

Optimizing Kitchen Design: Principles, Layouts, And Movement Efficiency In Modern Homes

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Objective: Kitchen design plays a crucial role in modern home architecture, impacting functionality and lifestyle. This study aims to analyze fundamental principles of kitchen design, focusing on spatial organization, movement efficiency, and contemporary trends.

Methods: The research employed a comprehensive literature review and analysis of kitchen design principles, including the triangle of movement and diamond shape rule. Various kitchen layouts were examined, and dimensional considerations for appliances and furniture were evaluated. Additionally, color theory in kitchen aesthetics was explored.

Results: The study identified key factors in optimal kitchen design, including appropriate sizing, strategic placement of appliances, and adherence to movement efficiency principles. The triangle of movement, with distances ranging from 4-8 meters between key elements, emerged as a critical concept. Six primary kitchen layouts were analyzed, each suited to different spatial constraints and user needs. The research also highlighted the rising popularity of open-concept American kitchens and the importance of color selection in creating functional and aesthetically pleasing spaces.

Conclusion: Effective kitchen design requires a balanced approach, integrating spatial efficiency, ergonomic considerations, and aesthetic elements. The findings provide valuable insights for architects and interior designers in creating functional, comfortable, and visually appealing kitchen spaces that align with modern lifestyle needs.

Significance: This research bridges the gap between theoretical design principles and practical application, offering comprehensive guidelines for architects, interior designers, and homeowners. By synthesizing historical context with current trends, the study contributes to the evolution of kitchen design in response to changing societal needs and technological advancements.

Keywords: Kitchen design, spatial efficiency, movement triangle, layout optimization, ergonomics.

Introduction

The kitchen, often referred to as the heart of the home, has undergone a significant evolution throughout history, transforming from a purely functional space to a central hub of domestic life. This transformation reflects broader changes in society, technology, and architectural design, making the study of kitchen design both fascinating and crucial for modern living (Forlini, 2024; Malaia, 2021). The kitchen's importance extends beyond its primary function

of food preparation; it has become a space for family gatherings, social interactions, and even a showcase of personal style and technological advancement (Eisenberg et al., 2023).

The origins of the modern kitchen can be traced back to the industrial revolution, which brought about significant changes in home design and functionality. The invention of the cooking range and the development of water infrastructure capable of providing running water to private homes marked a turning point in kitchen design (Kaarnavaara-Puutio, 2021; Moulai et al., 2024). Prior to these advancements, cooking was typically done over an open fire, and water had to be fetched from external sources such as wells and springs. These technological developments in the 18th and 19th centuries not only changed kitchen architecture but also revolutionized the way people interacted with their living spaces (Cioruta and Coman, 2020).

As kitchens evolved, so did the principles governing their design. The concept of the working triangle, introduced in the 1940s, became a fundamental principle in kitchen layout. This design theory posits that the three main work areas in a kitchen – the sink, the stove, and the refrigerator – should form a triangle for optimal efficiency (Ollár et al., 2022). The working triangle aimed to minimize unnecessary movement and optimize workflow, a principle that remains relevant in contemporary kitchen design despite the introduction of new appliances and changing lifestyle needs (Hagejård et al., 2020; Ramsamy-Iranah et al., 2021; Ram et al., 2024).

In recent years, the kitchen has increasingly become an open, multifunctional space that seamlessly integrates with other living areas. This trend towards open-plan living has led to the popularity of kitchen islands and breakfast bars, which serve as transitional elements between the kitchen and adjacent spaces (Carpenter, 2024). The American open kitchen concept, in particular, has gained significant traction, reflecting a broader cultural shift towards more casual, integrated living spaces (Pejic and Pejic, 2022; Hexmoor & Maghsoudlou, 2024; Sun and Ji, 2020).

The importance of ergonomics in kitchen design cannot be overstated. As a space where repetitive tasks are performed daily, the kitchen must be designed to minimize physical strain and maximize comfort. This includes considerations such as counter height, cabinet placement, and the positioning of appliances (Zhou et al., 2022). The diamond shape rule, an alternative to the traditional working triangle, has emerged as a method to further optimize kitchen layout, dividing the space into four functional zones: dry preparation, wet preparation, cooking, and food storage (Scherer et al., 2023).

Color theory and lighting design play crucial roles in creating a functional and aesthetically pleasing kitchen environment. The choice of colors can significantly impact the perception of space, cleanliness, and even appetite stimulation (Buntsma, 2023). Warm colors such as reds, oranges, and yellows are often recommended in kitchen design for their ability to create a welcoming atmosphere and potentially enhance appetite (Bordewijk and Schifferstein, 2020; Noury, 2021). Lighting, both natural and artificial, is essential not only for task performance but also for setting the mood and enhancing the overall ambiance of the kitchen (Eisenberg et al., 2023).

The materials used in kitchen construction and furnishing have also evolved, with a focus on durability, hygiene, and aesthetic appeal. Modern kitchens often feature a combination of materials such as stainless steel, granite, quartz, and various types of wood, each chosen for its specific properties and visual characteristics (Mirka, 2023). The selection of these materials must balance practical considerations such as ease of cleaning and resistance to heat and moisture with design preferences and budget constraints (Kiran et al., 2022).

As sustainability becomes an increasingly important consideration in architecture and design, kitchen design has also begun to incorporate eco-friendly principles. This includes the use of energy-efficient appliances, sustainable materials, and designs that promote waste reduction and recycling (Zhou et al., 2022). The concept of the "green kitchen" extends beyond material choices to include considerations of water usage, energy consumption, and even food storage and preparation methods that minimize environmental impact (Kaarnavaara-Puutio, 2021).

The advent of smart home technology has further transformed the kitchen landscape. Integration of Internet of Things (IoT) devices, such as smart refrigerators, connected ovens, and voice-activated assistants, is becoming increasingly common in modern kitchens (La Barbera, 2023; Sayeduzzaman et al., 2024). These technologies promise to enhance convenience, efficiency, and even cooking precision, although they also raise questions about privacy, security, and the potential for technological obsolescence (Ayubirad and Ataei, 2024; Sayeduzzaman et al., 2024).

Despite these advancements, challenges remain in kitchen design. One significant issue is the need to create spaces that are adaptable to changing family structures and lifestyle needs. As households become more diverse and living arrangements more fluid, kitchens must be designed with flexibility in mind (Hagejård et al., 2020). Additionally, the increasing prevalence of small living spaces, particularly in urban areas, presents challenges in creating functional kitchens within limited square footage (Sun and Ji, 2020).

Another pressing concern is accessibility in kitchen design. As populations age and awareness of diverse physical needs grows, there is an increasing demand for kitchens that are usable by people of all ages and abilities. This universal design approach aims to create spaces that are comfortable and functional for everyone, regardless of their physical capabilities (Malaia, 2021).

The current study aims to address these challenges by providing a comprehensive analysis of contemporary kitchen design principles, with a focus on optimizing space utilization, enhancing functionality, and improving user experience. By examining various layout options, from single-wall kitchens to island configurations, this research seeks to offer insights into how different designs can be adapted to meet diverse spatial constraints and user needs (Rajendran, 2021; Nainggolan et al., 2024).

