

VANCOUVER CONSTRUCTION NETWORK

Kitchen Renovations

Questions about kitchen remodeling, cabinets,
countertops, and appliances

17 Expert Answers from Construction Brain

vancouverconstructionnetwork.com/construction-brain

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Q1

What is the best countertop edge profile for a modern Vancouver kitchen?

For modern Vancouver kitchens, a straight polished edge or subtle eased edge are the most popular choices, offering clean lines that complement contemporary design while being practical for daily use.

The **straight polished edge** has become the gold standard for modern Vancouver homes, especially in new condos and recently renovated character houses. This profile creates a crisp, uninterrupted line that emphasizes the material's natural beauty, whether you're using quartz, granite, or marble. The clean geometry works particularly well with the minimalist aesthetic that's dominated Vancouver's design scene over the past decade.

An **eased edge** (slightly rounded corners) offers a softer alternative while maintaining modern appeal. This profile is especially practical for families with young children, as it eliminates sharp corners without adding decorative bulk. Many Vancouver homeowners choose this for kitchen islands where people gather and lean against the counter. The subtle rounding is barely noticeable but significantly improves safety and comfort.

Vancouver-specific considerations play a role in edge selection. Given that approximately 50% of Vancouver residents live in condos or townhouses, many kitchens are compact galley or L-shaped layouts where every inch counts. Bulky decorative edges like ogee or dupont can make small spaces feel cramped and dated. The city's abundant natural light from large windows also highlights countertop edges, making clean profiles more visually appealing than ornate ones.

Material and cost factors in Metro Vancouver influence edge choices significantly. Quartz countertops (the most popular choice locally) typically cost \$80-120 per square foot installed, with edge profiles adding \$15-25 per linear foot for specialty shapes. Straight and eased edges are included in standard pricing, making them budget-friendly. More elaborate edges like waterfall or mitered edges can add \$200-500+ to your project cost.

Professional installation is crucial regardless of edge choice. Countertop fabrication requires specialized tools and expertise - this is definitely not a DIY project. Poor edge work can chip, look uneven, or create hygiene issues where food particles collect. Licensed fabricators in Vancouver typically provide templates, precise cutting, and professional installation with warranties covering their workmanship.

Next steps: Visit showrooms to see edge profiles in person, as photos don't capture how they feel to the touch or how light plays across different profiles. Consider your kitchen's overall style, your family's usage patterns, and your budget when making the final decision.

Q2

What is the best way to add a pantry to a small Vancouver kitchen?

Adding a pantry to a small Vancouver kitchen requires maximizing vertical space and choosing the right location—whether that's converting an adjacent closet, installing floor-to-ceiling cabinets, or creating a pull-out pantry system within existing cabinetry.

The most effective approach depends on your kitchen's layout and available space. **Corner pantries** work exceptionally well in Vancouver's typically compact kitchens, utilizing often-wasted corner space with rotating shelves or pull-out drawers. If you have an adjacent coat closet or small room, converting it into a walk-in pantry can add significant storage—just ensure you're not removing required closet space that might affect your home's resale value in Vancouver's competitive market.

Floor-to-ceiling cabinet systems are another excellent solution, especially in Vancouver Specials and older character homes where ceiling heights allow for maximum vertical storage. These can be installed along a narrow wall or even in a hallway adjacent to the kitchen. Modern pull-out pantry systems with soft-close drawers make accessing items at any height much easier than traditional fixed shelving.

For **extremely tight spaces**, consider a pull-out pantry cabinet that fits into a narrow 6-12 inch gap between appliances or at the end of a cabinet run. These tall, slim units can hold surprising amounts of dry goods and are particularly popular in downtown Vancouver condos where every square inch matters.

Vancouver-specific considerations include ensuring any electrical work for interior lighting meets Technical Safety BC requirements if you're adding outlets or hardwired LED strips. If you're converting a closet in a strata property, check your bylaws—some restrict modifications that affect the unit's original layout. Most pantry additions won't require permits unless you're removing walls or adding plumbing, but always verify with your municipality.

Professional guidance is recommended if your pantry addition involves moving electrical, relocating plumbing lines, or removing any walls. A kitchen designer familiar with Vancouver's housing stock can maximize your storage while maintaining the kitchen's flow. For simple cabinet installations, a skilled carpenter can typically complete the work in 1-3 days.

Next steps: Measure your available space carefully, considering door swing clearances and traffic flow. Get quotes from cabinet makers or kitchen renovation specialists—expect to invest \$1,500-\$5,000 for a quality pantry solution depending on size and finishes. Browse contractors in our directory at Vancouver Construction Network to find professionals experienced with small Vancouver kitchens who can help you maximize your storage potential.

Q3

What ventilation options work for a kitchen with no exterior wall in a Vancouver condo?

For a kitchen without exterior wall access in a Vancouver condo, you'll need either a recirculating range hood or a ducted system that connects to existing building ventilation — both options can effectively manage cooking odors and moisture in your space.

