



Kitchen used for more than eating

THE KITCHEN of the '60s was an avocado green and gold laboratory. The family saw it as cramped and inhospitable and visted only for meals.

Times have changed. "The kitchen is now used for more than just eating," says Francis Jones, executive director of the National Kitchen and Bath Association. "It has become a living area, a communications center, a place to socialize."

Today's kitchens are open-plan. There's space for people to gather as well as for food preparation.

"Two-income couples have placed more demands on family time because time is limited," says Mary Jane Pappas, a St. Paul, Minn., kitchen designer. "They read the mail in the kitchen, sometimes a magazine. The kids may do homework there so they can be with mom and dad while dinner is being prepared."

Families of the affluent '80s not only congregate in the kitchen, they're going all out to make that room the high-tech hearth of the home.

Remodeling is rampant. The resulting no-nonsense kitchens are anything but sterile and cold. Priorities are effi-

ciency — both in space-planning and appliances — and a warm, pleasant atmosphere that welcomes family and friends.

If you plan to remodel your kitchen or design a new one, keep your lifestyle in mind. Your kitchen should fit cook and caboodle like a cozy pair of loafers.

"YOU REALLY HAVE to keep in mind those people who actually use the kitchen," says Colleen Langston of Euro-American Kitchens in California.

Langston, who has been a kitchen planner for 30 years, asks clients how often they shop for groceries. "Once a day, once a week or once a month makes a difference. It affects the number, type and size of cabinets and the size of the refrigerator and freezer."

She also asks about pets. "People often don't plan their kitchens with their pets in mind, and then they find themselves tripping over a pet's food dish.

"I always tell people that they should sit down by themselves for a while and really think about how they use their kitchen," says Langston. "Then, if they come to me or any other kitchen designer, they'll have done

their homework and we can plan a lot better for them."

Key elements of kitchen-lifestyle planning are traffic flow, location of major appliances, number of people who use the kitchen and the heights of those people. Also, functions of the room other than food preparation, how frequently it will be used and how much storage is needed.

If there's a remodeled kitchen in your future, you probably enjoy visiting kitchen showrooms and reading magazines that highlight home interiors. Start now to make a "dream kitchen" file of product brochures and photos from articles. Use it to show your kitchen planner what you like and want.

What's your personal style: Country French or Sleek European? How about nostalgic art deco or simple, elegant Japanese?

Keep style in mind when you plan your kitchen remodel, but feel free to have fun with it.

"THERE'S A WARMING trend in today's kitchen design, and individuality is the new byword," says Metropolitan Home magazine. You may want

to add personal touches to your new kitchen such as architectural details or unusual utensils on hanging racks.

Many contemporary kitchens have European styling. "These are sleeker looks," says Anne Patterson, editor of "Kitchen & Bath Concepts," a trade magazine for design professionals. "Knobs are recessed. Appliances are integrated with the cabinetry in a flush arrangement."

Kitchens with Eurostyling often include softer lines, like curved cabinetry. Low-voltage (halogen) lighting is popular. Also hot is the granite look, both real and faux, in laminates and other synthetic materials.

For kitchen colors, white is still the standard, combined with almond. Black is a strong accent in glass-fronted ovens, dishwashers and appliances of all sizes. Finishes for wood are lighter, often pickled.

The kitchen island is one of the most desirable aspects of new kitchens — if you have room for one. Designers prefer 36 to 48 inches between an island and its opposing counters.

An island can serve as an area for eating, cooking and food preparation. It can include a sink, dishwasher,

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