

A kitchen remodel goes smoothly or sideways based on one thing more than any finish, appliance brand, or paint color: the order of work.

I have seen beautifully designed kitchens turn into expensive headaches because someone installed flooring too early, ordered cabinets too late, or skipped the permit conversation until the walls were already open. I have also seen modest, budget-conscious remodels come out looking sharp and feeling custom because the sequence was right from day one.

If you want the best results, think of a kitchen remodel as a chain of decisions. Every stage affects the next one. Layout affects plumbing and electrical. Electrical affects drywall. Cabinets affect countertops. Countertops affect backsplash. Paint and flooring timing can save you money or create needless rework.

That is why people asking, “In what order should a remodel be done?” are asking exactly the right question.

Start with the plan, not the demo

The fun part is often the part people rush into too fast. Cabinets are exciting. Tile samples are fun. Demolition feels like progress. But the right order starts before a single cabinet comes off the wall.

First, lock down your scope. Are you doing a full kitchen and bath remodeling project, or just the kitchen? Are you keeping the same layout, or moving plumbing, gas, and walls? Those answers decide your timeline, your permit needs, and your budget more than the style of your cabinet doors ever will.

This is also the stage where the budget needs a reality check. One of the most common questions homeowners ask is, “What is a realistic budget for a kitchen remodel?” The honest answer depends on size, material quality, labor rates, and how much you are changing. A light cosmetic remodel may land in the low five figures. A full gut with new layout, custom cabinets, quality appliances, and structural changes can climb quickly.

If you are in Florida, labor and permit costs vary by county and city, but people often ask, “What is the average cost to remodel a kitchen in Florida?” A modest refresh might start around \$15,000 to \$30,000. A mid-range full remodel often lands around \$30,000 to \$60,000. High-end work can move well beyond that. Coastal markets and busy metro areas often run higher.

This is also where homeowners ask, “Is \$10,000 enough to renovate a kitchen?” or “Is \$10,000 enough for a new kitchen?” Usually, not for a full new kitchen unless you are keeping the layout, doing some of the labor yourself, choosing stock products, and making disciplined trade-offs. Ten thousand dollars can go a surprisingly long way in a kitchen remodel cheap strategy, but it is typically a refresh budget, not a full transformation budget. Think paint, hardware, lighting, maybe laminate tops, and possibly cabinet refacing instead of replacement.

Before work begins, get clear on five things:

- the exact layout and what is moving
- the cabinet plan and appliance sizes
- the permit requirements in your city or county
- your realistic all-in budget, plus a contingency
- the lead times for cabinets, tile, appliances, and counters

That last point matters more than people expect. A remodel should not begin with a vague promise that cabinets will be in “sometime next month.” Materials drive scheduling. Good contractors build around confirmed deliveries, not hope.

The hidden money question that shapes the whole job

Budget questions come up early because they affect the order of choices. If your budget is tight, you need to know where to spend and where to simplify before plans are finalized.

A phrase people hear a lot is, "What is the 30% rule in remodeling?" It is used in different ways, but the version that matters most is this: avoid over-improving a home far beyond the value of surrounding properties, and be cautious about spending so much on one room that you cannot recover it in function or resale. Another related rule of thumb is that a kitchen remodel budget often lands around 10% to 15% of the home's value for a balanced investment, though local market conditions matter.

The most expensive part of a kitchen remodel is usually cabinetry. Homeowners often ask both, "What is the most expensive part of a kitchen remodel?" and "What is the biggest expense in a kitchen remodel?" In most projects, the answer is cabinets, followed closely by labor and then countertops or appliances, depending on selections. If you blow too much money on cabinets early, the rest of the project gets squeezed, and that can lead to the kind of compromises people regret later, like cheap lighting, weak ventilation, or rushed installation.

That is one reason cabinet refacing remains popular. If your cabinet boxes are sound and the layout works, searching for "Kitchen cabinet refacing near me" can be a smart middle ground. Refacing is not right for every kitchen, but when it fits, it can save a meaningful amount while improving the look dramatically.

Permits come before demolition, not after

A lot of homeowners in Florida ask, "Do I need a permit to renovate my kitchen in Florida?" Sometimes yes, sometimes no, depending on the scope. Cosmetic work like painting cabinets or swapping a backsplash may not need one. But if you are moving plumbing, changing electrical, altering ductwork, replacing windows, modifying walls, or doing anything structural, permits are often required.

Do not guess. Call your local building department or ask a licensed contractor who works in your jurisdiction regularly. Permit rules can vary even within the same region.