The most practical solution is typically a **high-quality recirculating range hood** with multi-stage filtration. Modern recirculating hoods use charcoal filters to capture odors and grease filters for particles, then return cleaned air to the room. Look for units with at least 300-400 CFM capacity and ensure you replace the charcoal filters every 3-6 months for optimal performance. Brands like Broan-NuTone, Zephyr, and KitchenAid offer effective recirculating models ranging from \$200-800 for standard under-cabinet units, up to \$1,500-3,000 for island or wall-mounted designs.

Ducted ventilation through existing building systems is another option if your strata allows modifications. Some Vancouver condos have common exhaust shafts or mechanical rooms that can accommodate new ductwork. This requires strata council approval and typically costs \$2,000-5,000 including the hood, ductwork, and professional installation. A licensed contractor would need to assess your building's mechanical systems and ensure proper airflow without affecting neighboring units.

Vancouver strata considerations are crucial here. Before any installation, check your strata bylaws and get written approval from strata council. Most stratas require contractor insurance and may restrict work hours to weekdays 8am-5pm. If you're considering ductwork modifications, you'll likely need an engineering assessment to ensure you're not compromising the building envelope or affecting common property ventilation systems.

For cooking odors and moisture management, supplement any range hood with **strategic air circulation**. A ceiling fan or small exhaust fan in an adjacent bathroom (if it has exterior ventilation) can help create airflow. Opening windows in other rooms creates cross-ventilation that pulls cooking odors away from the kitchen area.

Professional guidance is recommended for ducted installations — you'll need a mechanical contractor familiar with strata buildings and BC Building Code requirements for ventilation rates. For recirculating hoods, this is typically a straightforward DIY installation if you're comfortable with basic electrical connections, though many homeowners prefer professional installation for proper mounting and electrical safety.

Next steps: Measure your space and cooking habits to determine CFM requirements, check your strata bylaws, and get quotes from kitchen ventilation specialists who understand Vancouver condo constraints. Browse contractors in our directory at Vancouver Construction Network for professionals experienced with strata renovations.

Should I keep the soffit or remove it during my kitchen renovation?

Whether to keep or remove your kitchen soffit depends on what's inside it and your renovation goals. Most soffits can be removed to create a more open, modern look with full-height cabinets, but you'll need to investigate what's hidden inside first.

What's Typically Inside Kitchen Soffits

Kitchen soffits commonly conceal essential building systems that can't simply be relocated. In Metro Vancouver homes, you'll often find HVAC ductwork (especially important given our mild climate where forced-air heating is common), electrical wiring for kitchen lighting and outlets, plumbing vents from the kitchen sink or nearby bathrooms, and sometimes gas lines for ranges. Older Vancouver homes, particularly those built in the 1960s-80s, frequently used soffits to hide these systems during the era when dropped ceilings were standard practice.

Before making any decisions, have a qualified contractor or home inspector examine the soffit contents. This investigation typically costs \$200-500 but can save thousands in unexpected complications later. In some cases, what appears to be a decorative soffit actually contains structural elements or critical building systems that would be expensive to relocate.

Removal Considerations and Costs

If the soffit only contains minor electrical wiring or is purely decorative, removal is usually straightforward. However, relocating major systems can be complex and costly. Moving HVAC ductwork might require rerouting through basement ceiling spaces or exterior walls, costing \$2,000-8,000 depending on your home's layout. Electrical work must be performed by a licensed electrician and inspected by Technical Safety BC, adding \$500-2,000 to your project. Plumbing vent relocation requires a licensed plumber and can cost \$1,000-3,000 if new routes through walls or roof are needed.

Design and Practical Benefits

Removing soffits creates a cleaner, more contemporary aesthetic and allows for full-height upper cabinets, maximizing storage space. This is particularly valuable in Vancouver's smaller kitchens where every inch of storage counts. The visual impact can make your kitchen feel significantly larger and more open. However, consider that exposed ceiling areas will need finishing work, including drywall repair, texture matching, and painting, which adds \$800-2,500 to your renovation budget.

Professional Guidance Required

This decision requires professional assessment before proceeding. Start with a renovation contractor who can open a small section of the soffit to identify contents and provide removal estimates. Any electrical work requires a licensed electrician, gas work needs a licensed gas fitter, and plumbing modifications need a licensed plumber - all inspected by Technical Safety BC. If structural modifications are needed, you'll need an engineer's assessment and likely a building permit from your municipality.

Next Steps

Schedule a consultation with a renovation contractor to assess your specific soffit situation. They can determine what's inside, provide removal costs, and suggest alternatives if full removal isn't practical. Sometimes partial removal or creative redesign can achieve your aesthetic goals while working around existing systems. Get quotes from multiple contractors and factor soffit work into your overall kitchen renovation timeline - this work typically happens during the demolition phase and can add 1-2 weeks to your project schedule.

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Q5

What do you recommend for kitchen cabinets?

For Metro Vancouver kitchens, I recommend considering your budget, timeline, and design goals first — cabinet costs typically represent 35-40% of your total kitchen renovation budget, ranging from \$8,000 to \$40,000+ depending on size and quality level.

Cabinet Options for Vancouver Homes

Stock cabinets from big box stores offer the most budget-friendly option at \$150-\$400 per linear foot installed. These work well for rental properties or quick flips, but you're limited to standard sizes and finishes. Popular brands available locally include IKEA, Home Depot's Hampton Bay, and Lowes' Arcadia lines.

