



Every Room Should Be Comfy In The Winter: The Key To A Cozy Kitchen Nook

Cozy kitchens are ideal for preparing home-cooked meals, sipping hot chocolate and spending time with the family during the colder months.

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10/04/2019

While most people may not think of the kitchen as a particularly cozy room, there is always the potential to turn a space into a winter-ready escape.

“First and foremost, for a space like a kitchen, it is important to find a layout that works for the space,” said interior designer MacKenzie Cain of Habitar Design. “My first priority is to make the seating in the kitchen as comfortable as possible, whether it be cozy counter stools, a great banquette or even an upholstered window seat.”

Interior designer Catherine Schager of Catherine Schaefer Designs specializes in kitchen and bath design. “People think ‘cozy’ is only a term that applies to a more transitional or traditional kitchen, but a sleek and modern one can also be cozy with the right use of color and texture,”

said Schager. “For example, find comfy furnishings for window treatments, as well as fabrics on stools, chairs and on the walls. Also, don’t forget the artwork in the kitchen—it not only makes for a more personal space but can definitely add to the cozy factor.”

Cain recommends playing with neutral colors like autumnal greens, oranges and reds, as well as utilizing natural materials such as wood, stone and even marble. “Try to avoid a design that is harsh and minimal, as that can create an uninviting atmosphere that keeps the kitchen strictly functional as opposed to space where you and the family will want to spend time,” said Cain.

Both Schager and Cain agree that lighting plays a key role in how comfortable a kitchen is for the homeowners. “I think it is important in any space, especially the kitchen, to have different layers of lighting,” said Cain. “If the kitchen is big enough to feature an island or dining table, these multiple layers can create depth.”

Some of Schager’s expert tips include the use of under-cabinet lighting, keeping the client’s wall cabinets off of the ceiling and adding small lights above the cabinetry. “This technique can be used alone or in combination with under-cabinet lighting for a cozy feel,” said Schager. “Also, toe-kick lighting can add to the cozy feel if you’re not using your overhead lighting in the kitchen.”

The kitchen design varies more so than that of many other rooms due to the needs of the homeowner as well as the plumbing and electrical setup. “For each client, I sit down and ask a series of questions about how they cook, what’s important to them, what appliances they need to house and what doesn’t currently work,” said Schager. “These details really add up—each client’s definition of a cozy kitchen is different.”

Schager cites one client in the Northbrook area of Illinois whose large kitchen was poorly arranged and required the in-home chef to walk back and forth across the main traffic area. “We rearranged everything, putting all of the major appliances within steps of each other,” Schager said. “When the kitchen was properly organized, we were able to include a cozy banquette which provided a beautiful view of the garden.”

This winter, make sure the kitchen matches the coziness of the rest of the house by finding the perfect layout, taking advantage of layered lighting and utilizing comfy furnishings.