Furthermore, this study intends to bridge the gap between theoretical design principles and practical application, offering guidelines that can be utilized by architects, interior designers, and homeowners alike. By synthesizing historical context, current trends, and future projections, the research aims to contribute to the development of kitchen designs that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also highly functional, adaptable, and sustainable.

Materials and Methods

The research methodology employed in this study was primarily based on a comprehensive literature review and analysis of existing kitchen design principles, focusing on spatial organization, movement efficiency, and contemporary trends. The researchers conducted an in-depth examination of various sources, including architectural journals, design publications, and industry reports, to gather relevant information on kitchen design evolution, current practices, and emerging trends.

The study began with an historical overview of kitchen design, tracing its evolution from early functional spaces to the multifaceted, integrated living areas of modern homes. This historical context provided a foundation for understanding the factors that have influenced kitchen design over time, including technological advancements, societal changes, and shifts in architectural principles.

A key focus of the methodology was the analysis of fundamental kitchen design principles, with particular emphasis on the triangle of movement concept. The researchers examined the origins and applications of this principle, which posits that the three main work areas in a kitchen – the sink, the stove, and the refrigerator – should form a triangle for optimal efficiency. The study evaluated the recommended distances between these elements, noting that the perimeter of the triangle should ideally range from 4 to 8 meters, with each side of the triangle measuring between 1.25 and 2.75 meters.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of kitchen layouts, the researchers identified and analyzed six primary kitchen configurations: single wall, parallel, L-shaped, U-shaped, American open, and island kitchens. Each layout was examined in terms of its spatial requirements, advantages, and limitations. For instance, the single wall kitchen was noted as suitable for spaces not exceeding 1.60 meters in width, while the U-shaped kitchen was identified as appropriate for medium to large spaces of at least 10 square meters.

The study also investigated an alternative to the triangle of movement, known as the diamond shape rule. This concept, which divides the kitchen into four functional zones (dry preparation, wet preparation, cooking, and food storage), was analyzed for its potential to enhance kitchen efficiency and workflow.

Dimensional considerations formed a crucial part of the research methodology. The researchers compiled and analyzed standard measurements for various kitchen elements, including the minimum legal area for kitchens (three square meters), the recommended width (not less than 1.20 meters), and length (not less than 2.50 meters). Additionally, the study examined ergonomic considerations, such as the recommended height for lower units (minimum 0.90 m) and the optimal depth for preparation areas (not exceeding 0.64 m).

The researchers also investigated the role of color in kitchen design, focusing on the psychological and functional aspects of color choice. They examined the use of warm colors and their derivatives, as well as neutral tones, in creating appetizing and visually appealing kitchen spaces. The study considered how different colors could influence the perception of space, cleanliness, and overall ambiance in the kitchen.

To ensure a comprehensive approach, the methodology included an analysis of lighting in kitchen design. Both natural and artificial lighting were considered, with emphasis on how proper lighting can enhance functionality, create ambiance, and complement the chosen color scheme. The researchers examined the recommendation that window area should be at least 10% of the kitchen floor area to provide adequate natural lighting and ventilation.

The study also addressed the selection of materials for kitchen construction and furnishing. The researchers evaluated various materials commonly used in modern kitchens, such as wood (particularly oak and beech for their durability), marble, and granite. The analysis focused on the properties of these materials, including their resistance to heat, moisture, and wear, as well as their aesthetic qualities.

In examining the trend towards open-plan living, the researchers conducted a detailed analysis of the American open kitchen concept. This included an investigation of its popularity, design considerations, and the challenges associated with integrating the kitchen with living spaces. The study considered both the advantages of this layout, such as enhanced social interaction and the illusion of increased space, as well as potential drawbacks like the spread of cooking odors and the visibility of kitchen clutter.

To address the growing importance of sustainability in design, the methodology included an examination of eco-friendly practices in kitchen design. This encompassed the use of energy-efficient appliances, sustainable materials, and design strategies that promote waste reduction and recycling.

The researchers also considered the impact of technological advancements on kitchen design. This included an analysis of smart home technologies and their integration into modern kitchens, such as IoT-enabled appliances and voice-activated assistants. The potential benefits and challenges of these technologies were evaluated within the context of kitchen design and functionality.

Accessibility and universal design principles were also incorporated into the research methodology. The researchers examined how kitchens can be designed to accommodate users of all ages and abilities, considering factors such as counter heights, cabinet accessibility, and the placement of appliances.

Throughout the study, the researchers paid careful attention to the interplay between aesthetics and functionality in kitchen design. They analyzed how different design elements, from color schemes to layout choices, can be balanced to create kitchens that are both visually appealing and highly functional.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, the researchers cross-referenced information from multiple sources and considered contrasting viewpoints on various aspects of kitchen design. They also took into account regional variations in kitchen design preferences and requirements, acknowledging that factors such as cultural norms, climate, and local architectural traditions can influence kitchen design choices.

The methodology also included an analysis of current challenges in kitchen design, such as creating functional kitchens in small urban spaces and designing kitchens that can adapt to

changing family structures and lifestyle needs. The researchers examined case studies and design solutions that address these challenges, providing insights into innovative approaches to contemporary kitchen design.

In compiling and analyzing this information, the researchers aimed to create a comprehensive framework for understanding and implementing effective kitchen design. The methodology was designed to bridge the gap between theoretical design principles and practical application, offering insights that could be valuable to architects, interior designers, and homeowners alike.

Results

The study on kitchen design foundations and the triangle of movement yielded significant findings across various aspects of kitchen planning and layout. These results are presented sequentially, following the structure of the provided document.

Design Foundations of Kitchens

The research identified several key principles for effective kitchen design. As illustrated in Figure 1, the layout of a kitchen should consider multiple factors:

- 1. Adequate space for comfortable movement
- 2. Proximity to the dining room or internal living room for privacy
- 3. Close proximity to the house entrance for convenient supply access
- 4. Proper orientation to prevent food odors from entering the house
- 5. Placement on side or back facades for efficient plumbing
- 6. Strategic positioning of doors and windows to optimize the movement triangle
- 7. Provision of natural lighting and ventilation through windows covering at least 10% of the kitchen area

These principles form the foundation for creating functional and efficient kitchen spaces.

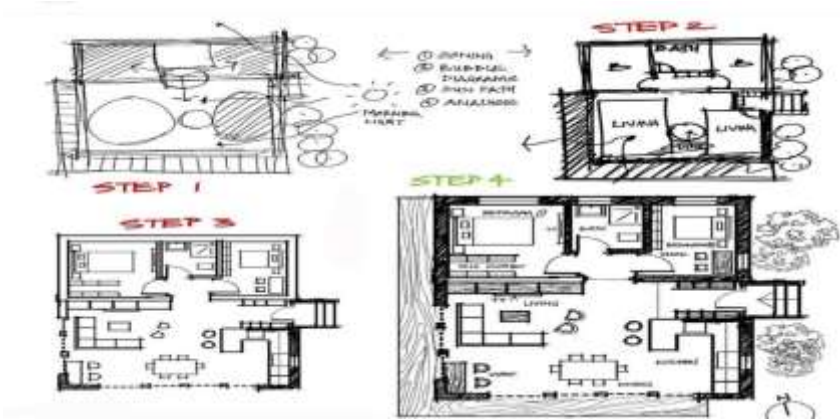


Figure 1: Basic principles of kitchen design

The Triangle of Movement

A central concept in kitchen design is the triangle of movement, connecting three key elements: the sink, the stove, and the refrigerator. As shown in Figure 2, these elements represent the vertices of a triangle that defines the primary work area in the kitchen.

