

# A Luxurious Kitchen Island

By JOE SZYNKOWSKI | Green Shoot Media

Kitchen tables are taking a back seat to spacious and convenient islands.

The new “hub” of the room can offer plenty of seating space, a cooking area and even running water or electricity.

The possibilities of creating a luxurious central island are endless; just make sure it works well with your kitchen layout.

The National Association of Home Builders reports that 76 percent of home buyers consider a central island essential to their kitchen.

With so many options regarding countertop finishes, seating space and amenities, costs can rack up and quickly surpass your budget. Consider how you’ll use the area so you don’t waste money on any extras.

## UTILIZING YOUR SPACE

Most kitchens are designed with an island as the main focal point. The bold statement an island can make can be for naught, however, if it overwhelms your space.

Consider allowing at least 36 to 48 inches between other structures or appliances to allow plenty of room for foot traffic. You’ll also want ample space available if you use the surface as a work space.

A kitchen island can make a



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room feel more open, but if you build it too big for your area, it can appear cluttered and cause builder’s regret. Renovating an existing island can be a huge project, especially if electricity is involved.

## OPEN SHELVES OR CABINETS

Many people enjoy the extra space an island provides. Matching the cabinet color with your existing

design may tie a room together, but using a contrasting color will create an awesome “wow” factor.

Be sure to use attractive hardware to make cabinets stand out even more.

If you decide to forgo traditional doors, kitchen islands add a unique flair with open shelves. You can display your elegant china or fill them with knick-knacks to give your room personality.

## CHOOSE A COUNTERTOP

While granite is an incredibly popular countertop choice for luxurious kitchens, it can be extremely expensive. There are many other materials that offer their own benefits and won’t be as hard on your wallet. Here are two options you should consider during your design phase.

**Wood:** Wooden countertops create a warm look that can’t be duplicated by other

## REAL ESTATE 101

### ROI

According to Remodeling Magazine, a minor kitchen remodel can provide homeowners with an 81 percent return on their investment. For example, a remodel that costs \$21,198, using mid-range materials, can increase resale value by \$17,193, according to the magazine, ranking the project fifth for ROI, coming in behind a garage door replacement, manufactured stone veneer, steel entry door replacement and a wood deck addition.

options. Manufacturers commonly use hardwoods such as maple and oak to display a wide variety of colors and finishes. You can easily find the style to make your kitchen stand out. Some advantages to wood are that it is easy to clean and smooth, and can be restored when needed.

**Stainless steel:** For a modern flair, homeowners turn to stainless steel for a top that is heat resistant and durable. Typically, they are custom built, so you’ll have a full slab without any seams. While they are resilient to high heats and are easily cleaned, don’t cut on it and know that it can be dented easily.



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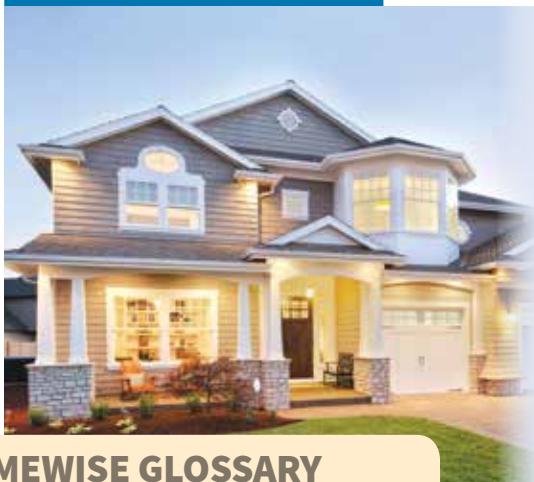
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### HOMESWISE GLOSSARY

**Annual membership or maintenance fee:** an annual charge for access to a financial product such as a line of credit, credit card, or account. The fee is charged regardless of whether or not the product is used.

**SOURCE:** Columbia University

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