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FANTASY ISLAND

Make the Most of Your Kitchen Space with Island Innovations

North Olmsted, Ohio... Dreaming of a fantasy island? No, not the island with white sandy beaches, palm trees and sun... but your *kitchen* island. According to a recent survey, kitchen islands are increasing in popularity.

“The kitchen island has become the icon of the modern kitchen – the 21st century equivalent of the old-fashioned hearth,” says Architect Duo Dickinson for *This Old House Magazine*. “It’s easy to understand why...islands work.”

Centrally located, islands are easily accessed and ideal for various kitchen tasks from food prep and cooking, to clean up and entertaining. They often are the focal point in the kitchen and typically blend in with the décor. According to Dickinson, an island, at a minimum, should be four feet long and a little more than two feet deep.

As the attractiveness of kitchen islands continue to grow, so do the innovations. In fact, the number-one design feature on consumer wish lists is a central island cooktop. But cooktops aren’t the only island innovations. Following are the newest kitchen finds and options to consider when building or turning your fantasy island into a functional – and stylish – workspace.

Create Levels

When deciding on the layout for your kitchen island, why not customize your fantasy and create levels? Multi-level islands are becoming increasingly popular since most homeowners not only want a work area, but also an informal place for entertaining guests.

With the kitchen as one of the main gathering areas in a home, your guests will be able to sit, chat and rest their beverage glasses on the high-top counter, while the lower tier of the island should feature an ample work area for you to whip up your decadent cuisine. Additionally, be sure to incorporate enough drawers and shelves below the work area to keep key ingredients, utensils and your favorite cookbooks right at your fingertips. If you love to entertain, also consider adding wine chilling drawers or a wine refrigerator to keep your beverages close at hand and maintain proper temperatures for your reds and whites.

Feeling Hot, Hot, Hot

Turn up the heat and get cooking! According to *Kitchen & Bath Design News*, homeowners want a central island cooktop as part of their kitchen island. Installing cooktops brings countertop burners within easy reach, while also creating room for amenities below, such as additional storage – or even warming drawers.

Easy Clean Up

In addition to your cooking surface, you'll want to install a sink and faucet in your kitchen island to make food prep and clean up quick and easy. Cutting up vegetables can even be stylish with the minimalist design of the new Level™ pulldown kitchen faucet from Moen. Its sleek and contemporary lines, accented in the most popular finishes, blend beautifully with modern kitchen decors. Plus, Level's pulldown wand also makes performing everyday tasks – such as filling large pots, pitchers and vases – in and around the sink and island easy.

Topping It Off

Add character to your island countertop with a dramatic surface finish. While high-end materials, such as granite, metal, solid-surface and marble are still popular to install, new custom, hand-applied finishes with unique designs, such as full circles and waves,

can add unique beauty to your island and set your countertop apart. And, be sure to finish off your counter with a thick butcher block. Not only will it be an easy spot for all your cutting needs, you'll be sure to protect your beautiful countertop surface.

Finishing Touches

With your fantasy island now becoming a reality, spruce up your space with some finishing touches. Installing long, vertical drawer and cabinet pulls add some flair to the kitchen, while also doubling as towel bars. Offer your guests comfortable and stylish seating around your island with new bar stools that fit comfortably under your high-top counter, such as the Kipling high table barstools from Crate & Barrel, accented with matching custom-tie cushions. Finally, shed some light on your new fantasy island with pendant lighting. Manufacturers, such as Sea Gull Lighting, offer a variety of shapes, styles and finishes to illuminate and showcase your amazing new island.

With a few island innovations, you'll make the most of your kitchen space and create your own, customized fantasy island.

For more information on the Salora pullout kitchen faucet or other Moen products, visit www.moen.com or call 1-800-BUY-MOEN (1-800-289-6636).

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