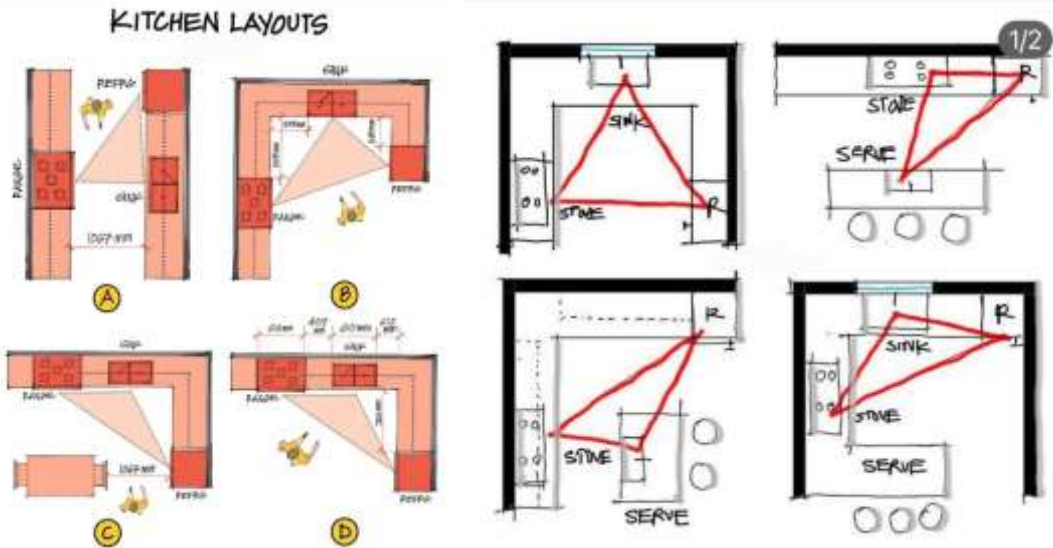


Figure 2: The triangle of movement in kitchen design

The study found that the optimal perimeter of this triangle ranges from 4 to 8 meters, with each side measuring between 1.25 and 2.75 meters (Figure 3). This configuration ensures efficient movement between the main work areas. Additionally, the research recommends placing the refrigerator closer to the entrance, the sink near a window for natural light, and the stove in a well-ventilated area.

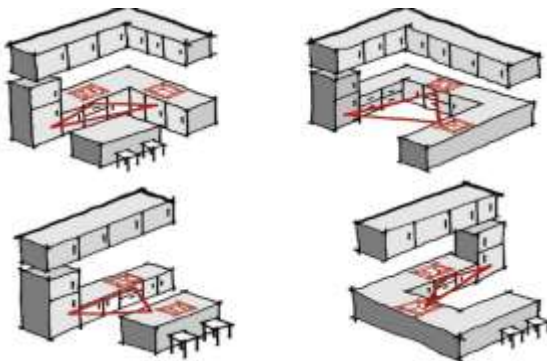


Figure 3: Optimal dimensions for the kitchen work triangle

The Diamond Shape Rule

An alternative to the triangle of movement, the diamond shape rule, was also examined. As depicted in Figures 4 and 5, this concept divides the kitchen into four functional areas:

1. Dry preparation area
2. Wet preparation area
3. Cooking area (surrounding the stove and oven)
4. Food preparation area (surrounding the refrigerator and cooler)

This rule offers a more detailed approach to kitchen organization, potentially allowing for greater efficiency in larger kitchen spaces.

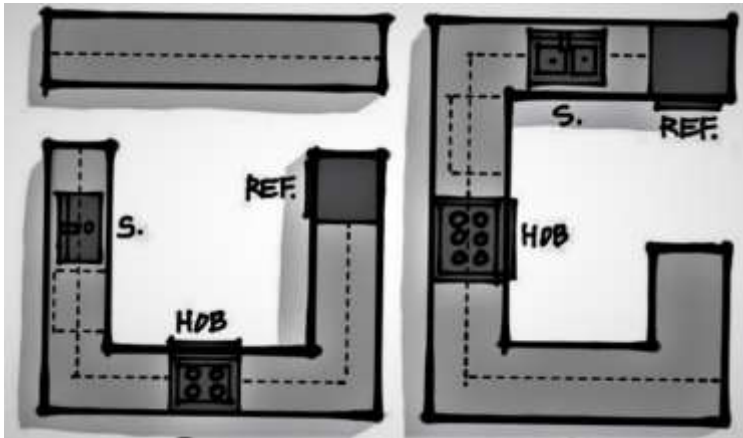


Figure 4: The diamond shape rule - an alternative to the triangle of movement

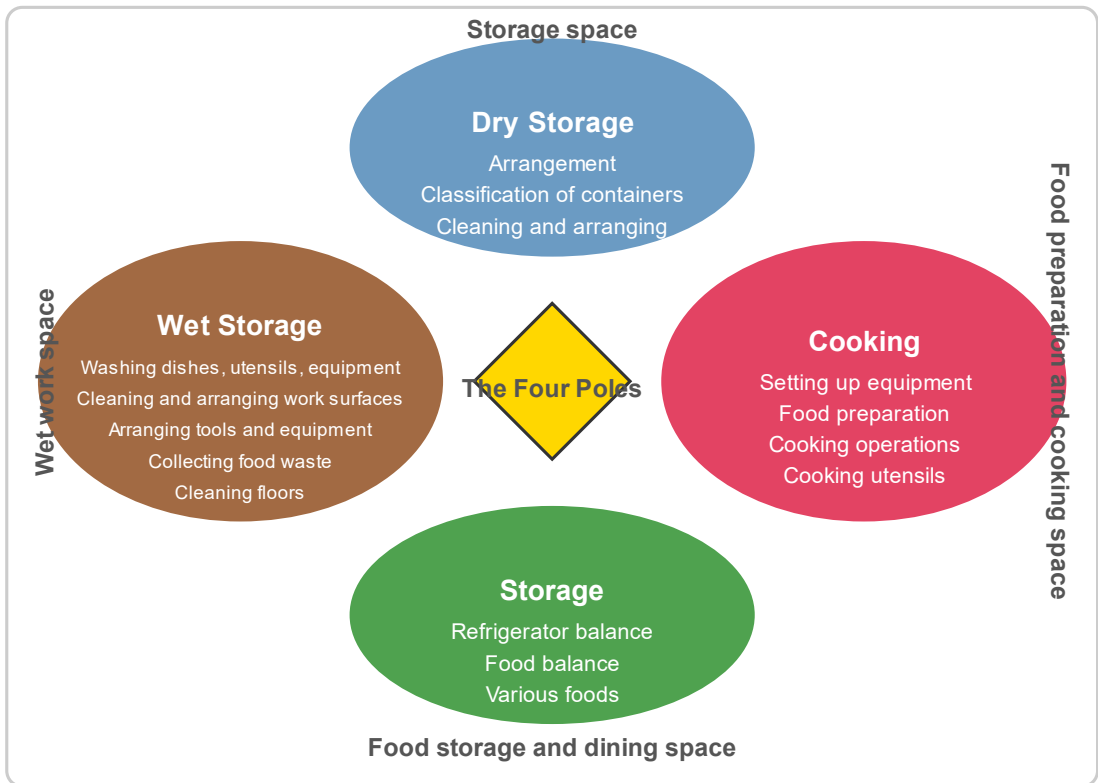


Figure 5: Functional zones in the diamond shape rule

Kitchen Dimensions and Measurements

The study established key dimensional guidelines for kitchen design. The minimum legal area for a kitchen was found to be three square meters, with a minimum width of 1.20 meters and a minimum length of 2.50 meters. These dimensions ensure a basic level of functionality even in compact spaces.