Semi-custom cabinets provide the sweet spot for most Vancouver homeowners at \$400-\$800 per linear foot. You get more size flexibility, better hardware, and higher-quality construction than stock options. Local suppliers like Deslaurier, Wellborn, and KraftMaid offer excellent semi-custom lines with good warranty support.

Custom cabinets from local millwork shops run \$800-\$1,500+ per linear foot but give you complete design freedom — crucial in Vancouver's older homes with unusual layouts, sloped ceilings, or character features you want to work around. Many Vancouver Craftsman bungalows and heritage homes benefit from custom solutions that respect the original architecture.

Vancouver-Specific Considerations

Moisture management is critical in our climate. Specify marine-grade plywood boxes rather than particleboard, especially for sink base cabinets. Many local cabinet makers use moisture-resistant finishes as standard practice given our 1200mm+ annual rainfall and high humidity levels.

Seismic considerations matter in Vancouver's high seismic zone. Ensure upper cabinets are properly secured to wall studs with appropriate fasteners — this became more important with BCBC 2024's updated seismic requirements. Your installer should use cabinet screws rated for seismic loads, not just drywall anchors.

Space optimization is essential given Vancouver's smaller kitchen footprints, especially in condos and character homes. Consider features like pull-out drawers, corner lazy susans, and vertical dividers to maximize storage in compact spaces.

Professional Installation vs DIY

Hire professionals for cabinet installation — this isn't a typical DIY project. Poor installation voids warranties and creates safety hazards, especially with heavy upper cabinets. Licensed contractors carry WorkSafeBC coverage and liability insurance, protecting you if something goes wrong.

Electrical and plumbing coordination requires careful planning. Any electrical work (under-cabinet lighting, outlet relocation) must be done by a licensed electrician and inspected by Technical Safety BC. Plumbing modifications need a licensed plumber.

Next Steps

Measure your kitchen carefully and create a basic layout before shopping. Most cabinet suppliers offer free design consultations. Get quotes from at least three sources — local cabinet shops often provide better value than big box stores once you factor in customization and service. Budget 6-12 weeks for semi-custom orders, 12-16 weeks for full custom work.

Find verified cabinet makers and kitchen renovation contractors in our Vancouver directory to get started with professional quotes and design consultations.

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Q6

What is the best flooring for a kitchen renovation in the Lower Mainland?

For Lower Mainland kitchens, luxury vinyl plank (LVP) and porcelain tile are the top choices, offering the best combination of water resistance, durability, and style for our wet climate.

Luxury Vinyl Plank (LVP) has become the go-to flooring for Vancouver-area kitchen renovations, and for good reason. Quality LVP costs \$4-8 per square foot installed and offers 100% waterproof construction — crucial in our rainy climate where moisture can be tracked in year-round. Modern LVP convincingly mimics hardwood or stone, comes with 15-25 year warranties, and handles the temperature fluctuations common in older Vancouver homes without expanding or contracting. Brands like Coretec, Shaw, and Mohawk offer excellent options that can handle everything from spilled coffee to wet boots during our October-through-March rainy season.

Porcelain tile remains the premium choice for high-end renovations, particularly in West Side homes and luxury condos. Expect to pay \$8-15 per square foot installed for quality porcelain. Large format tiles (12"x24" or larger) create a seamless, modern look while minimizing grout lines that can collect moisture and stains. Porcelain is completely waterproof, extremely durable, and works beautifully with radiant floor heating — increasingly popular in Vancouver's energy-efficient homes. The key is proper installation with waterproof underlayment, especially important in our wet climate.

Engineered hardwood can work in kitchens if you choose a quality product with proper moisture barriers, but it requires more maintenance in our climate. Expect \$10-18 per square foot installed. Site-finished hardwood should be avoided in kitchens due to moisture sensitivity.

What to avoid: Laminate flooring (not waterproof), solid hardwood (expands/contracts with moisture), and natural stone like marble (stains easily and requires ongoing sealing).

Lower Mainland considerations: Our homes experience significant humidity changes between wet winters and dry summers. Choose flooring with low expansion rates and ensure proper moisture barriers are installed. Many Vancouver Specials and older character homes have concrete slab foundations that can transmit moisture — your contractor should test for moisture levels before installation.

Professional installation is recommended for all kitchen flooring. Improper installation can void warranties and lead to costly moisture damage.

Budget \$2,000-6,000 for flooring in an average 150-square-foot kitchen, including materials and professional installation.

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How much does it cost to add an island to my kitchen in Surrey?

Adding a kitchen island in Surrey typically costs between \$3,000-\$15,000, depending on size, materials, and complexity. The wide range reflects everything from a simple rolling cart to a custom built-in with plumbing and electrical.

For a basic kitchen island without plumbing or electrical, expect to pay \$3,000-\$6,000. This includes a standard 4x2 foot island with basic cabinetry, laminate or butcher block countertops, and simple installation. Many homeowners in Surrey choose this option for additional prep space and storage without major renovations.

