

# The Kitchen Remodel Checklist

Every decision, in the order it has to be made. Print it, tick it off, take it to your contractor. Free — no email required.

## PHASE 1 — BEFORE YOU CONTACT ANYONE

- ☐ **Write down what's actually wrong.** Symptoms, not solutions. "No landing zone by the oven," not "we need an island."
- ☐ **Track how you really use the room.** One week. Where you prep, where groceries land, who else is in there while you cook.
- ☐ **Set a target number and a hard ceiling.** The gap between them is your contingency. Aim for 10–15% of the total.
- ☐ **Measure the room yourself.** Walls, ceiling height, window and door positions, current sink/range/fridge. Rough is fine.
- ☐ **Photograph every wall and inside every cabinet.** Include the electrical panel and under the sink.
- ☐ **Decide whether you're living through it.** If yes, plan the temporary kitchen now — microwave, kettle, fridge, washing up.

## PHASE 2 — DESIGN AND SCOPE

- ☐ **Lock the layout before anything else.** Every later decision depends on it. Keeping plumbing and gas in place is the biggest single saving.
- ☐ **Choose actual appliance models first.** Cabinet openings are built to appliance sizes. Counter-depth vs standard fridge changes the whole run.
- ☐ **Get a written line-item quote.** Cabinets, counters, flooring, electrical, plumbing, demolition, disposal — broken out, not lumped.
- ☐ **Ask what is excluded.** Painting? Appliance install? Disposal? Permits? Backsplash? Under-cabinet lighting? Get it in writing.
- ☐ **Agree the change-order process.** How changes get priced and approved — settled before you need one.

## PHASE 3 — CONTRACTOR CHECKS

- ☐ **Licence and insurance verified, not just claimed.** Ask for the certificate. An uninsured injury on your property can become your liability.
- ☐ **Registered in your municipality.** Some towns require registration before any permit is issued.
- ☐ **Confirm who pulls the permit.** If the answer is "you do," ask why.
- ☐ **Call three recent references.** Ask specifically: did the schedule hold, and how were change orders handled?
- ☐ **Payment schedule tied to milestones.** Never a large deposit up front.
- ☐ **One named point of contact.** Somebody who answers when a decision is needed at 8am.

## PHASE 4 — PERMITS

- ☐ **Establish whether your scope needs one.** Cabinets and counters in place usually don't. Moving plumbing, electrical, gas or walls does.
- ☐ **Confirm which authority issues it.** City, township or county — it varies by address, and applying to the wrong desk means starting over.
- ☐ **Book rough-in inspection in advance.** Some authorities need 24 hours' notice. A missed window stalls drywall and everything after it.
- ☐ **Keep the approved drawings on site.** Inspectors can decline if the site set doesn't match what's being built.

## PHASE 5 — THE BUILD, IN ORDER

- ☐ **1. Demolition and discovery.** Budget time for what the walls hide.
- ☐ **2. Rough-in: electrical, plumbing, HVAC.** Layout must be final. Changes after this are expensive.
- ☐ **3. Rough-in inspection.** Must pass before anything closes.
- ☐ **4. Drywall, patch, prime.** Never close walls before the inspection passes.
- ☐ **5. Flooring.** Usually under the cabinets — slightly more material, far more flexibility later.
- ☐ **6. Cabinet installation.** Shimmed and scribed level. Old houses are not square.
- ☐ **7. Countertop templating.** Only after cabinets are set. Templating from drawings produces gaps.
- ☐ **8. Countertop installation.** Typically 7–14 days after templating.
- ☐ **9. Backsplash.** After counters.
- ☐ **10. Trim-out: lighting, fixtures, hardware.** The satisfying part.
- ☐ **11. Final inspection and walkthrough.** Before final payment.

## PHASE 6 — BEFORE THE FINAL PAYMENT

- ☐ **Open and close every door and drawer.** All of them. Check soft-close actually engages.
- ☐ **Run the water and look underneath while it runs.** Drips show under load, not at rest.
- ☐ **Test every outlet, including GFCI trip and reset.** And every light, and every switch.
- ☐ **Check countertop seams from a low angle.** Flaws hide when you look straight down.
- ☐ **Confirm doors align with each other.** Not just with their own frames.
- ☐ **Collect warranties, paint codes and spare tile.** You will want all three within two years.
- ☐ **Write the punch list down and date it.** A verbal list is not a list.