Figures 6 and 7 illustrate various dimensional considerations for kitchen elements. The research recommends a minimum height of 0.90 cm for lower units, which can be adjusted based on users' heights. The depth of preparation areas should not exceed 0.64 cm to ensure comfortable reach and prevent strain.

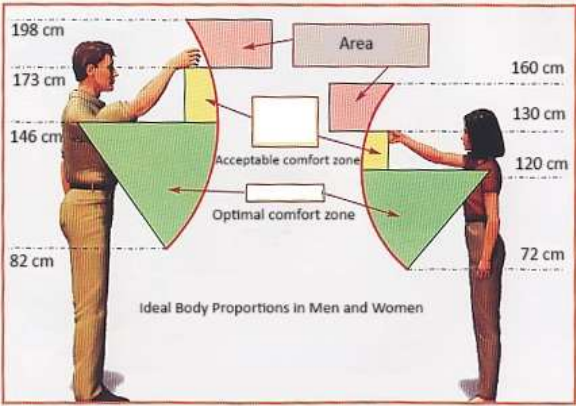
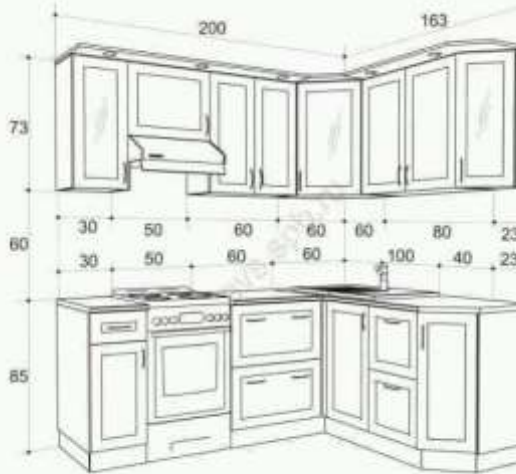
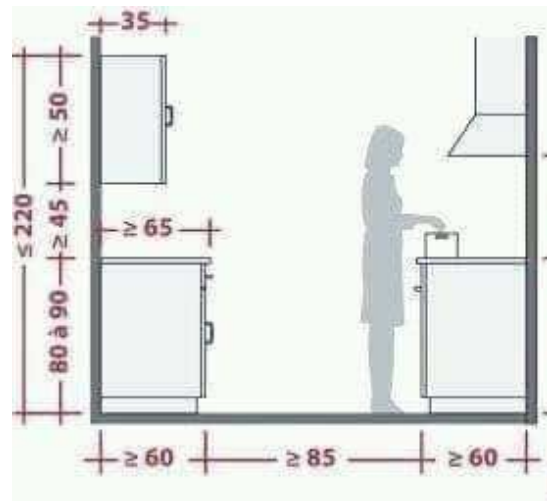
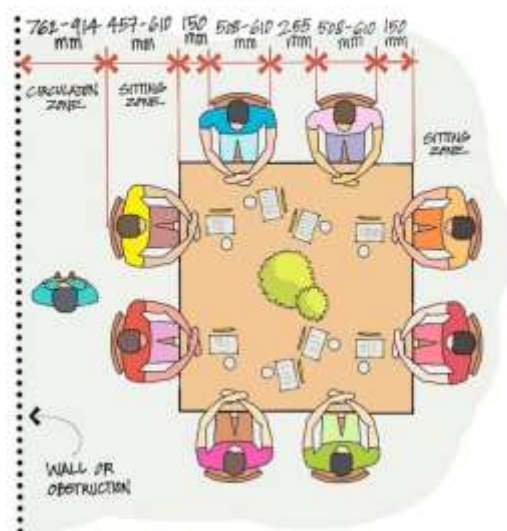


Figure 6: Kitchen cabinet and countertop dimensions

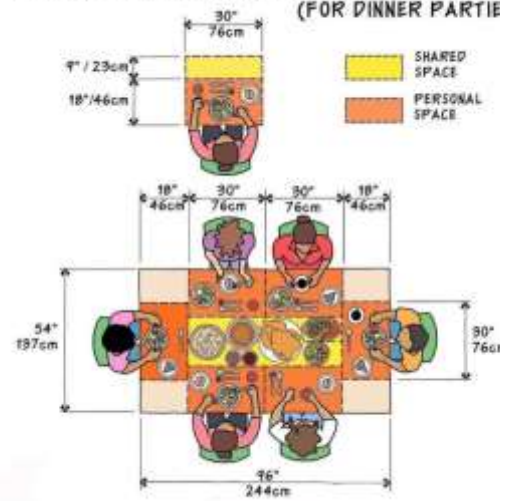




CONFERENCE TABLE WORKZONE



IDEAL DINING AREA DIMENSIONS (FOR DINNER PARTIE)