Mid-range islands with electrical outlets, upgraded countertops (quartz or granite), and custom cabinetry run \$6,000-\$10,000. This is the sweet spot for most Surrey homeowners, providing good functionality with quality materials. Adding electrical requires a licensed electrician and **Technical Safety BC** inspection, which adds \$800-\$1,500 to your project cost.

High-end custom islands with plumbing for a sink, built-in appliances, waterfall countertops, or specialty storage solutions can reach \$10,000-\$15,000+. These require both electrical and plumbing work, plus potential structural considerations if you're adding significant weight. The plumbing rough-in alone typically costs \$1,200-\$2,500 in the Surrey area.

This also includes the city's building permit requirements. Simple islands without plumbing typically don't require permits, but adding electrical circuits or plumbing does. Contact Surrey Building Department at 604-591-4086 to confirm permit requirements for your specific project. Surrey's permit fees are generally more reasonable than Vancouver, typically \$200-\$800 for kitchen electrical/plumbing work.

Installation factors affecting your cost include your kitchen's current layout, electrical panel capacity, and floor type. Homes built before 1990 may need electrical panel upgrades to handle additional circuits. Hardwood or tile floors may require careful cutting and patching around the island base.

Professional guidance is recommended for any island requiring utilities. While you might handle a simple cabinet island as a DIY project, electrical and plumbing work must be done by licensed trades in BC. A kitchen designer can help optimize your layout and ensure proper clearances (36 inches minimum walkway space around the island).

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Q8

What are the best brands for kitchen cabinets available in British Columbia?

The best kitchen cabinet brands in BC range from premium Canadian manufacturers like Dura Supreme and Wellborn to value options like IKEA, with local custom shops often providing the best combination of quality and service for Metro Vancouver homeowners.

When selecting kitchen cabinets in British Columbia, you'll find excellent options across all price points. Premium brands like Dura Supreme, Wellborn Cabinet, and KraftMaid offer superior construction with dovetail joints, soft-close hardware, and extensive customization options. These typically run \$15,000-\$40,000+ for an average kitchen but provide exceptional durability and resale value in Vancouver's competitive housing market.

Mid-range options include brands like Merillat, Aristokraft, and Diamond Cabinets, which balance quality construction with more accessible pricing (\$8,000-\$20,000 for most kitchens). These brands offer solid wood face frames, quality finishes, and good warranty coverage while keeping costs reasonable for Metro Vancouver budgets.

For budget-conscious renovations, IKEA remains popular with Vancouver homeowners, offering modern European-style cabinets starting around \$3,000-\$8,000 for basic kitchens. Their modular system works well in smaller Vancouver condos and provides good value, though installation complexity can drive up labor costs.

Local custom cabinet makers throughout Metro Vancouver often provide the best value proposition. Companies like Sunrise Kitchens, European Kitchen Design, and numerous smaller shops in Richmond, Burnaby, and Surrey can create fully custom solutions tailored to your space. Custom work typically costs \$12,000-\$35,000 but allows for perfect fit in Vancouver's diverse housing stock, from heritage character homes to modern condos.

This also includes moisture resistance due to our coastal climate - look for cabinets with quality sealing and marine-grade finishes. Many local suppliers stock inventory specifically chosen for BC's humidity levels. Additionally, seismic considerations matter in our earthquake zone - ensure proper mounting and bracing, especially for upper cabinets in high-rise buildings.

What affects pricing includes cabinet construction (solid wood vs. engineered), hardware quality, finish complexity, and installation requirements. Vancouver's older homes often need custom sizing due to non-standard dimensions, while newer condos may accommodate standard sizing better.

Professional help essential for cabinet selection - a kitchen designer can help maximize your space efficiency and ensure proper integration with plumbing, electrical, and ventilation requirements. Most reputable cabinet suppliers offer design services and can coordinate with your contractor for seamless installation.

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Q9

What's the best order of steps for a kitchen renovation in Vancouver?

A successful Vancouver kitchen renovation follows a specific sequence to avoid costly delays and rework. The key is completing all structural, mechanical, and electrical work before any finishes go in, while accounting for Vancouver's longer permit timelines and seasonal considerations.

Planning and Permits First

Start with design and permits 3-4 months before you want to begin work. Vancouver's building department is notoriously backlogged, so simple kitchen permits can take 4-8 weeks, while complex projects involving structural changes or electrical panel upgrades can take 3-6+ months. If you're moving walls, adding windows, or upgrading electrical service, you'll need building permits through the City of Vancouver at vancouver.ca/home-property-development/building-permits or call 311.

Order materials early - especially custom cabinets, countertops, and appliances. Supply chain delays are still affecting Vancouver, and custom work can take 8-16 weeks. This is also when you should finalize your contractor selection from licensed professionals who carry **WorkSafeBC** coverage and proper liability insurance.

Demolition and Structural Work

Begin with demolition and structural modifications. Remove old cabinets, flooring, and fixtures first. If you're removing walls, adding beams, or making structural changes, this happens next and requires inspection by the City of Vancouver building department. Any structural work must be engineered and follow **BCBC 2024** requirements.

