



SEBRING
design • build • remodel

Kitchen Cabinets 101

Understanding the Basics

Table of Contents

1. Cabinet Basics

2. What is Your Style?

3. Understanding Your Budget

4. Functionality of the Cabinets

5. Get Your Kitchen Project Started

Finding the perfect home builder and remodeler takes time and patience. They should understand your unique vision and flawlessly bring it to life. Sebring Design Build can help you achieve just that.

Cabinet Basics

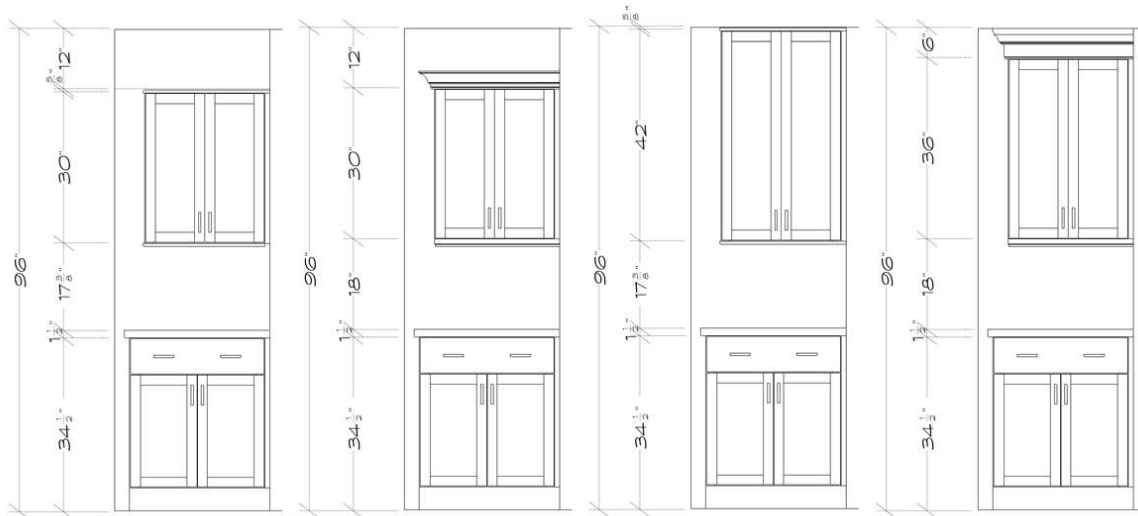
Sebring Design Build

When you are refinishing your kitchen, it is important to understand what you are looking for in new cabinets. Therefore, we want to take the time to give you a lesson: its kitchen cabinets 101. Understanding what you should know before you go and look for cabinets will make your experience go smoother, quicker, and ultimately feeling good about the decisions made.

Cabinet Basics



It is important to understand and educate yourself on the basics of kitchen cabinets, since there are so many options available to you. This will help narrow down the options and ask informed questions to ensure you get the most value from your purchase.



Standard sizing guidelines: Widths available in base & wall cabinetry generally start at 6" wide and increase in 3" increments all the way to 42" wide. It is not uncommon to have larger widths available; it just would not be a standard size. Base cabinet depth is 24" with a height of 34 ½". Wall cabinet standard depth is 12" but there are three common heights: 30", 36" and 42" tall. Most wall cabinets have 18" of space between the countertop and the bottom of the wall cabinets, but that can be adjusted where needed.

The reason for the three different wall cabinet heights is to accommodate differing ceiling heights. In addition, the overall aesthetics, storage and/or molding stacks in the design. Here are a few examples to consider with an 8' ceiling height:

1. 84" High with a 12" H soffit (that comes down from the ceiling); 30" H wall cabinet is recommended to fit underneath. This will only allow for a small piece of molding or trim piece at the top.
2. 84" High with no soffit; 30" H wall cabinet allows the flexibility to add a larger stacked crown molding if desired. By using this height of cabinet, you have the appropriate amount of space between the molding and the ceiling, so it looks proportionate and not a mistake.
3. 90" High: 36" H wall cabinets add more cabinet storage space while still being able to have a nice sized crown molding at the top. I would recommend taking the top molding to the ceiling, so it looks more built in and does not call attention to the ceiling line.
4. 96" High; 42" wall cabinets is the maximum amount of wall cabinet space you can add with this ceiling height, but like the soffit height, it limits your crown molding to a trim piece at the top.