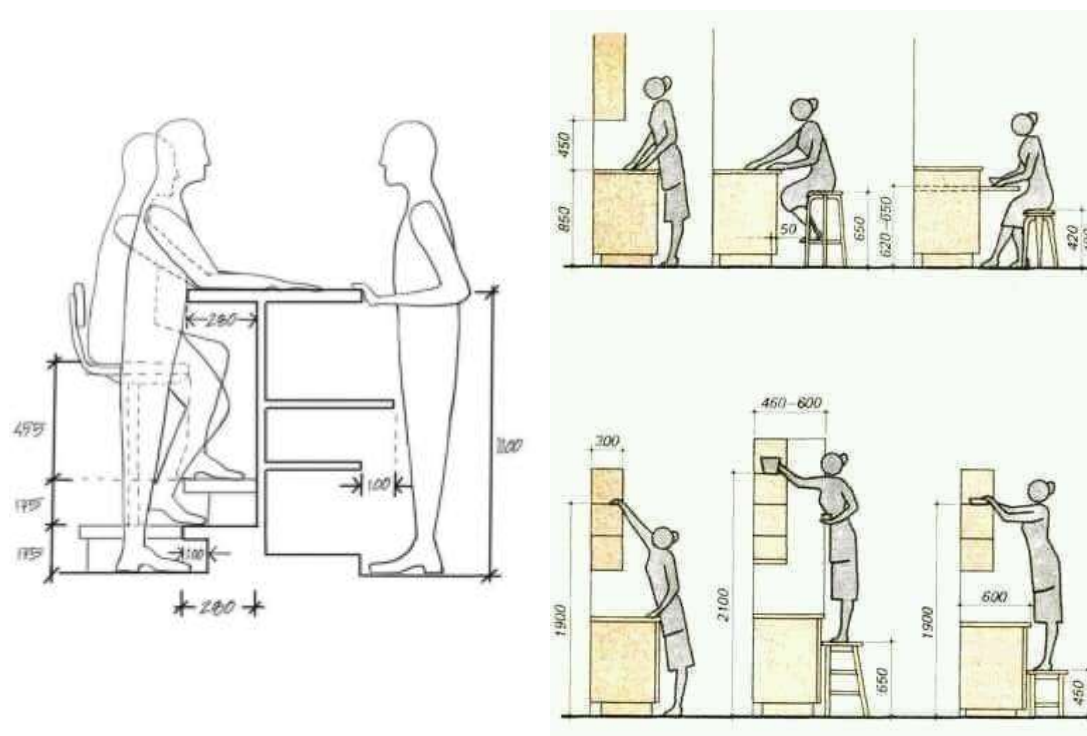
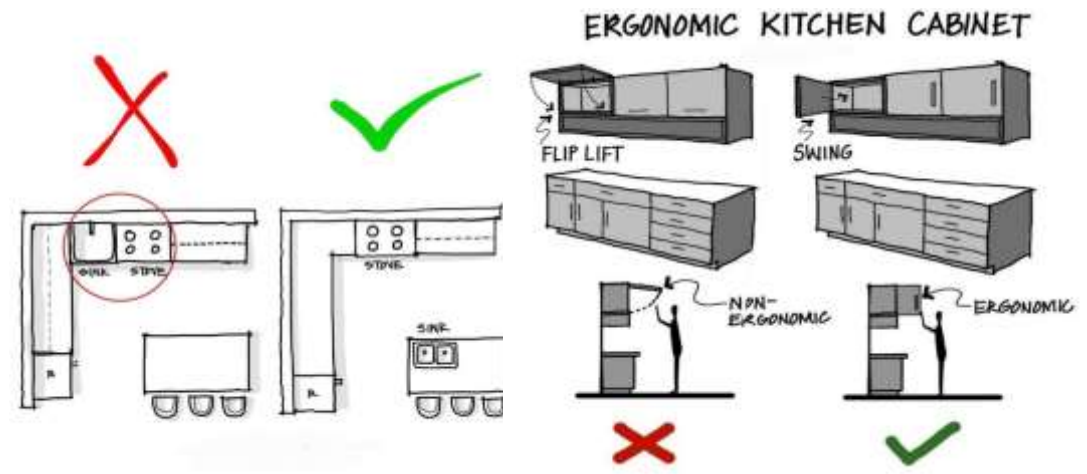
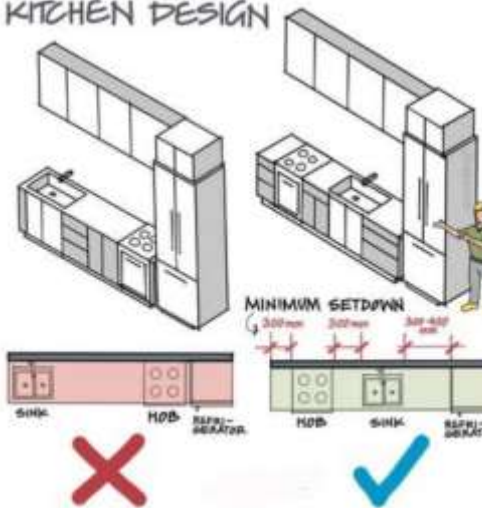


Figure 7: Additional kitchen dimension considerations

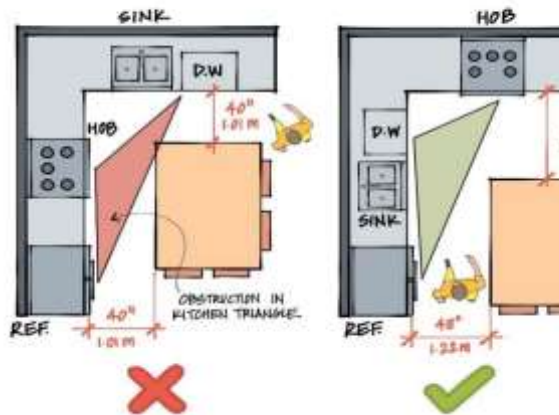
Figure 8 highlights several dimensional prohibitions in kitchen design, such as avoiding tight spaces between appliances and ensuring adequate clearance for cabinet and appliance doors to open fully.



KITCHEN DESIGN



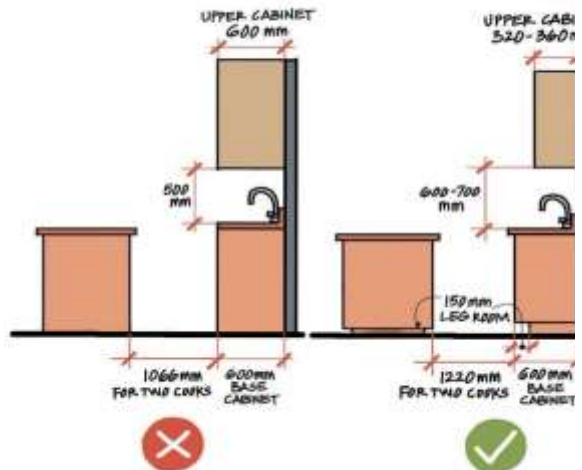
L-SHAPED KITCHEN WITH ISLAND



KITCHEN SAFETY



KITCHEN DESIGN



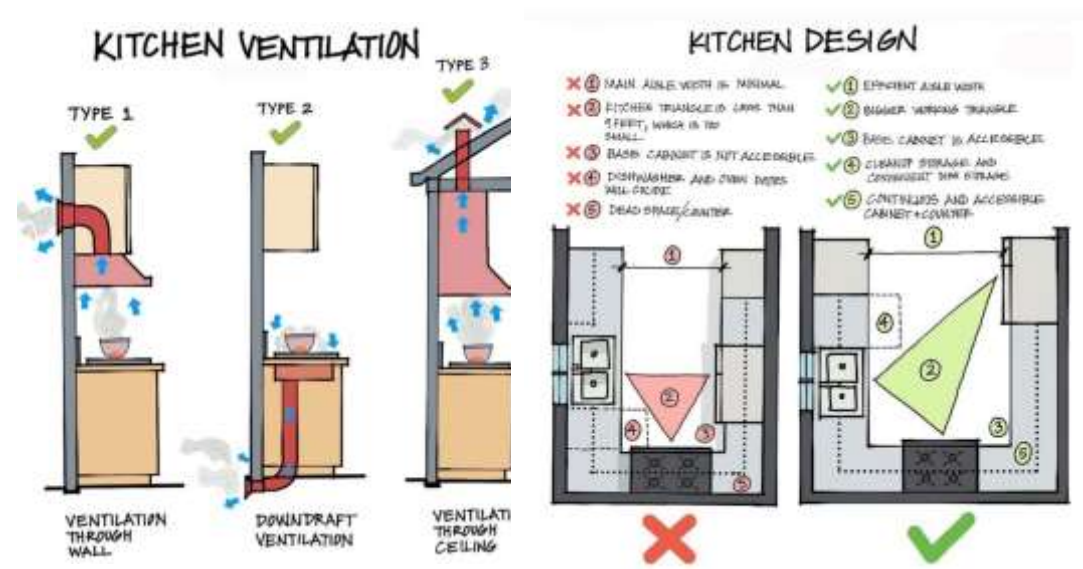


Figure 8: Dimensional prohibitions in kitchen design

Types of Kitchen Layouts

The study identified and analyzed various types of kitchen layouts, each suited to different spatial constraints and user needs. Figure 9 provides an overview of these different kitchen layout types, serving as a visual summary of the main configurations available to designers and homeowners. This figure illustrates the basic floor plans for single wall, L-shaped, U-shaped, and island kitchen layouts. It demonstrates how the positioning of key elements - such as the sink, stove, and refrigerator - varies across these different layouts.

