

Kitchens

A kitchen is a place to store, wash, prep, cook and gather. It works when the layout, cabinets, counters, light and services are planned together, around how you actually cook.

NKBA kitchen guidelines IRC M1503 · M1901 NEC 210.52 ANSI/KCMA A161.1

KEY NUMBERS		6 numbers ^
CODE	GOOD	
Counter height	—	36"
Counter depth	—	25"
Work aisle	—	42" · 48" for 2
Above cooktop	30" to combustibles	hood per maker
Counter outlets	no point >24" away	+ islands
Ducted hood	100 CFM min	150+ CFM

1.1

What makes a kitchen?

A kitchen is a space to store, prep, cook, clean and gather. It's functional, but also deeply personal. A well-designed one makes everyday life easier, safer and more enjoyable.

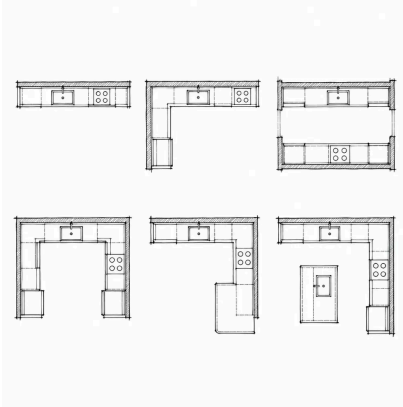
Good kitchens fit your lifestyle, not just a style.



FIG. 1.1 • What makes a kitchen?

THE KITCHEN FAMILY TREE

LAYOUT



- single wall
- L-shaped
- galley
- U-shaped
- peninsula
- island

WORKFLOW



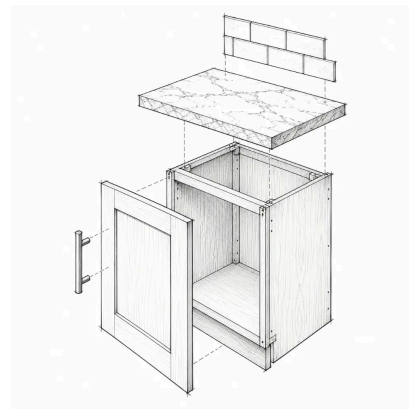
- store
- wash
- prep
- cook
- serve

CABINETS



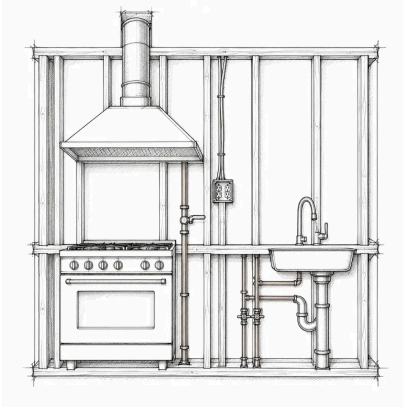
- base cabinets
- wall cabinets
- tall + pantry
- specialty storage

MATERIALS



- cabinet box
- doors + fronts
- countertop
- hardware
- backsplash

SERVICES



- electrical
- plumbing
- gas
- ventilation
- lighting

THERE ISN'T A BEST LAYOUT. THE RIGHT KITCHEN DEPENDS ON

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ your space | ☐ the appliances you own |
| ☐ how many people cook | ☐ your budget |
| ☐ how you cook | ☐ how long you'll stay |

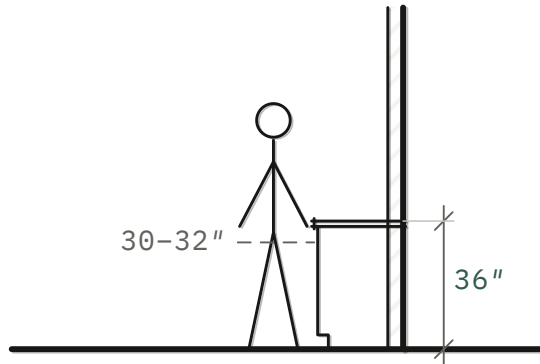
*Start with how you
live, not what looks
good in photos.*

NEXT 1.2 Which layout works for you? →

These are common dimensions that work in most US homes. They're a starting point; adjust for the main cook's height, the appliances and the room you actually have.

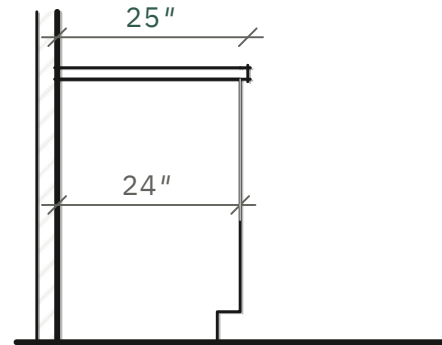
Good design considers people, not just numbers.

