Modern kitchens are the central hub for families and can be the showplace of the home. A well-equipped, functionally-designed kitchen offers a place to savor food and entertain guests. What are the latest trends...and are they for you?

## Countertops

Countertop materials are varied and versatile. The most common kitchen countertop available is **laminate**, a synthetic, made of colored plastics. Available in many patterns and finishes—only easy upkeep needed. *Best value for your investment!*

**Corian®** is easy to clean, heat and scratch resistant. Because it's nonporous, stains do not penetrate the surface. With proper cleaning, it also resists the growth of mold, mildew and bacteria.

**Granite** is celebrated worldwide for its striking beauty and its remarkable durability. Choose granite tiles as a less costly alternative to large granite slabs.

**Cutting boards** are important additions whether they are built-ins, freestanding, or portable. Use them to protect counters from damage during food preparation and cooking.

## Flooring

**Linoleum** is free of artificial ingredients so it's eco-friendly. The linseed-oil base gives it natural antibacterial properties.

**Vinyl** has a wide price range; expect a short life span with low-end vinyl. There are many style options, such as wood look-alikes with printed photos of the real thing on the surface.

**Ceramic or porcelain tiles** cover your floors in durable, stylish looks. Because they are not as expensive as natural stone and are easy to maintain, these are very popular.

**Area rugs** in kitchens protect the floor in high use areas and help cushion your feet when you are standing for a long time. Whether you choose a plain or colorful accent rug, be sure they have a rubberized back and are washable. Wash them often!

## Tip

Do your research on countertop and flooring options. Your best bet is to hire a professional for installation. Experienced contractors who know how to install these materials are essential for a successful result.

## Return on Investment

**Major kitchen remodels can return from between 80% and 85% of your investment at the time of sale.**

## Information Line

For more about it, visit:

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Practical kitchen design ideas

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Information and inspiration

**http://design.hgtv.com/kitchen**
Guides for the ultimate kitchen

## key trends

- Natural stone look on countertops
- Brightly colored walls
- Flexible, open design
- Inset lighting

**I hope you enjoyed this edition of *Home & Garden Trends*.**

Please enjoy this edition and share it with your friends. It's free and packed with useful tips to maintain your home and its value. Whenever you need advice from an experienced, professional real estate agent, I'm here to help!