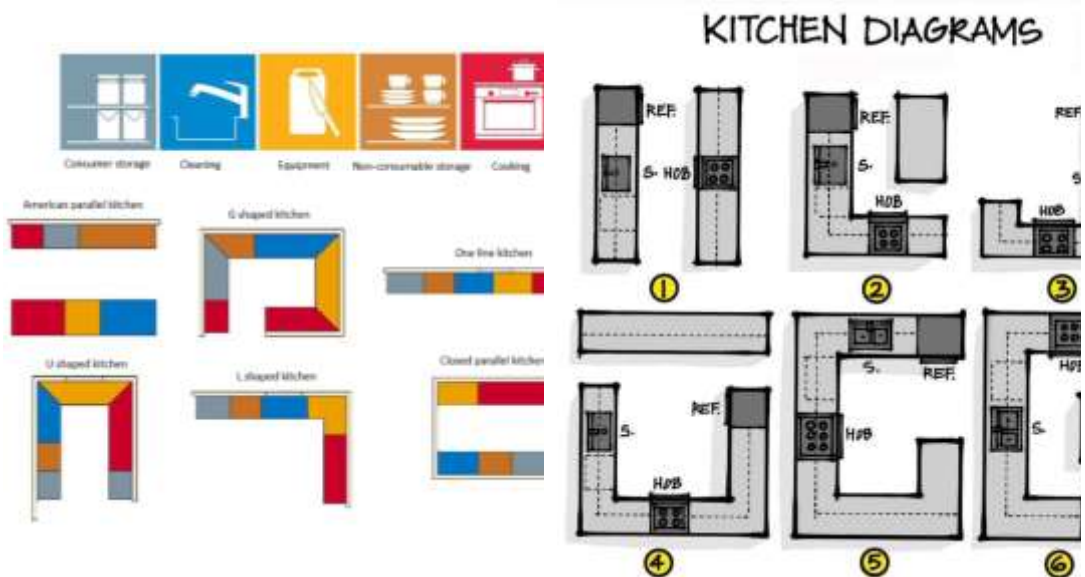


Figure 9: Overview of different kitchen layout types

The study identified six primary kitchen layouts, each suited to different spatial constraints and user needs:

1. Single Wall Kitchen: As shown in Figure 10, this layout is suitable for spaces not exceeding 1.60 meters in width. All storage units, appliances, and the sink are placed along one wall.

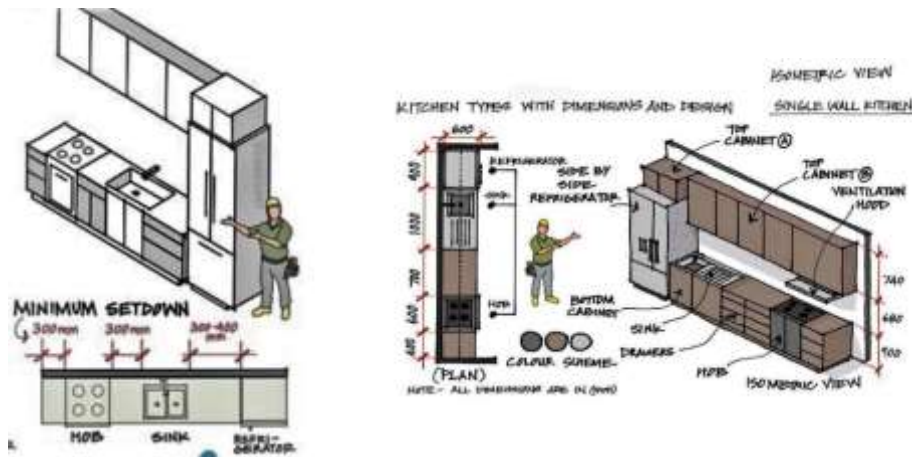




Figure 10: Single wall kitchen layout

- 2. Parallel Kitchen: Illustrated in Figure 11, this layout is appropriate for rectangular kitchens with a minimum width of 2.40 meters. Storage and appliances are distributed along two parallel walls.

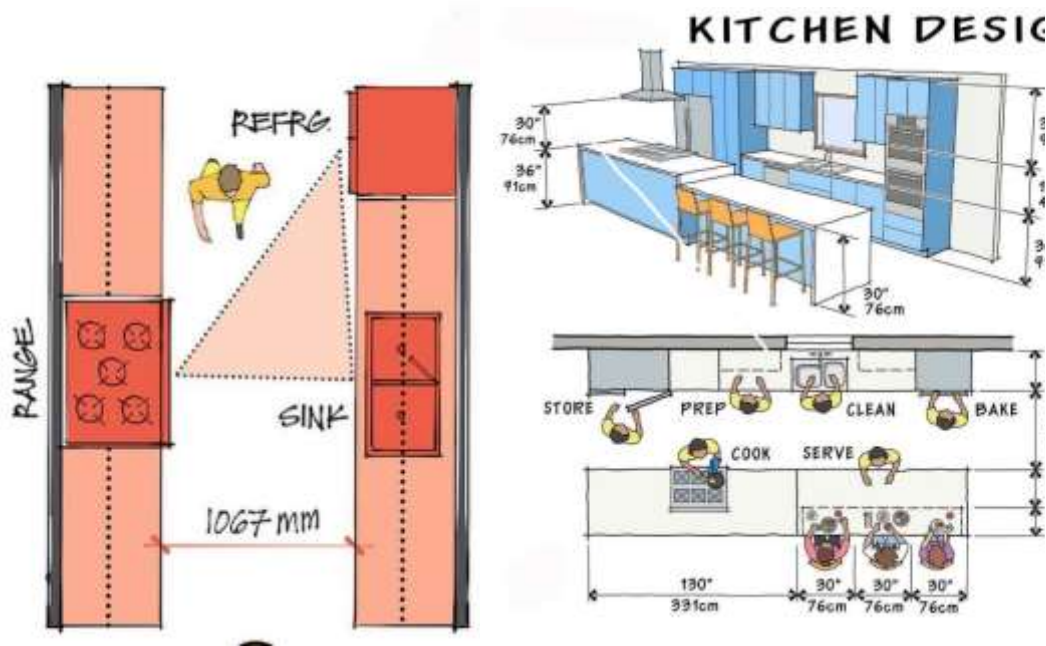




Figure 11: Parallel kitchen layout

3. L-Shaped Kitchen: Figure 12 demonstrates this common layout, suitable for both square and rectangular kitchens. It distributes elements along two perpendicular walls.