With taller ceiling heights emerging within a home's open floor plan, wall cabinet

heights are increasing in size, as well as, the amount of stacked cabinetry available.

Next, let's talk about some terms you should know:

Door Styles:



When considering a framed cabinetry line there are three door profiles types available: Inset, Traditional overlay, and the most common, Full overlay. Here are the differences.

Inset doors and drawers recess back within the cabinets $\frac{3}{4}$ " face frame, so that the two are flush with one another. It does not cover any of the face frame material and is a common look among higher end cabinetry lines.

Traditional overlay doors and drawer fronts sit in front of the cabinet face frame and cover about $\frac{1}{2}$ " (on all sides) of the cabinets face frame. Leaving most of the frame exposed. Consider this door profile if you have a smaller budget, since they are usually value priced.

Full overlay doors and drawer fronts also sit on the front of the cabinet face frame, but these doors and drawer fronts are larger and cover most of the cabinets frame. Leaving little exposed to give the illusion of a seamless cabinetry run. With its continued popularity, this profile has the widest door style selections to choose from.

Most people are under the impression that kitchen cabinet doors are made from 100% Wood, but that is not always the case. There many other door materials to choose from like Wood with veneer or MDF (Medium Density Fiberboard) center

panel, solid MDF painted doors, Thermofolds, and Laminates. Here are a few characteristics that you can expect from each:



Hardwoods: There are multitudes of different wood species that a cabinet manufacture can offer in its collection, but I would say Maple, Cherry, Oak, and Hickory are the staples in the industry, Maple is the most widely used. One wood species is not better than the other, they just have different characteristics.

- **Maple:** features a finely textured straight closed grain with a natural luster of creamy-white to reddish-brown wood. It is the second highest rated in overall strength. Character Maple is also available and most people are drawn to the randomly occurring various sized knots, pinholes, worn holes, sugar tracks, heartwood and/ or mineral streaks that make each piece unique.
- **Cherry:** features a closed grain pattern with rich red highlights that occasionally have tiny pin knots and very small dark streaks of gum, which creates that luxurious warm effect people gravitate toward. This wood species is available in a Character version as well.
- **Oak:** features a course texture straight open grain with a color variation from white to light brown to a pinkish reddish brown depending on when and where the tree is harvested. Oak is third in strength behind Maple.
- **Hickory:** features a coarse textured closed fine grain that is usually straight, but can be wavy or irregular. Color range defines this wood species because of the contrasts in color. It can vary from white to dark reddish brown with inconspicuous fine brown lines in one piece. Hickory is the strongest of the wood species and most dramatic.

Other Construction Details:

- **MDF (Medium Density Fiberboard):** is a combination of wood fibers with a wax resin binder processed under high pressure and temperatures to form panels. This is not the same material as particleboard. MDF is much more

dense and durable. The smooth surface is perfect for painting and a router leaves crisp profiles with no splintering.

- **Thermofoil:** is a surface finish, applied to door panels & drawer fronts. It is made of a plastic material, which is strong and scratch resistant, that is thermally glued and vacuum-sealed to a MDF panel.
- **Laminate:** is a thin covering of saturated resin and printed-paper, which are fused together by glue, high heat, and pressure to a particleboard or MDF core. The thermally fused melamine process bonds the paper and cabinet making the laminate look like any wood finish.

When you are looking at door styles on a cabinet, you will hear words like mitered or butt joints, flat or raised panel, and square or arched. There are many more, but those are a few of the more popular ones to familiarize yourself with.

Box Construction:

Most cabinets do not come with wood sides; they are usually upgrades that are available, but most commonly used for exposed cabinet ends. This way you can save money here and invest where you can see it most.

- Options for an exposed cabinet end:
 - Matching End Panels (with door design)
 - Wood skin with replacement door
 - Matching Finished End, which includes a ½" Thick Wood Veneer plywood on the end
 - Flush Cabinet End, which includes a ¾" Thick plywood end panel.

Important: Not to have a laminated exposed cabinet ends, since the color does not change over time and "age" with the fronts of the cabinetry.

