles recently and at first it makes one think about uber-fancy kitchen designs that you only see in architecture magazines. However, that's not really what the term is referring to. It really refers to a much more homegrown kind of trend that refers to how kitchens are being used by people these days. For decades, kitchens in new homes have been "open" in concept; typically no wall between a family room, a dining room or both. But often the kitchens themselves still don't reflect how well people use their kitchens. They remain hallways and circulation space; they lack social areas; they have pinch points. Nearly every home I go to visit, the homeowners talk about issues that present themselves when family and friends inevitably gather in the kitchen.

Today, we use our kitchens to socialize in, to do work in, catch up on "e" and snail mail, and a myriad of other activities that may not have anything to do with food preparation or eating. To define the term correctly, a "Super Kitchen" is a kitchen space that works more like a family room and less like a traditional space to prepare food.

What's behind this trend? Kitchens are visually interesting with many potentially cool elements to look at and interact with. The materials going into kitchens have become incredibly diverse and plentiful over the last 15 years. There are cabinetry and countertops, appliances, lighting, floor surfaces, backsplashes, windows, hardware; all of which can reflect the homeowner unique personality and aesthetic. To coin a new phrase, I often call cabinet hardware "the jewelry of cabinets" - 😊.

Functionally, Super Kitchens can include many elements on top of people's wish lists:

- inviting seating/social areas,
  - views and access to outdoor spaces,
  - access to technology,
  - organizational spaces,
  - pet centers,
  - kid centers,
  - snack centers,
  - bar areas,
  - coffee and tea beverage centers
- and many others, a plethora of non-food oriented functionality.

In addition to all of these things, the open living area is still an integral part of the "Super Kitchen". How the kitchen interacts with the rest of the home is critical to its functioning the way modern lifestyles demand.

In a recent study by HOUZZ, they found that 43% of the people they surveyed could "no longer stand their kitchen". Wow, that's a pretty strong statement. This is up from 29% last year; a pretty big

jump. See the whole report on kitchen trends from HOUZZ here: <http://info.houzz.com/rs/804-JLJ-529/images/HouzzUSKitchenStudy2016.pdf>

In our work redesigning spaces for clients, we are almost always re-arranging kitchen layouts, often moving the kitchen to a completely different space in the home. Many people who think their home is too small find that reconfiguring how a home functions can make them “live” and feel they have more space than they actually have.

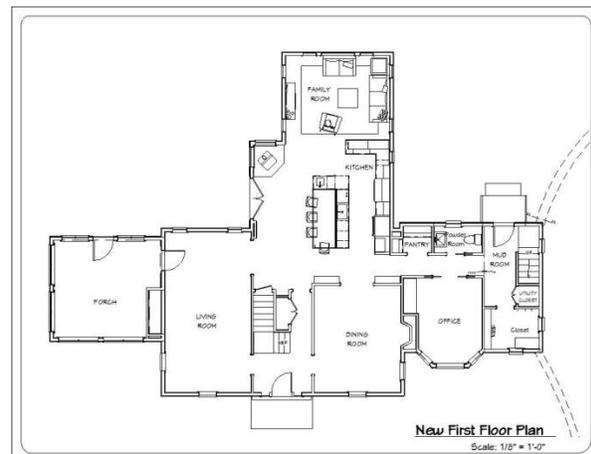
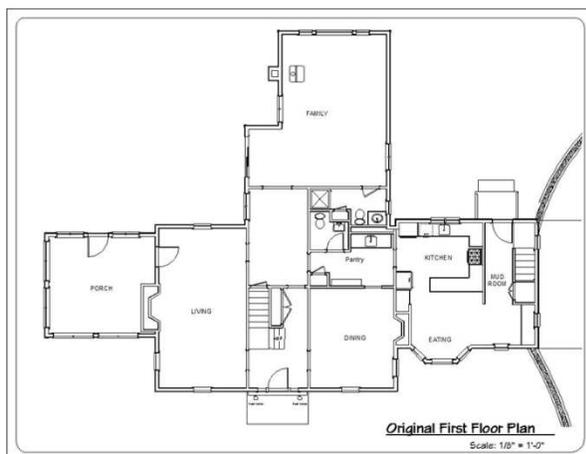
Another element that I’ve long felt is very important in kitchen design is seating that is inviting, not only to give people a place to sit but to subliminally encourage non-cooks to stay out of the way of the cooking function -- the function that I haven’t mentioned once in this kitchen article!



Here’s an example of a project that included a “super kitchen” we designed and built recently. The project moved the kitchen from a completely separate wing right to the center of the home, so it could serve that very purpose, “being the center of the home”.

*Inviting seating, open to family room, cool lighting, and beautiful materials*

*Original First Floor Plan and New First Floor Plan – Click PHOTOS to Enlarge*



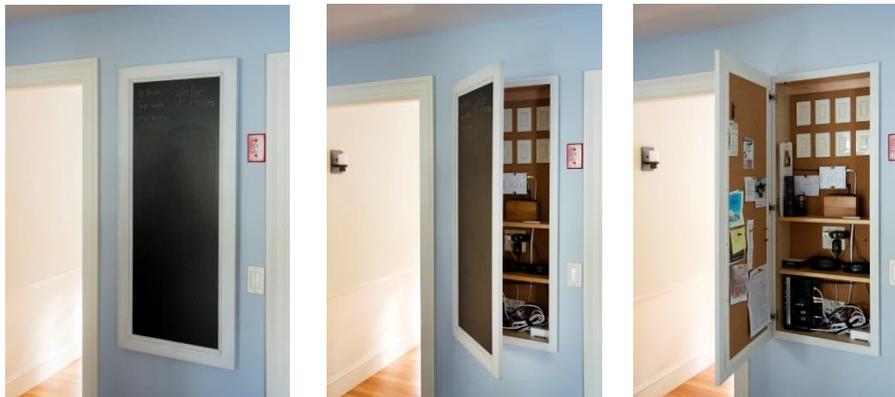
*Relocation of Kitchen to more effective layout in center of home significantly effecting how all the main living spaces connect and interact with each other.*

Some examples of the Super Kitchen elements:

*Bar/beverage area*



*Seating area, cool lighting, open spaces*



*Message black board, bulletin board, charging station,  
wireless modem/lighting system/technology hub*



*Pet friendly elements: feeding station, cat door access to basement*

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I've realized since exploring and researching this term that we've been experts at designing and building "Super Kitchens" for a long time. If you or anyone you know are interested in exploring your own "Super Kitchen" you should give us a call or contact us on our website today to discuss how we can make it a reality.