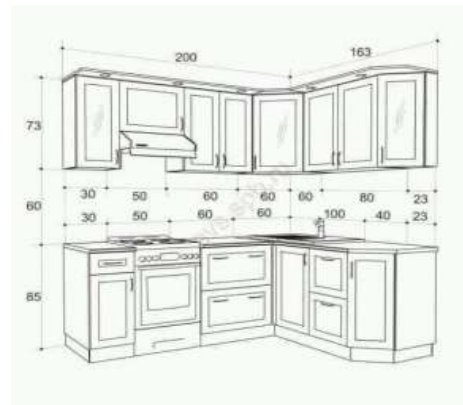


Figure 12: L-shaped kitchen layout examples

4. U-Shaped Kitchen: Depicted in Figure 13, this layout is ideal for medium to large spaces of at least 10 square meters, utilizing three walls for maximum storage and work surface area.

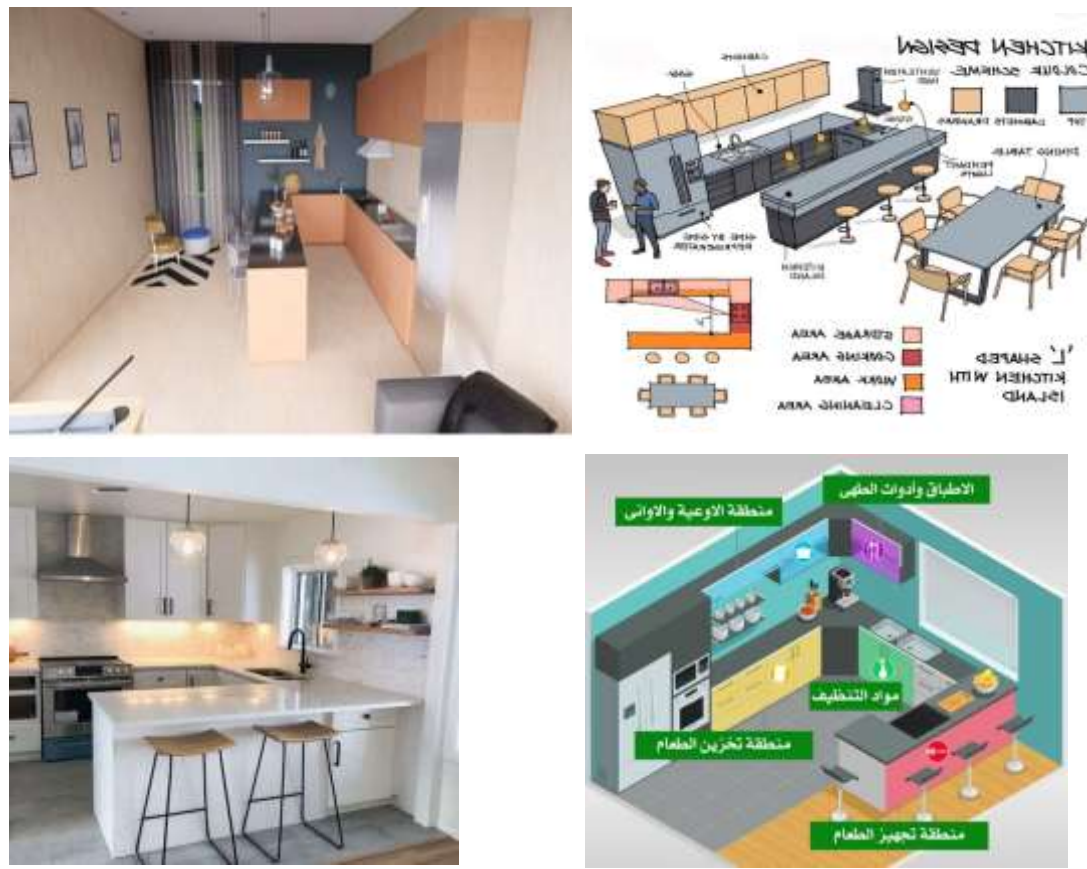


Figure 13: U-shaped kitchen layout examples

5. American Open Kitchen: Figure 14 showcases this layout, which can be adapted to any of the previous shapes but is characterized by its openness and connection to adjacent living spaces.



Figure 14: American open kitchen layout examples

6. Island Kitchen: As seen in Figure 15, this layout is suited for larger spaces, typically incorporating a U or L shape with a central island.

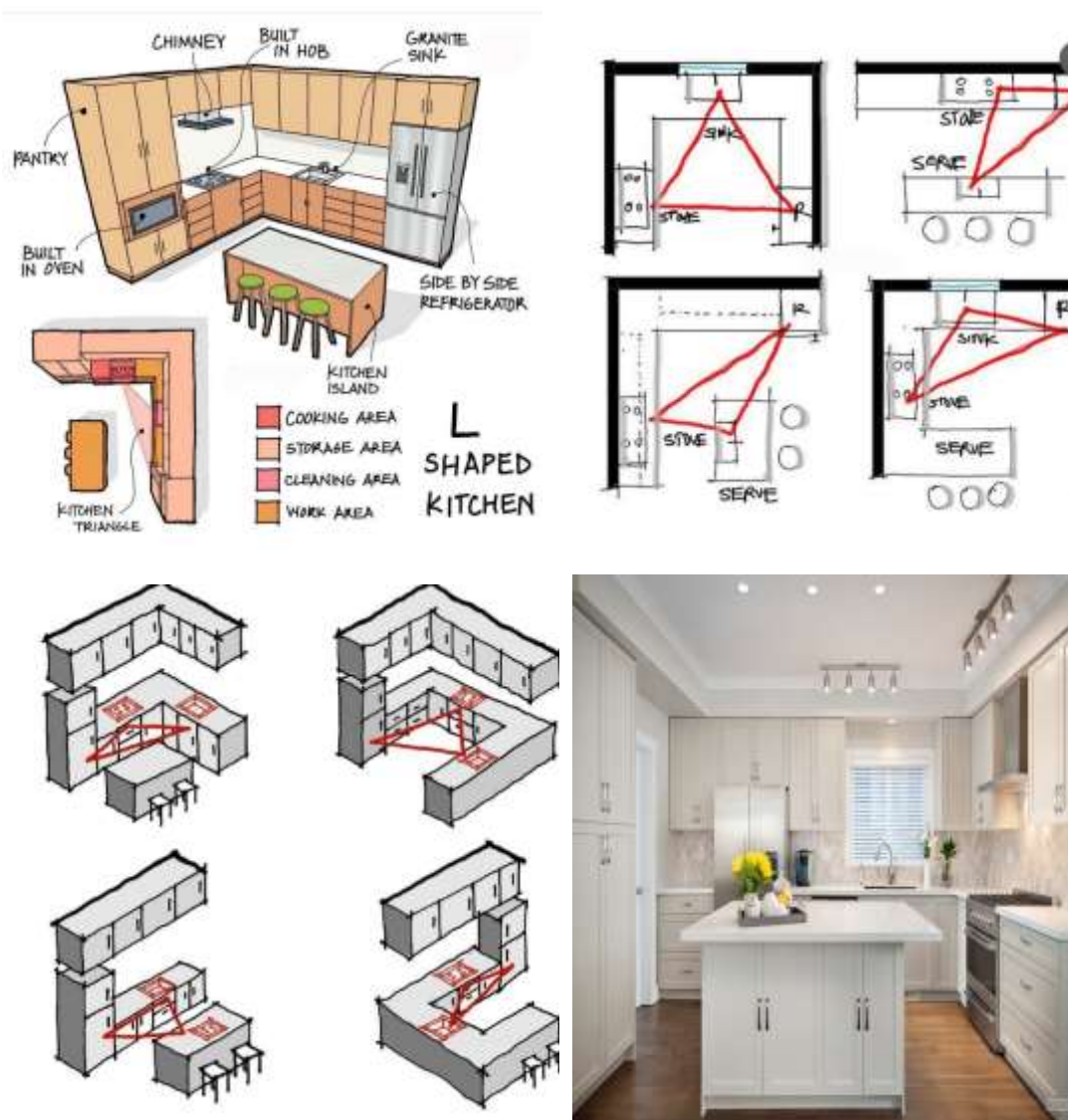


Figure 15: Island kitchen layout examples

Color Theory in Kitchen Design

The study found that color selection plays a crucial role in kitchen aesthetics and functionality. Figure 16 illustrates various color schemes suitable for kitchens. Warm colors and their derivatives, such as red, orange, and yellow, were found to stimulate appetite and create a welcoming atmosphere. Neutral tones were also identified as effective in creating a clean and spacious feel.