COUNTER HEIGHT



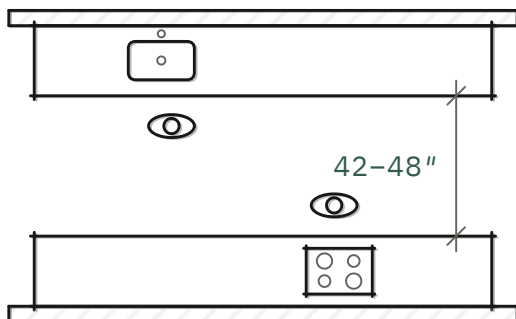
- 36" standard
- adjust $\pm 1-2$ " for the main cook
- a lower 30-32" baking section is a luxury

COUNTER DEPTH



- 25" top on a 24" box
- a standard-depth fridge sticks out about 6"; recess it or choose counter-depth

AISLE

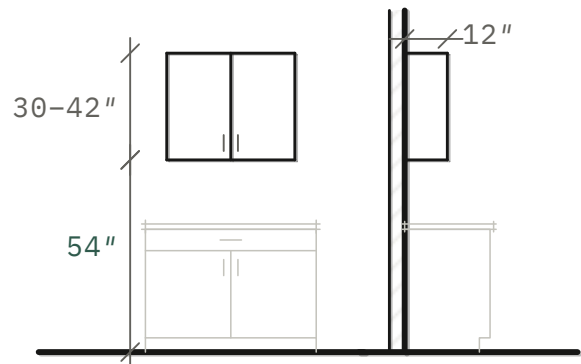


- 42" for one cook
- 48" for two cooks
- 36" for a walkway (NKBA)

KEEP IN MIND

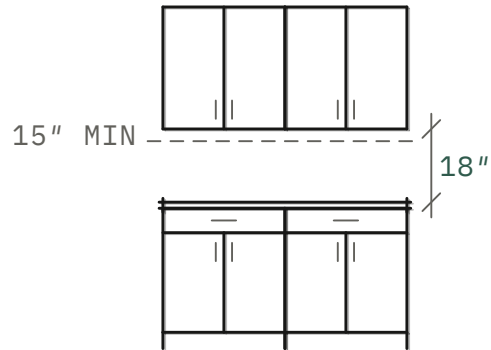
Add room where a dishwasher or oven door opens into it.

WALL CABINETS



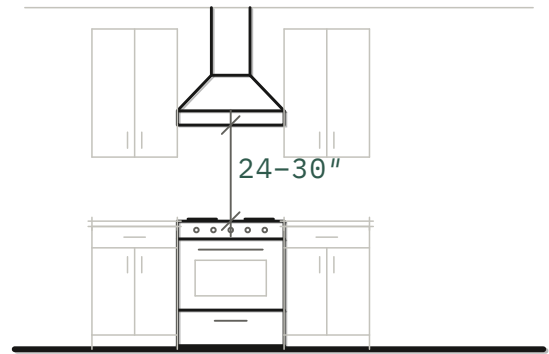
- 30", 36" or 42" tall
- 12" deep
- bottom usually 54" off the floor

SPACE ABOVE COUNTER



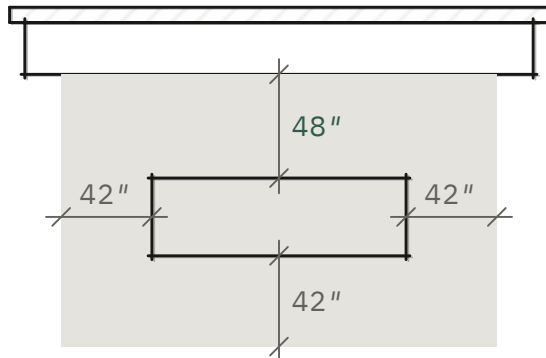
- 18" is typical
- 15" minimum (NKBA)
- more behind a range, by the hood spec

ABOVE THE COOKTOP



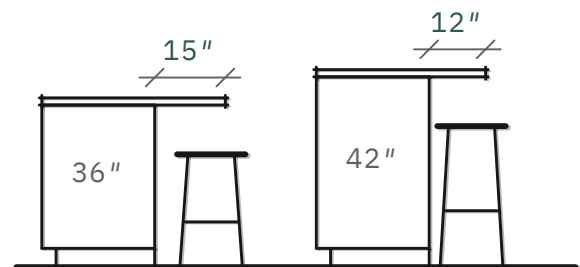
- 30" to unprotected combustibles (code)
- hood height per the maker, often 24-30"

ISLAND



- 42" clear on working sides
- 48" where two cook
- same height as the counters for a seamless look

SEATING



- 24" of width per seat
- 15" knee space at 36" high
- 12" at 42" high
- 36" behind seats to edge past

A QUICK ERGONOMIC CHECK

- ☐ counter height right for the main cook?
- ☐ can every appliance open fully?
- ☐ enough aisle for two?
- ☐ everyday items within reach?
- ☐ landing space beside each appliance?
- ☐ does it suit how you cook?

*Use these numbers
as a guide, not a
rule.*

NEXT [1.12 Planning tips: a kitchen that works for you](#) →