Skipping permits when they are required can create problems later during a sale, an insurance claim, or an inspection. It can also slow a project if the city stops work after the fact. This ties directly into resale, because homeowners also ask, "What devalues a house the most?" Poor workmanship, awkward layouts, obvious DIY shortcuts, and unpermitted work are high on that list. Buyers may forgive dated finishes. They are less forgiving of hidden risk.

Demolition only starts when the replacement plan is settled

Once design, permits, and product orders are in place, then demolition can begin.

This is where discipline matters. Demo is fast. Rebuilding is not. A kitchen can be torn apart in a day or two and then sit half-finished for weeks if the planning was loose. Good sequencing prevents that.

During demolition, crews remove existing cabinets, countertops, flooring if needed, old appliances, and wall finishes in the areas being changed. If the project includes structural changes, this is also when walls or soffits may come out. Old plumbing and wiring become visible, which is often when surprises appear. Rotten subfloor around a dishwasher. An undersized vent line. Ungrounded wiring in an older home. A previous remodeler's mystery patch.

This is why a contingency reserve matters. On older homes, I usually tell people to keep at least 10% to 20% in reserve. You may not need it, but if you do, it is better to have planned for it than to raid the appliance budget mid-project.

Framing, rough mechanical work, and inspections happen before walls close

After demolition comes the bones of the remodel. If walls are moving, openings are being resized, or soffits are being removed, framing happens now. Then plumbing, electrical, and HVAC rough-ins follow.

This is the stage that determines whether the kitchen will actually function well. It is also the stage where good design reveals itself. Outlets should land where small appliances will be used. Lighting should layer properly, not just rely on one ceiling fixture. The island should be wired with intention. Water lines, drain locations, and shutoffs should serve the layout you actually live in.

A common renovation mistake is choosing a layout based only on appearance. Another is keeping old outlet placement because moving it seems inconvenient. You only get one easy chance to fix this stuff, and it is before insulation and drywall go back in.

If inspections are required, they usually happen after rough work and before wall closure. Do not rush this. A passed inspection protects the project and helps avoid costly tear-out later.

Drywall and surface prep set the stage for the finish work

Once the rough-ins are done and approved, walls are insulated as needed, then drywall is hung, taped, finished, and sanded. Any ceiling repair happens here too. The kitchen starts to look like a room again, but this phase is more important than it appears.

Bad drywall finishing will show up under cabinet lighting, glossy paint, and tile. Uneven walls make cabinet installation harder. If you are putting in a backsplash with tight grout lines, slight surface imperfections can become noticeable very quickly.

This is also a good point for primer and often the first coat of paint, especially on areas that will be harder to reach after cabinets go in. Many painters prefer to do the bulk of wall painting before final trim and hardware installation, then return later for touch-ups.

Flooring timing depends on the material and cabinet plan

People are often surprised to learn there is not one universal rule for flooring order. The correct timing depends on what flooring you are using and whether cabinets are sitting on top of it.

With tile, many contractors prefer to install the flooring before base cabinets if the layout is fixed and the extra cost is acceptable. It creates a clean finish and gives future flexibility. With floating floors, installation usually happens after cabinets because those floors need room to move. Hardwood can go either way depending on the plan, but it needs coordination with cabinet heights and appliance clearances.

This is where kitchen remodels often get tripped up. An installer lays a thicker floor without checking dishwasher clearance. Then the dishwasher cannot come out later without removing countertop or flooring. That sounds minor until someone needs appliance service three years later.

The right answer is not just “floor first” or “cabinets first.” The right answer is to confirm the finished floor height, cabinet height, appliance specs, and installation method before either one begins.

Cabinets go in before countertops, and precision matters here

Cabinet installation is one of the most critical points in the entire remodel. If cabinets are not level, plumb, and properly fastened, everything after them suffers. Countertops will not fit right. Appliance panels may not align. Crown molding and fillers will look off. Even a nice backsplash can look crooked if the cabinets are set poorly.

This is also when homeowners feel the project finally turning the corner. The room gets shape. Storage becomes real. Traffic flow starts to make sense.

If you are saving money by refacing, this stage looks a little different. Cabinet refacing usually happens after any needed layout changes are complete and surrounding finishes are protected. It works best when you are happy with the cabinet footprint and the boxes are in good condition. If not, replacement makes more sense long term.

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One of the number one home design regrets is not adding enough storage or not planning it around daily habits. Deep drawers for pots, tray dividers near baking zones, trash pull-outs close to prep space, and a place for small appliances matter more than the perfect trendy finish. A kitchen that photographs well but fights your routine gets old fast.