Drawer Box Construction Options:

- Stapled, MDF box with side runners is the most basic.
- Dovetail construction, Plywood box with under mount full extension runners.
- Dovetail construction, Hardwood ¾" drawer box with under mount soft close runners.

Another aspect of cabinetry is the finish color and if so desired an applied finish techniques. These days you can get just about any color or technique you desire, most companies have done their homework and offer the most popular stains and paint colors for the market place, but for those of you who fancy something a little bit different you may be able to order a custom color. Cabinetry companies are

paring up with paint companies more and more these days, so the color palettes you have to choose from is quite extensive. In addition, this partnership makes the price much more reasonable than ever before.

Sheen level on the finish can vary anywhere from a matte finish all the way to a high gloss. It depends on what the company offers and which you prefer. However, do not confuse the sheen level with durability. Many manufacturers have multi-step processes that will withstand many household items/ spills.

I would not say that adding a finish technique is a basic consideration, when buying cabinetry, but most companies will offer a few different options to choose from that enhances the style desired and creates a unique look to the exterior of the cabinetry.

What is Your Style?

Sebring Design Build



Before you start to look for kitchen cabinets, it would be helpful to have an idea of your style. Are you looking for very simple cabinets with clean lines? Then you want something with a modern feel and probably in either white, gray, or black. Is your taste more traditional? You will want to look for cabinets with beautiful wood grain textures and warm colors.

Or are you focused on the details? In that case, you are going to want to look for cabinet doors that offer plenty of style, cabinet accessories galore, and intricate molding detail work that make them stand out in your kitchen.

Once you have decided on your exact taste and style, shopping for cabinets will be much easier. There are so many style choices that it could become overwhelming, but if you take a glance below and review the characteristics, soon you will discover which you prefer. Having a particular style in mind beforehand will help make the experience less stressful and give the designer keys to work around.

Traditional – All About the Details

- Timeless look, cabinets can be painted or stained, usually includes glass front wall cabinet doors.
- Includes classic elements and Architectural details everywhere
 - Arches
 - Moldings
 - Corbels
 - Beamed or coffered ceilings,
 - Raised panel doors
 - Custom hood/surround
 - Chandeliers
 - Built-up molding toe-base treatments
 - Wood panels to hide appliances
- Great style-look for inset doors (raised panel), extra hardware
- Tend to see more glazed or finish techniques applied to make the cabinets distressed or aged
- Often mix door styles & finish colors in one space
- Glass doors vary from traditional wood mullion to ornate leaded grills with textured glass
- Furniture style cabinets/hutches where wall cabinets may sit on the countertop providing added storage and character
- Luxury Materials and finishes

Transitional – Blending Traditional & Contemporary

- Streamlined sophistication that has balance and flexibility in one design
- Layering of color neutrals and textures
- Simple paneled cabinetry doors
- Natural surfaces (granite, marble)
- Simple tile designs: subway tile
- Accents: lighting fixtures and frame embellishments

Contemporary – Simplicity

- Contemporary tends to be interchangeable with Modern, since most people cannot distinguish between the two styles, but modern design is a style that was created in the 1920-1950's. Where contemporary is an ever-changing style the uses materials popular right now.
- Most often seen in frameless cabinetry, but can be achieved with framed as well
- Flush setting, unadorned doors kept minimalist

- Straight lines
- Matte or high gloss finishes
- Simple oversized, tubular chrome hardware, flat linear pulls
- Horizontal lines, lack of ornamentation
- Example: Flat panel door styles (slab)
- Natural characteristics in materials (wood grain cabinets, concrete counters)
- Lots of drawers, tile stacked – not in a brick pattern.
- Luxury Materials and finishes.

Eclectic – Extreme personal style

- This is the hardest look to achieve, since there are no rules.
- Collected over time or travel.
- Fashionista Kitchen full of confidence, bravado, and a touch of restraint
 - Mixing and NO matching
 - Contrast that works
 - Bold and custom colors
 - Whimsy
 - Style mixing, twisting, a some “edge” on top.