Rough-in mechanical and electrical comes next. All electrical work must be done by a **Technical Safety BC** (TSBC) licensed electrician - this isn't DIY territory in BC. New circuits for appliances, under-cabinet lighting, and outlets need to be roughed in now. Plumbing rough-in for new sink locations, dishwasher connections, or gas lines for ranges also happens at this stage. Gas work requires a licensed gas contractor and TSBC inspection.

Insulation and Drywall

Complete insulation and drywall after all rough-in work is inspected and approved. This includes any vapor barrier work, which is critical in Vancouver's high-moisture climate. Drywall, taping, and priming follow. Don't rush this stage - proper prep work shows in the final finish.

Flooring and Major Installations

Install flooring before cabinets in most cases, especially for hardwood, luxury vinyl, or tile that runs throughout the space. The exception is if you're doing a floating floor that can slide under toe kicks.

Cabinet installation comes next, followed by countertop templating and installation. Most countertop fabricators need cabinets in place for accurate templating, then require 1-2 weeks for fabrication.

Final Finishes and Connections

Complete painting and trim work after cabinets but before appliances. Install backsplash after countertops are in. Finally, connect appliances and plumbing fixtures - your licensed electrician and plumber return for final connections and testing.

Final inspections wrap up the project. Your electrical and gas work needs TSBC final inspection, and if you pulled building permits, the City of Vancouver needs a final building inspection before occupancy.

Vancouver-Specific Timing Considerations

Plan exterior work (windows, exterior doors) for May through September to avoid Vancouver's rainy season. Interior renovations can happen year-round, but book contractors early - Vancouver's construction season creates scheduling bottlenecks from spring through fall.

Budget 6-12 weeks for a full kitchen renovation once work begins, plus your permit timeline. Costs typically range from \$30,000-\$100,000 depending on size and finish level - Vancouver construction costs run 15-25% above national averages.

This is especially important for electrical, gas, plumbing, and structural work.

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How much should I expect to pay for a kitchen remodel in Surrey?

Kitchen renovations in Surrey typically range from \$30,000 to \$100,000+, with most homeowners spending \$45,000-\$70,000 for a complete mid-range remodel. The wide range depends on your kitchen size, material choices, structural changes, and finish level.

Budget Breakdown for Surrey Kitchens:

- **Basic refresh** (\$15,000-\$30,000): New paint, cabinet doors, countertops, and appliances while keeping the existing layout
- **Mid-range remodel** (\$30,000-\$60,000): New cabinets, quartz countertops, tile backsplash, mid-tier appliances, some plumbing/electrical updates
- **High-end renovation** (\$60,000-\$100,000+): Custom cabinetry, premium stone counters, high-end appliances, significant layout changes, luxury finishes

What Affects Your Surrey Kitchen Costs: Surrey's construction costs are roughly 10-15% lower than Vancouver proper, but still above the national average. Your final price depends on several key factors. **Structural changes** like removing walls or relocating plumbing can add \$5,000-\$15,000 to your project. **Kitchen size** matters significantly — a typical 120 sq ft galley kitchen costs less than a 200+ sq ft open-concept space. **Material choices** create the biggest price swings, with laminate counters at \$30-\$50/sq ft versus premium quartz at \$80-\$120/sq ft installed.

Surrey-Specific Considerations: Many Surrey homes were built in the 1970s-1990s and may need electrical panel upgrades to handle modern appliances — budget \$2,000-\$4,000 for a 200-amp service upgrade. If your home has the original breaker panel, this is often required by the electrical inspector. Permits are required for any electrical, plumbing, or structural work — Surrey building permits typically cost \$500-\$2,000 depending on scope and are processed faster than Vancouver (4-6 weeks versus 8-12 weeks).

Kitchen renovations involve multiple trades and complex coordination. While you might save money doing your own demolition or painting, electrical and plumbing work must be done by licensed professionals and inspected by **Technical Safety BC**. Gas line work for ranges requires a licensed gas contractor. Most contractors recommend a 10-20% contingency budget for unexpected issues like outdated wiring or plumbing problems discovered during demolition.

Next Steps: Get quotes from at least three licensed contractors to establish a realistic budget for your specific space and goals. Schedule consultations in January-March for spring/summer installation when material availability is better and contractors' schedules are more flexible.

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Q11

Can I move my kitchen to a different room in my house?

Yes, you can move your kitchen to a different room in your house, but it's a complex renovation that requires careful planning, permits, and professional expertise. This type of project involves relocating plumbing, electrical, gas lines, and ventilation systems, which makes it one of the more involved home renovations.

Planning and Feasibility Considerations

The first step is determining if your chosen location can accommodate a kitchen's infrastructure needs. You'll need access to water supply and drainage lines, electrical circuits capable of handling kitchen appliances (typically requiring 200-amp service), gas lines if you want a gas range, and proper ventilation for range hoods. In Vancouver homes, especially older character houses and Vancouver Specials, plumbing stacks and electrical panels may limit your options. The new location should also provide adequate natural light and logical flow with your home's layout.

