

# Kitchens Made User-Friendly

As one of the spaces that sees the most action in a home, kitchens need to strike the right balance between practicality and aesthetics. Some of the new trends in kitchen design are ensuring this crucial aspect is taken care of.

By Bindu Gopal Rao



In the ever-evolving trends of kitchen design, open shelving and minimalist aesthetics have become great choices for contemporary living because of the clean and spacious look they offer.

## KITCHEN CONFIDENTIAL

When a family of four who values modern aesthetics, functionality, and shared family moments wanted to do away with clutter—both physical and visual and emphasise more clean, neat lines in their kitchen in their South Mumbai home, they reached out to Swati Gupta, Founder & Principal Designer, Bluedot Design. “Our design team incorporated a contemporary open kitchen layout, seamlessly connecting it to the living area. The idea was to eliminate the barrier between the central living area and the cooking space, making entertaining or socialising with the rest of the family more accessible while whipping up meals.

In the kitchen, the island unit in teakwood with brass inlay duals up as a breakfast counter for a quick meal. Dark grey matte cabinets and drawers were chosen for a sleek and sophisticated look on one side, contrasting beautifully with warm wood finishes on the other side of the cabinets and the breakfast counter,” says Swati. The kitchen was strategically laid out to optimise workflow. The stove/ prep area, refrigerator and oven, and the cleaning/ washing area form a perfect triangle, ensuring efficiency during cooking. The central focus is the wood-finished breakfast counter, acting as a hub for quick meals, family gatherings, and casual conversations.



Vaishali Lahoti, Deputy General Manager- Design, Godrej Interio



Amruth Sampige, Co-founder, Dash Square

1. Efficient storage emerges as another paramount concern, recognizing that a well-organised kitchen is a canvas for seamless functionality

2. Urban kitchens today have become multifunctional as they support activities like storing, eating, entertaining and cleaning, leaving very little time for organizing

3. Innovative materials like engineered quartz and recycled glass countertops provide durability and eco-friendliness







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Dilip Rathi - Managing Director, Ereluxe

for seamless functionality. From pantry items to cookware, the user seeks smart storage solutions that ensure that every item has its designated place, effortlessly accessible and neatly arranged.” The consideration of child-friendly features takes precedence when children are involved as safety becomes an integral aspect of the design, manifesting in rounded countertop edges, lockable cabinets for potentially hazardous items, and thoughtful placement of appliances to create a space that is not only functional but also safe. “Ultimately, users yearn for a space that transcends the utilitarian, reflecting their unique style sensibilities. This goes beyond the mere visual appeal; it is about curating an environment that resonates with their personality and preferences, a space that feels like an extension of their identity,” avers Amruth.

**USER EXPERIENCE**

In a study conducted by Godrej Interio, it was found that urban kitchens today have become multifunctional as they support activities like storing, eating, entertaining and cleaning, leaving very little time for organising. “On the technology front, most Indian kitchens today are equipped with many appliances and gadgets. A sharp increase in storage requirements has been observed especially in the kitchen due to the overwhelming choices of food available to consumers today and individual preferences of family members. As always, we have aimed to create a sensible range with a superlative experience that justifies every kitchen space. Our kitchens are designed with diverse features to evolve with the swiftly changing lifestyles of our customers,” says Vaishali Lahoti, Deputy General Manager, Godrej Interio.

4. There is a captivating shift in colour palettes with deeper hues taking centre stage in the design landscape.

5. The trend in modern kitchens is to ‘Mix it All Up’, combining diverse elements for a personalized and eclectic aesthetic.

6. The integration of smart technology in the kitchen is becoming popular.



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Pendant lights above the breakfast counter create a cosy and intimate atmosphere, while recessed lights in the ceiling ensure a well-lit workspace. The integration of smart technology in their freezer, refrigerator, and dishwasher not only enhances convenience but also aligns with their desire for a modern, efficient, and tech-savvy home, allowing them to manage their kitchen efficiently.