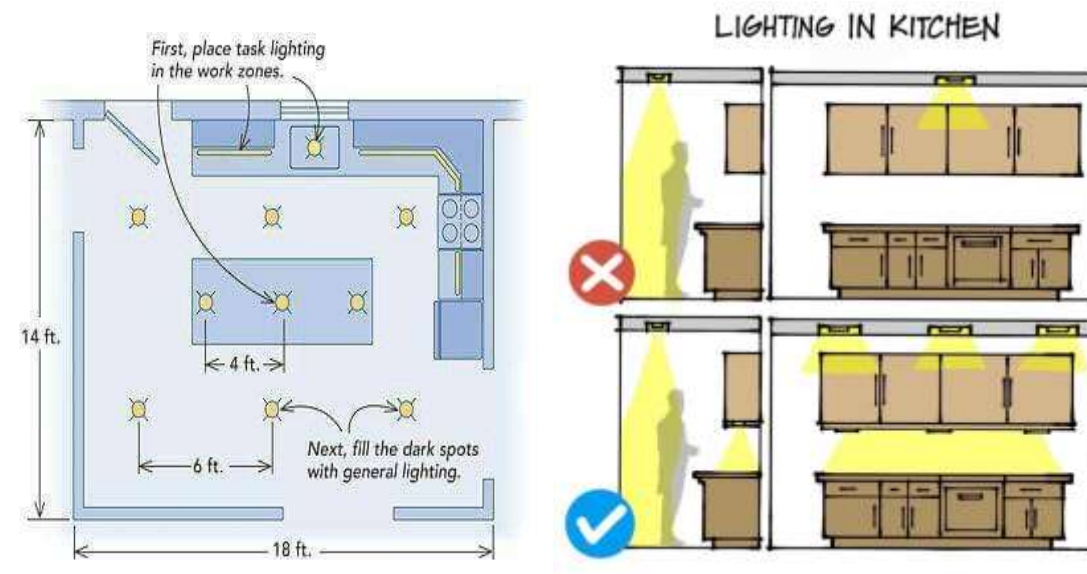




Figure 16: Color schemes for kitchen design

Lighting in Kitchen Design

The research emphasized the importance of both natural and artificial lighting in kitchen design. Figure 17 demonstrates various lighting configurations, highlighting the need for both task lighting in work areas and ambient lighting for overall atmosphere. The study found that a combination of natural light and strategically placed artificial lighting yields the best results in terms of functionality and aesthetics.





Fixture Placement for Task Lighting

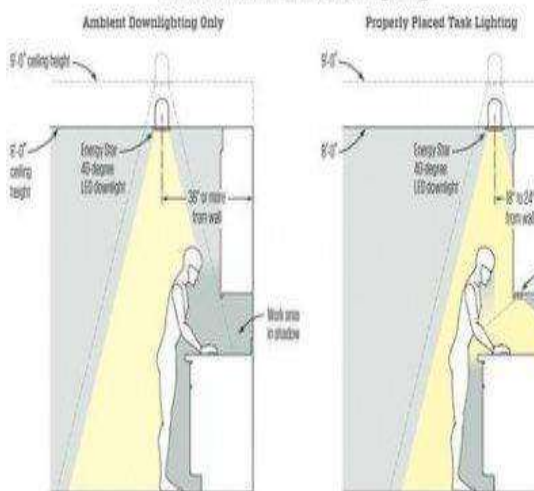




Figure 17: Lighting configurations in kitchen design

The findings of this comprehensive study on kitchen design principles and layouts provide valuable insights into the complex interplay between functionality, aesthetics, and ergonomics in modern kitchen spaces. The research underscores the enduring relevance of established design concepts, such as the triangle of movement, while also highlighting the emergence of new approaches like the diamond shape rule. These findings suggest that while foundational principles remain crucial, there is an ongoing evolution in kitchen design to accommodate changing lifestyles and technological advancements.

The study's emphasis on dimensional considerations and layout options offers practical guidelines for architects and interior designers. The detailed analysis of six primary kitchen layouts, ranging from single wall to island configurations, demonstrates the versatility required in contemporary kitchen design to adapt to diverse spatial constraints and user needs. This aligns with previous research by Zhou et al. (2022), which emphasized the importance of flexible design solutions in modern homes. However, our study goes further by providing specific dimensional recommendations, such as the optimal perimeter of 4 to 8 meters for the work triangle, which offers more concrete guidance for practitioners.

The integration of color theory and lighting considerations in kitchen design, as highlighted in this study, reflects a growing recognition of the kitchen's role beyond mere functionality. The finding that warm colors can stimulate appetite and create a welcoming atmosphere corroborates earlier work by Sun and Ji (2020) on the psychological impacts of color in living spaces. However, our study extends this understanding by specifically applying these principles to kitchen environments and linking them to the overall user experience. The emphasis on both task and ambient lighting further reinforces the multifaceted nature of modern kitchens as spaces for both work and social interaction.

One of the most significant findings of this study is the detailed exploration of the American open kitchen concept. This trend towards integrated living spaces aligns with broader architectural movements towards open-plan designs, as noted by Eisenberg et al. (2023). Our research provides additional insights into the practical considerations of implementing such designs, including the challenges of odor control and visual organization. This contributes to

a more nuanced understanding of the open kitchen concept and its implications for overall home design.

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The research methodology, primarily based on literature review and analysis of existing principles, may not fully capture the latest real-world applications and user experiences. Future studies could benefit from incorporating case studies of recently designed kitchens or conducting surveys with homeowners to gather empirical data on the effectiveness of different design approaches. Additionally, while the study touches on sustainability and technological integration, these rapidly evolving areas warrant more in-depth exploration in future research.

The findings on ergonomic considerations and accessibility in kitchen design highlight an important area for further investigation. As populations age and awareness of diverse physical needs grows, future studies could focus more specifically on universal design principles in kitchen layouts. This could involve collaborations with occupational therapists and accessibility experts to develop more inclusive design guidelines.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive overview of contemporary kitchen design principles, offering valuable insights for both practitioners and researchers in the field. By synthesizing historical context with current trends and future projections, the research contributes to a more holistic understanding of kitchen design. Future work should build on these findings to explore emerging trends in smart home technology, sustainable design, and adaptive spaces, ensuring that kitchen design continues to evolve in response to changing societal needs and technological capabilities.

Declaration of interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest that could be perceived as prejudicing the impartiality of the research reported.

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