Permits and Code Requirements

Moving a kitchen absolutely requires building permits from your municipality. Under the **BC Building Code (BCBC 2024)**, you'll need permits for electrical work, plumbing modifications, gas line installation, and potentially structural changes if you're removing walls. All electrical work must be performed by a **Technical Safety BC (TSBC)** licensed electrician, and gas work requires a licensed gas contractor. If you're in a strata property, you'll also need written approval from your strata council before beginning any work that affects plumbing or electrical systems.

Professional Requirements and Costs

This project requires multiple licensed trades working in sequence. Expect to hire a general contractor to coordinate the work, plus licensed electricians, plumbers, and gas fitters. In Metro Vancouver's market, a complete kitchen

relocation typically costs \$40,000 to \$80,000 depending on the distance moved, complexity of routing utilities, and finish level. This includes demolition of the old kitchen, rough-in work for the new location, drywall repairs, flooring, and installation of new cabinetry and appliances.

Timeline and Disruption

Kitchen relocations typically take 6-12 weeks from start to finish, with significant disruption to your daily routine. You'll be without a functional kitchen for most of this period, so plan for alternative cooking arrangements. The permitting process alone can take 4-8 weeks in Vancouver, though suburban municipalities often process permits faster.

Start by consulting with a general contractor experienced in kitchen relocations to assess feasibility and provide a detailed quote.

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Q12

What is the best kitchen layout for a Vancouver Special?

Vancouver Specials typically benefit from an open-concept galley or L-shaped kitchen layout that maximizes the limited main floor space while working with the home's characteristic post-and-beam structure and side-entry configuration.

Vancouver Specials, built primarily between 1965-1985, present unique layout challenges due to their compact main floor footprint (typically 1,100-1,400 square feet) and the distinctive side entrance that often cuts through the natural kitchen zone. The galley kitchen works exceptionally well because it efficiently uses the narrow spaces between structural posts while creating a clear workflow triangle between sink, stove, and refrigerator.

An L-shaped layout is another excellent option, particularly when you can position it in the corner opposite the side entrance. This configuration allows you to maximize counter space along two walls while keeping the kitchen visually connected to the living and dining areas. Many Vancouver Special renovations successfully remove the wall between the kitchen and living room (after confirming it's not load-bearing with a structural engineer) to create a more contemporary open-concept feel that Vancouver homeowners expect today.

Working with the structural reality of these homes is crucial. Vancouver Specials use post-and-beam construction with 4x4 or 6x6 posts typically spaced 12-16 feet apart. Your kitchen layout needs to work around these posts rather than against them — they often can't be removed without significant structural modifications. Consider incorporating posts into your design as natural room dividers or wrap them with cabinetry for a built-in look.

The side entrance challenge requires creative solutions. Since most Vancouver Specials have the main entrance coming directly into the living space from the side of the house, your kitchen layout should maintain clear sight lines and traffic flow from the entrance to the rest of the home. Avoid placing the kitchen island or peninsula where it blocks this natural circulation pattern.

This also includes planning for the region's entertaining culture and diverse cooking styles. Many families want space for woks and rice cookers alongside standard appliances, so ensure adequate counter space and electrical capacity. The mild climate means you can potentially extend the kitchen to a covered deck or patio through large sliding doors, effectively expanding your cooking and entertaining space.

Professional help is essential for structural modifications. While you can often remove upper cabinets or change finishes yourself, any wall removal or structural changes require consultation with a structural engineer and building permits from your municipality. Kitchen renovations in Vancouver Specials typically range from \$30,000-\$80,000 depending on whether you're keeping the existing footprint or expanding.

Find a Kitchen Renovations Contractor

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Are my new kitchen cabinets warping normally in Vancouver?

Kitchen cabinet warping in Vancouver is unfortunately common due to our high humidity climate, but it's not necessarily "normal" and often indicates moisture management issues that need addressing.

Vancouver's coastal climate creates challenging conditions for wood cabinets. With humidity levels regularly exceeding 70% during our long rainy season (October through March), wood naturally expands and contracts. However, significant warping usually signals deeper problems rather than just normal seasonal movement.

Common causes of cabinet warping in Vancouver homes include inadequate ventilation around the kitchen sink and dishwasher areas, missing or failed vapor barriers behind cabinets, and poor-quality cabinet construction that can't handle our moisture levels. Older Vancouver homes, particularly those built before modern moisture management standards, are especially susceptible. If your cabinets are near exterior walls without proper rain screen assemblies, moisture infiltration from Vancouver's 1200mm+ annual rainfall could be a factor.

The type and timing of warping matters significantly. New cabinets warping within the first few months often indicate manufacturing defects or improper acclimatization before installation. Quality cabinets should be stored in your home for 48-72 hours before installation to adjust to local conditions. Gradual warping over 1-2 years might be normal settling, but dramatic changes suggest moisture problems that will only worsen.

Professional assessment is recommended if you notice doors not closing properly, visible gaps appearing, or any signs of water damage. A qualified cabinet installer can determine whether this is normal settling or requires warranty work. For moisture issues, you may need a building envelope specialist to assess your home's vapor management systems.

Next steps: Document the warping with photos and contact your cabinet supplier about warranty coverage. Check around sinks, dishwashers, and exterior walls for any signs of water infiltration. Consider running a dehumidifier during Vancouver's wet months to maintain 30-50% indoor humidity levels.