Countertops, then backsplash, then finish plumbing and electrical

Once cabinets are installed, countertop templates are made. Then there is usually a short wait while the tops are fabricated. This is normal. It is one reason scheduling cabinets accurately matters so much. Templating cannot happen until cabinetry is final.

After countertops are installed, the backsplash comes next. Doing it in this order gives the backsplash a clean edge where it meets the counter, and it reduces the chance of awkward gaps. Then sinks, faucets, disposals, light fixtures, outlets, appliances, and finish plumbing are completed.

At this stage, tiny details matter. Under-cabinet lighting placement. Caulk color. Outlet cover alignment. Faucet reach. Drawer pull consistency. These are the details that separate a kitchen that feels polished from one that feels nearly done.

The final phase is where good remodels become great ones

Punch work is not glamorous, but it matters. This includes paint touch-ups, hardware adjustment, door alignment, trim fixes, caulking, cleaning, and a final walk-through. Good contractors expect a punch list. Homeowners should too.

A kitchen should be tested, not just admired. Open every drawer. Run every faucet. Check the disposal. Turn on each light. Confirm the vent hood actually vents properly. Make sure appliance doors open without collisions. Stand at the sink, island, and range and see if the room works the way you imagined.

That final check is where many common kitchen renovation mistakes reveal themselves. The microwave door blocks a walkway. The island overhang is too shallow for stools. The trash pull-out is too far from prep space. The pendant lights hang too low. None of these issues are impossible to fix, but all are easier to prevent during planning.

The order that usually works best

For most full kitchen remodels, the cleanest sequence looks like this:

- planning, design, budget, permits, and material ordering
- demolition and any structural framing changes
- plumbing, electrical, HVAC rough-in, then inspections
- drywall, paint prep, flooring as appropriate, and cabinet installation
- countertops, backsplash, finish hookups, punch list, and final inspection if needed

Every project has exceptions. Older homes, condo rules, specialty appliances, and custom work can shift the timing. But if you stay close to this sequence, you avoid most of the expensive mistakes.

How to save money without wrecking the result

People ask all the time, “How can I save money on a kitchen remodel?” The answer is not to do things out of order or hire the cheapest person with a truck. The answer is to simplify wisely.

Keeping the same layout is usually the biggest saver because moving plumbing, gas, and electrical adds cost fast. Stock or semi-custom cabinets usually provide better value than full custom for many homes. Cabinet refacing can work well when the bones are good. Choosing one or two statement elements instead of making everything premium also helps. Splurging on a great faucet and durable counters while keeping a straightforward backsplash is often a smarter move than trying to max out every category.

If you <https://timely-construction.com/is-kitchen-remodeling-worth-it-in-cape-coral-timely-construction-llc-has-the-answer/> need a kitchen remodel cheap plan, think in terms of impact. Paint, lighting, hardware, cabinet

fronts, and countertops often change the feel of a kitchen more than people expect. But cheap should never mean careless. Poor installation can erase the value of even good materials.

When is the best time of year to remodel?

People often ask, “What is the best time of year to remodel?” There is no perfect season for every project, but there are practical considerations.

Spring and summer are busy, which can mean longer wait times and tighter contractor schedules. Fall can be an excellent time if you plan early, though many families want projects done before the holidays. Winter sometimes offers better scheduling flexibility, especially for interior work, but material lead times and holiday interruptions can still affect progress.

In Florida, weather can affect deliveries, exterior access, and moisture conditions, especially during storm season. If your remodel involves windows, doors, or any exterior-adjacent work, timing matters more.

The best time is usually when your plan is complete, your materials are ordered, and your contractor is not rushing from one overloaded job to another.

The mistakes that cost the most

The worst kitchen remodel problems usually come from impatience, not bad taste. People start demo before cabinets are ordered. They choose appliances after the layout is finalized. They change countertop material after templating. They skip permits. They focus on finishes and ignore ventilation or lighting.

If you are wondering, ***Kitchen Remodeling*** “What are common kitchen renovation mistakes?” these are the ones I see most often: underestimating the budget, skipping contingency money, choosing style over function, failing to verify lead times, and doing things in the wrong order.

There is also one regret that comes up constantly after the dust settles: not planning hard enough for daily life. That may be the real answer behind “What is the number one home design regret?” People regret beautiful rooms that are annoying to use. The kitchen is too important for that. It is not just a showpiece. It is a workroom, gathering spot, and traffic lane all at once.

A successful remodel respects that reality.

If you get the sequence right, the budget has a better chance of staying under control, the craftsmanship improves, and the finish choices have room to shine. The best kitchen remodels are not just pretty at the end. They feel calm while they are being built because each step happened when it should.