

# 19 Wow-Worthy Kitchen & Bath Upgrades

By Claire Ruhlin

When it comes to kitchens and baths, even the smallest changes can have a huge impact. This is especially great news when you consider that updates to those two rooms give you the highest return on your investment when it comes time to sell. To help you bring your kitchen and bath into 2022, and beyond, we've rounded up our top tips and tweaks for making these spaces shine.



**1** **Install a self-lit vanity mirror**  
Good lighting is essential, especially if you get ready in the bathroom. Enter the self-lit vanity mirror, a popular choice for brightening bathrooms, especially those with little to no natural light. Consider using LED lighting for a more sustainable choice.



**3** **Pump up the greenery**  
Indoor-outdoor living is only becoming more popular, and there's no better way to inject life into your kitchen or bath than by incorporating plants. No green thumb? Fake it with faux greenery that, when high-quality enough, looks just as lifelike as the real thing.

**2** **Add a freestanding tub**  
Freestanding soaking tubs are a modern and elegant swap. There's, of course, the classic clawfoot tub, but flat-bottom freestanding tubs add a modern twist to the trend. Generally easy to install, these tubs take up less space than a drop-in or deck-mounted tub—all while looking super stylish.



**4** **Upgrade your countertops**  
If anything's worth the splurge, it's countertops. Pay attention to 2022's top countertop materials: engineered quartz and quartzite, which are natural, nonporous stones. Also trending: butcher block countertops, which add a sense of texture and contrast.



**5** **DIY fluted cabinetry**  
Give your existing bathroom cabinetry new life without replacing the entire vanity. Simply fake the look of fluted cabinetry with half-round molding (available at most hardware stores), wood glue and paint.

**6** **Integrated technology**  
When it comes to creating a modern kitchen, gadgets and gizmos are all the rage. Appliances like refrigerators and ovens with smartphone controls and wireless capabilities can help make your life easier. Some smart refrigerators even have built-in cameras inside, so you can check and see what you need to add to your grocery list remotely.



**7** **Slab backsplash**  
Not into tile? This update is for you. Implement a slab kitchen backsplash by continuing your countertop slab up the wall. The result is a modern look that's seamless and easy to clean (no grout, no problem).



**8** **Pop in a beverage refrigerator**  
Renovating homeowners are increasingly adding refrigeration specifically for beverages. Unlike a mini-fridge, these coolers have shelves that are designed explicitly for beverages rather than food. They're also compact in size and make entertaining a breeze.

**9** **Textured tiles**  
Subway tile isn't going anywhere, but in 2022, expect a move towards textured, handmade tile finishes. Opt for white brick, stone or ceramic tiles for a sense of organic warmth.

**10** **Hide the outlets**  
Cleverly concealed outlets give kitchens a streamlined feel. Consider having pop-up outlets installed along the sides of your island or cabinetry. Or convert a drawer or cabinet into a charging station.



**11** **Wood applications**  
Warmth is in, particularly in the form of wood elements, like exposed beams and reclaimed wood. (Think upcycling a reclaimed table as a kitchen island.)



**12** **Patina**  
Smaller bathrooms or powder rooms are the perfect space for a fun burst of pattern. If you don't want to commit to traditional wallpaper, opt for a playful peel-and-stick version, which is easy to use and removable.

**14** **Bring mood lighting into the shower**  
Sometimes long baths get all the glory, but who says showers can't be just as relaxing? Up the luxury with color-changing LED shower lighting that can adapt to your every mood.

**15** **Patina**  
From hardware to sinks, unlacquered finishes with a natural patina add a lived-in element that gives the impression of a time-honored space. It's also an easy way to add depth and texture, keeping kitchens and baths from looking too sterile or utilitarian.

**16** **Go touchless**  
Something to consider for your bathroom upgrade: a touchless faucet. Not only does it help conserve water, it's also easy to use and prevents the transmission of germs.



**17** **Cabinet contrast**  
Add a pop of contrast by using a different color, or wood tone, on the island cabinetry than what's used in the rest of the kitchen. It's an easy way to add interest without using patterns or bold colors.



**18** **Find your color**  
Color can change the entire look and feel of your space. In the kitchen, consider painting the cabinetry a versatile, subtle green, like Sherwin-Williams' color of the year, Evergreen Fog. Alternatively, cover cabinets with contact paper for a quick, nonpermanent fix.

**19** **Larger islands**  
Kitchen islands are no longer just for food prep. Since the pandemic, they've also become business and homework stations, as more people live, work and play from home. These days, it's not uncommon for kitchen islands to be more than 7 feet long.

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