Find a Kitchen Renovations Contractor

Vancouver Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [EuroLine Windows ?](#)
- [Premier Grounds Contracting ?](#)
- [SteelEdge Reinforcing Ltd. ?](#)

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What backsplash options are popular in Vancouver kitchen renovations?

Subway tile remains the most popular backsplash choice in Vancouver kitchens, but we're seeing a strong shift toward natural stone, bold patterns, and sustainable materials that reflect the city's design-forward culture.

Vancouver homeowners are embracing several key backsplash trends that balance the city's love for both classic and contemporary design. Subway tile continues to dominate, particularly in 3x6 and 4x8 formats, but it's being installed in creative patterns like herringbone, vertical stack, or with contrasting grout for visual interest. White and off-white remain popular, but we're seeing more warm grays and sage greens that complement Vancouver's natural surroundings.

Natural stone is having a major moment in Vancouver's higher-end renovations. Marble slabs, particularly Calacatta and Carrara, are being used as full-height backsplashes that extend from counter to ceiling, creating a luxurious, seamless look. For a more budget-friendly natural option, travertine and limestone tiles offer texture and warmth. These materials work beautifully in Vancouver's character homes, especially Craftsman bungalows in Kitsilano and Mount Pleasant.

Large format tiles and slabs are increasingly popular for their clean, modern aesthetic. Porcelain slabs in 24x48 or even 36x72 sizes minimize grout lines and create a sleek backdrop. Many Vancouver homeowners are choosing wood-look porcelain or concrete-effect tiles that complement the city's industrial loft conversions and modern condos.

For those wanting to make a statement, bold patterns and colors are trending. Zellige tiles from Morocco, with their handmade imperfections and glossy finish, are particularly popular in Vancouver's design-conscious neighborhoods. Dark green, navy, and even black tiles are being used to create dramatic contrast, especially in kitchens with white or light wood cabinetry.

Sustainable and local materials resonate with Vancouver's environmentally conscious homeowners. Recycled glass tiles, locally-sourced stone, and tiles made from recycled content are increasingly requested. Some homeowners are even incorporating reclaimed wood as backsplash material, though this requires proper sealing and isn't recommended behind cooktops.

Installation costs in Vancouver typically range from \$15-40 per square foot for standard subway tile, \$25-60 for natural stone, and \$30-80+ for premium materials like large porcelain slabs or imported zellige. The city's high labor costs mean installation often represents 50-60% of the total backsplash budget.

Consider your home's style when choosing materials. Vancouver Specials and mid-century homes often look great with geometric patterns or wood-look tiles, while heritage character homes suit natural stone or classic subway tile.

In strata properties, check if your renovation requires strata council approval, especially if you're making changes that might affect plumbing or electrical behind the backsplash.

Professional installation is recommended for natural stone, large format tiles, or complex patterns. Improper installation can lead to water damage behind the backsplash, which is particularly problematic in Vancouver's wet climate. Find experienced tile installers in our Vancouver contractor directory who understand local moisture management requirements.

Find a Kitchen Renovations Contractor

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- Heilman Renovations ?
- Scandia paving Ltd ?
- Tour De Force Construction ?

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Q15

Should I get custom or stock cabinets for my kitchen renovation?

For most Vancouver homeowners, semi-custom cabinets offer the best balance of quality, customization, and value, typically running \$8,000-\$18,000 for an average kitchen compared to \$15,000-\$35,000+ for full custom work.

The choice between stock, semi-custom, and custom cabinets depends heavily on your budget, timeline, and how well your kitchen fits standard dimensions. Stock cabinets from big box stores cost \$3,000-\$8,000 for a typical kitchen but come in limited sizes (3-inch increments) and finishes. They work well for straightforward layouts but can leave awkward gaps in Vancouver's older homes where walls aren't perfectly square or standard.

Semi-custom cabinets are the sweet spot for most renovations. Companies like KraftMaid, Merillat, or local Vancouver cabinet shops offer hundreds of door styles, colors, and interior options while building to your exact measurements. You'll pay \$8,000-\$18,000 for materials, with 4-8 week lead times. This approach handles the quirky dimensions common in Vancouver Specials, character homes, and condos while keeping costs reasonable.

Full custom cabinets make sense when you have unique space constraints, want specific wood species, or desire furniture-quality details. Vancouver has excellent custom cabinet makers, but expect \$15,000-\$35,000+ in materials

alone, plus 8-16 week lead times. Custom work shines in heritage homes, high-end West Side properties, or kitchens with unusual angles and ceiling heights.

Many Vancouver homes, especially pre-1980s character houses and Vancouver Specials, have non-standard dimensions, sloped floors, or quirky layouts that favor semi-custom or custom solutions. Condo kitchens often have space constraints that benefit from custom storage solutions. Factor in Vancouver's premium labor costs—installation typically runs \$3,000-\$8,000 regardless of cabinet choice.

The professional angle A kitchen designer can help optimize your layout and cabinet selection. Stock cabinets are fine for DIY-savvy homeowners with standard layouts, but semi-custom and custom work should involve professionals who understand Vancouver's building requirements and can handle the precise measurements needed.