Cottage/Country/Rustic – Warm, Antiques, homey, and or reclaimed

- Try a-typical appliances with different color, shapes, and style.
- Character hardwoods like Maple, Cherry, Hickory, and Oak. Often with a vintage, antiqued, seaside, or distressing finishing technique.
- Great style-look for inset doors
- Furniture-like toe-base treatments
- Furniture style cabinets/buffet...often in warm finish tones.
 - Vintage looking hardware (latches)
 - Textiles – pillows, bench seating
 - Use stone, brick, and add a wood ceiling(s)
 - Wood countertops
 - “Farm style” apron front sinks
- Metals
 - Copper: Antiqued, hammered, or in a patina
 - Iron
 - Zinc

No matter your style, you will be able to find the perfect cabinets for your kitchen. If you need some more inspiration, look through our [photo gallery](#).

Understanding Your Budget

Sebring Design Build

When you are designing a kitchen, you also want to make sure you understand your budget and clarify how much flexibility you have. Remember, it's not just about the cabinetry. There are other types of coordinating materials & finishes needed in the space, which may cost you money. Make sure to leave room for accessories, appliances, countertops, plumbing fixtures, and possibly more. Ultimately, understanding your budget will help you to understand which cabinets are within your price range.

Now that you know what your budget is, always purchase all the cabinetry together and not in stages. Especially if you considering adding moldings at a later date. These pieces should be ordered together, because later on the color & tone will be different. You may say it is the same wood and stain color, so why? Nevertheless, the reasons are vast and many. Here are just a few that can affect color: the time of year the wood was harvested, how much sunlight & heat it has been exposed to, and the age.

Manufacturers generally have Good, Better, & Best Lines. Each differentiated by the standard construction of the cabinetry & drawer boxes, how many door styles & finish color selections are available, and the options of standard cabinets compared to custom.

Functionality of the Cabinets

Sebring Design Build



Cabinetry can come with all sorts of interior accessories these days. So what should you have? Think about the current items in your kitchen that need to be stored or more importantly what items would you like to have, that can help you better organize everything into the new cabinet or layout design? Do you want a specialty piece like a hutch or wine bar made out of the same cabinetry? Alternatively, are you looking to add storage space for your kitchen? Then you need to be sure to have the correct accessories in your kitchen. These are a few great pieces to start with:

Wouldn't you love it if everything in your kitchen could just slide out to you? No more bending over to get inside your base cabinets? Well it is an easy solution... drawers, drawers and more drawers. Especially now with all the accessories available inside a drawer, like cutlery & utensil dividers, knife dividers, drawer divider kits, deep drawer pegged dish organizer, storage lids, and charging stations. However, if you still like the door and drawer look of a base cabinet, then consider adding roll out trays inside for easy and convenience.

Wastebasket base cabinet can come with either one, two, or sometimes four wastebaskets in one cabinet. So how big is your family? Do you recycle? Either way, make sure to include this cabinet in the design, so at the end of the process you do not have a plastic trashcan sitting at the end of the cabinet run.

Corner base cabinet with a "Super Susan" installed inside. These cabinets come with two wooden rotary shelves, each mounted on a fixed shelf. There is no pole in the center so you can utilize the entire rotary shelf. Moreover, the fixed shelves help items from falling to the bottom of the cabinet.

Are you always buying spices for new recipes you are trying and running out of space to put them? Then how about a pull out spice rack base cabinet for the expert cook, or maybe something a little smaller...like in a wall cabinet version. If you are a novice but still have a few spices you enjoy, then maybe consider a spice rack that you can either insert into a drawer or have it mounted to the backside of a wall cabinet door.

Where should I store my cutting boards or cookie sheets? Well, there are all kinds of tray divider options available for above an oven cabinet, inside a base cabinet, and/ or inside pots & pans deep drawers. Do you prefer wood, metal, or something that even pulls out to you? Make sure to ask and see what is available to you.

Nevertheless, at the end of the day, you will probably be able to personalize your space and pick the cabinets that work best for you. Remember you should be thinking of what you want, so you can plan these items into the design at the beginning.

I hope that now you are well versed in the basics of kitchen cabinets. When you have decided on the style that you like, the accessories needed for a functioning space, and a budget to work with, finding the perfect kitchen cabinets will be a breeze and a fun experience. So please [contact us](#). We would be pleased to get the process started for you.



SEBRING

design • build • remodel

Get Your Kitchen Project Started

Finding the perfect home builder and remodeler takes time and patience. They should understand your unique vision and flawlessly bring it to life. Sebring Design Build can help you achieve just that.

[Schedule Your Consultation Here](#)