

lighting

Light Up Your Kitchen



LIGHT UP YOUR KITCHEN



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Ambient lighting is the main source of illumination for most rooms in a home. The goal of ambient lighting is to provide soft, general illumination without drawing attention to the light source. Ambient lighting provides enough light for safe navigation, cooking and washing dishes and helps to define the space.

Depending on the location of the kitchen and the number of windows and doors, ambient lighting can be sourced organically, from sunlight. Other potential sources of ambient lighting can be chandeliers, pendant lights, recessed lighting and flush-mounted lighting.

Task lighting is employed to illuminate the activities in the kitchen. It provides light to prepare food, cook, bake, read recipes and easily find ingredients, watch television or do homework. Recent technological advances enable designers to integrate task lighting into drawers and cabinets by installing LED strip lighting or puck lights. LED lights are often installed under wall mounted cabinets to illuminate countertops.

Accent lighting can keep your kitchen from looking ordinary or bland by highlighting open shelving, artwork, architectural details or other objects. A detail or work of art that draws the attention of the eye is called a focal point. Light fixtures that provide light and shadows can make the space more inviting and comfortable. These may include track lights, recessed adjustable fixtures and spotlights. Accent lighting is subtle. A focused beam of light directed at a plant or highlighting a work of art, or a spotlight placed behind a plant and pointed upward through the leaves creates shadows on the wall that can make a kitchen more attractive.

Lighting controls such as dimmers and motion detectors should be a part of almost any lighting plan because they not only are more environmentally friendly, but they also help to control utility costs and enable you to alter the look and feel of the room.

The look and feel of the kitchen also will be influenced by the colors used for floor and wall coverings, countertops, vanities, sinks and plumbing fixtures. A light color scheme will bounce light around more than if dark colors are selected because darker colors absorb light. Smooth, shiny materials will reflect more light than textured matte surfaces. Polished marble will reflect more light than honed black slate. More light is needed in a space with dark and textured finishes.

The feel of the room also is affected by paint colors. Different paints and colors have different reflective capabilities to discuss as part of the planning process.

The type and amount of light needed for a new kitchen will be dictated by the size of the space and the daylight that the room receives from windows, doors and/ or skylights. Electric light fixtures complement the light generated by Mother Nature. Mother Nature can be fickle, however. Clouds, rainstorms and other weather conditions can minimize the daylight that enters the space. A lighting plan should account for the possibility that the sun won't shine brightly every day.

Generally, electric lighting supplements or replaces daylight but man-made light can't match daylight's intensity or color distribution. Exposed lamps look warm or even yellow compared to sunlight coming to the space through skylights, windows or glass doors. Recessed lighting may be a good option to create a color palette that works in the space.

If recessed lighting is not wanted or practical, ambient lighting can be provided by pendants or surface-mounted fixtures installed around the perimeter in a cove. Pendants can deliver light upwards or downwards or in a combination of uplighting and downlighting. Pendant options are almost limitless and a great way to influence the look of the kitchen.

Highly polished stone and other reflective surface materials can amplify light in the room, but also produce unwanted glare.

A kitchen lighting design succeeds when all three types of light – ambient, task and accent – are layered together within a room to create a usable, adaptive space. Good lighting does not draw attention to itself but highlights the other design elements and fixtures in the space. Different light layers may be activated depending on purpose or time of day. For example, during the day, pendants over the island may not be needed, but when you start to prepare dinner in the evening all the layers providing ambient, task, and accent lighting become necessary.

Want to know the light that will make your kitchen shine? Call us at **520-825-8256** to schedule an appointment with one of our professional designers.