Measure your space carefully, set a realistic budget including installation and hardware, and get quotes from 2-3 cabinet suppliers.

Find a Kitchen Renovations Contractor

Vancouver Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [Ioniq electrical corp ?](#)
- [Yu+ME Design ?](#)
- [RJS Stonetops Ltd ?](#)

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How long does a kitchen renovation usually take in Metro Vancouver?

A typical kitchen renovation in Metro Vancouver takes 6-12 weeks from demolition to completion, though this can vary significantly based on the scope of work and current market conditions.

The timeline breaks down into several key phases. Design and permitting (if required) takes 2-4 weeks upfront, though this happens before construction begins. Simple cosmetic updates like new countertops, backsplash, and paint might only take 2-3 weeks, while a full gut renovation with structural changes, electrical upgrades, and custom cabinetry can stretch to 12-16 weeks.

Demolition and rough work typically takes 1-2 weeks, including removing old cabinets, flooring, and any necessary electrical or plumbing updates. In Metro Vancouver, any electrical work must be done by a TSBC-licensed electrician, and plumbing rough-in requires a licensed plumber, which can add scheduling complexity. Cabinet installation and countertops usually take 2-3 weeks, with custom cabinets potentially adding 6-8 weeks to the overall timeline due to manufacturing lead times.

Vancouver-specific factors often extend timelines beyond the national average. Older homes (especially Vancouver Specials and character homes) frequently reveal surprises like knob-and-tube wiring, galvanized plumbing, or structural issues that require additional work. If your renovation involves moving walls or significant electrical upgrades, you'll need building permits from your municipality, which can take 4-8 weeks in Vancouver (suburban municipalities like Surrey or Coquitlam are often faster). Strata properties require additional approvals and must work within restricted construction hours, typically Monday-Friday 8am-5pm.

Supply chain delays remain a factor in 2025, particularly for custom cabinets, specialty appliances, and imported materials. European appliances can have 12-16 week lead times, while custom millwork might take 8-12 weeks. Smart contractors order materials early and have backup options ready.

Licensing and code compliance is crucial for realistic timeline expectations. A experienced kitchen renovation contractor will sequence trades efficiently, coordinate inspections, and build buffer time into the schedule. Attempting DIY electrical or plumbing work will actually slow things down since only licensed professionals can do this work legally in BC, and you'll still need inspections.

Plan for the unexpected by adding 20-30% buffer time to any estimate. Budget \$30,000-\$100,000 for a full kitchen renovation in Metro Vancouver, with costs running 15-25% higher than national averages. Consider temporary kitchen setup in another room, as you'll be without a functional kitchen for most of the renovation period.

Find a Kitchen Renovations Contractor

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- EuroLine Windows ?
- Frick's Glass and Mirrors ?
- Art in stone co ?

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Q17

What is the typical timeline for a kitchen gut renovation in Richmond?

A complete kitchen gut renovation in Richmond typically takes 6-10 weeks from demolition to completion, though this can extend to 12+ weeks for complex projects involving structural changes or permit delays.

The timeline breaks down into several key phases. Demolition and rough-in work usually takes 1-2 weeks, including removal of cabinets, flooring, and fixtures, followed by any necessary electrical, plumbing, or HVAC rough-in work. This phase often requires permits from the City of Richmond (604-276-4000), and inspection scheduling can add a few days to the timeline.

Cabinet installation and major trades work represents the longest phase at 3-4 weeks. Custom cabinets typically have 4-8 week lead times from order to delivery, so this should be ordered early in the process. During this phase, contractors install drywall, complete electrical and plumbing connections, and handle flooring installation.

Countertop fabrication and installation adds another 1-2 weeks, with quartz and granite requiring field measurements after cabinets are installed.

Finishing work including painting, backsplash installation, and final fixture installation typically takes 1-2 weeks. The final week involves appliance installation, final inspections, and punch list completion.

The Richmond angle can impact timing. The city's building department is generally more efficient than Vancouver's, with simple electrical and plumbing permits typically processed within 2-3 weeks. However, if your renovation involves structural changes or affects a load-bearing wall, expect additional engineering requirements and longer permit timelines. Many Richmond homes are newer builds (1980s-2000s) which can simplify electrical and plumbing updates compared to older Vancouver character homes.

Factors that extend timelines include structural modifications requiring engineering (add 2-4 weeks), custom millwork or specialty finishes (add 2-6 weeks), and supply chain delays for appliances or materials. Winter weather

rarely affects interior kitchen work in Richmond, but contractor availability can be tighter during peak renovation season (spring/summer).

Working with licensed contractors is essential for gut renovations. Electrical work must be performed by TSBC-licensed contractors, and plumbing rough-in requires licensed plumbers. Most contractors recommend living elsewhere during the 2-3 week period when you'll have no functioning kitchen.

Get quotes from 3-4 contractors, confirm their **WorkSafeBC** coverage and TSBC licensing, and start the permit application process early.

Find a Kitchen Renovations Contractor

Vancouver Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [ConstructX Developments Inc ?](#)
- [Levelone Construction Ltd. ?](#)
- [The Local Window Guy ?](#)

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