**FORM MEETS FUNCTION**

This kind of user-centric approach to kitchen design blends aesthetics with functionality, ensuring that the space not only meets the family’s practical needs but also enhances their overall living experience. Amruth Sampige, Co-founder, Dash Square, explains, “When viewed through the lens of the user, the key priorities in kitchen design transition into a compelling set of considerations. Foremost among them is the aspiration for an open and spacious design that breathes freely and facilitates a fluid culinary experience. Efficient storage emerges as another paramount concern, recognising that a well-organised kitchen is a canvas



COURTESY BLUEBOT DESIGN





COURTESY ETRÉLUXE

**MATERIAL MATTERS**

Innovative materials like engineered quartz and recycled glass countertops provide durability and eco-friendliness. High-tech porcelain surfaces emulate the look of natural stone with enhanced resilience. Glass-ceramic materials, known for their resistance to scratches and high temperatures, are finding applications in cooktops, countertops, as well as cabinets. “Additionally, advanced polymers and acrylics are shaping futuristic kitchen components, exhibiting versatility in design and colour. A newer addition that’s seen in this space is stainless steel kitchens. Stainless steel kitchens exude a sleek, modern aesthetic. Renowned for durability and hygiene, stainless steel surfaces bring a timeless look to contemporary kitchen designs. The outer aesthetics are very similar to the HDF kitchens and these new-age materials not only enhance functionality but also contribute to sustainable and aesthetically pleasing kitchen spaces,” says Swati.

**TRENDING NOW**

There is a captivating shift in colour palettes with deeper hues taking centre stage in the design landscape. These rich, darker tones bring an undeniable sense of warmth and intimacy to the kitchen, transcending it from a functional space to a sanctuary of culinary indulgence. Dilip Rathi, Managing Director, Etréluxe, says, “Recognising the importance of the kitchen, it becomes vital to consider kitchen furniture as more than mere utilitarian items. Instead, each piece must be regarded as a masterpiece, meticulously planned, and crafted to elevate the kitchen space into a realm of unparalleled sophistication. Having said that, it’s essential to ensure each piece of furniture is not merely an item; it is a work of art thoughtfully designed to elevate the kitchen space. From intricately carved cabinets to bespoke islands, every element must exude an air of refined luxury.”

**MIX IT UP**

Despite its cost, wood is a timeless choice for kitchens given its remarkable durability and resistance. The rich textures and warm tones of wood not only elevate the visual appeal but also

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infuse the kitchen space with an enduring sense of character and sophistication. “Even gold hardware has gracefully stepped into the limelight, transforming kitchen interiors into havens of luxury and refinement. Gold, whether in cabinet handles, faucets, or luminous light fixtures, has become a design choice synonymous with those aspiring to transcend the ordinary,” says Rathi. The trend in modern kitchens is to ‘Mix it All Up’, combining diverse elements for a personalised and eclectic aesthetic. “This involves blending various materials, textures, and colours in cabinetry, countertops, and appliances, and various depths and heights to make it more functional. The result is a harmonious yet dynamic kitchen space that reflects individual tastes. Mixing materials like wood, metal, and stone, and experimenting with contrasting tones, creates a visually engaging and inviting atmosphere,” adds Gupta.

**GOING GREEN**

Kitchens are embracing sustainability through various measures. Energy-efficient appliances, such as induction cooktops and low-energy dishwashers, reduce consumption. LED lighting minimises energy use while lasting longer. Recycling stations within kitchens encourage waste separation and proper disposal. Water-saving faucets and dishwashers contribute to conservation efforts. “Quartz countertops have maintained their unwavering popularity, and for good reason. Renowned for its exceptional durability, ease of maintenance, and an extensive array of colour and pattern options, quartz stands as the epitome of practical elegance in modern kitchen design. On the eco-conscious front, bamboo emerges as a star player in the realm of sustainable kitchen materials. This rapidly renewable resource finds its purpose not only in resilient kitchen flooring but also in the crafting of cabinets and countertops,” says Amruth. Additionally, eco-friendly countertops made from recycled glass or composite materials are gaining popularity. Smart technologies optimise resource use, with some kitchens incorporating home composting systems. Overall, a holistic approach to sustainable design in kitchens involves mindful choices in materials, energy, and waste management. **AS**