

Whether it is extra large or made from luxurious materials, a statement island can add real impact. This striking unit with a geometric design, created by Epilog Studio for Slovenian kitchen company Kovinoplastika, pairs a porcelain stone surface with a granite sink and gold mixer tap. Price on application.

IN DETAIL

# KITCHEN *islands*

It's one of the most sought-after features when planning a new space – and while looks are important, deciding on the functionality of the design is key. Follow our useful guide to determine which set-up is right for you >

Words: **Yvette Murrell**



**#TRENDING**  
Add lots of drawers into your island for easy access to your most-used items

## For the keen chef THE COOK'S ISLAND

If you enjoy whipping up a storm in the kitchen, you'll likely want a dedicated zone to take centre stage in your new space. An island with built-in appliances such as an integrated hob and ovens is an obvious starting point. However, note that outlets for gas, electrics, and water should be looked into at the very beginning of your project. Moving these elements may require you to take up your existing kitchen floor and will incur additional costs. It is also important to factor in the working triangle – where your cooking zone is within easy reach of key features such as the sink and fridge-freezer – into your design. The most straightforward way of accomplishing this is by picking one element to have on the island, for example the hob, and place the other two points on a run of parallel units.

Don't forget to include a bin in the island for easy waste disposal. For the extractor, why not choose a venting hob with a built-in solution or a rising design that comes up from the work surface when required? This not only keeps sightlines clearer but also helps remove steam and odour right at the source. "Be mindful of decibel ratings as well, to ensure you have a quiet dining experience," says Tony McCarthy at Crown Imperial. A robust worktop will complete your cook's island – opt for stainless steel or an engineered stone, such as Neolith, both of which are hard-wearing and can withstand high heats. Siematic's L-shaped Urban kitchen has a space for fresh potted herbs, plus seating located at a lower-level breakfast bar – a safe distance from the hob. Siematic kitchens start from £25,000.



## Get the party started THE ENTERTAINING ISLAND

Hosting drinks can be more enjoyable if you have a bar-style set-up. Change the mood with dimmable lighting in the island unit itself or have a row of pendants above. Storage for bottles is key and a wine conditioner built into the side where the seating is located means guests can help themselves to drinks without interrupting you while you're cooking. Add a small sink, complete with a boiling-water tap, to allow yourself and visitors to easily make teas and coffees. When it comes to seating on a sociable island design, make sure

there is a clear space underneath the worktop for legroom so friends and family can perch comfortably – also check your chosen barstools will fit underneath or opt for adjustable-height designs, such as the ones in this kitchen by The Wood Works. With a sleek Shaker-style door, this design from the Chelsea range has been painted in a custom blend of Dulux's Royal Regatta and Farrow & Ball's Cornforth White, paired with worktops in veined white quartz. The Chelsea range starts from £35,000 including appliances, worktops and fitting. >



## Get everyone together THE FAMILY ISLAND

For busy households, the kitchen is often the hub of the home – so it is a good idea to incorporate comfortable seating areas with space for all the family. When it comes to the island, the kids can be finishing off homework while you cook on the other side, a safe distance away yet still close enough to talk. Banquette seating, such as in this kitchen design by Humphrey

Munson, provides a dedicated dining area for meals together zoned off from, but still connected to, the rest of the island, where integrated storage drawers and a built-in drinks fridge have been included on the other side. “An island is a golden opportunity to incorporate storage for items such as tableware and servingware close to the table,” says Peter Humphrey,

director and founder of Humphrey Munson. If you do include a hob, consider an induction model as opposed to an electric or gas one for a safety measure as they only heat the pan, reducing the risk of others getting burnt from either open flames on a gas hob or a hot electric appliance. Humphrey Munson kitchens start from £40,000, excluding appliances.

## EXPERT ADVICE

“As a rule of thumb, walkways around an island should ideally be 1m wide in order to be safe and practical. And while wide units make a big impact in a scheme, they’re not a very practical solution, as you have to be able to reach the middle when cooking – so try to keep it no deeper than 140cm from front to back.”

*Matthew Baker, kitchen designer at Harvey Jones*

## From Monday to Friday THE WORKSPACE ISLAND

If you work from home, regularly use a laptop, or live in a tech-centric household with lots of gadgets and mobile devices, there is no doubt you’ll want to ensure your island is always ready to accommodate the multitude of phones, computers, tablets, and smart home devices that come into the kitchen. A good way to keep any cooking or washing areas away from electrics is to define clear zones on the island – for example by using different levels or materials, as shown here in this bespoke Roundhouse scheme. The plugs are

conveniently located close to the seating, underneath the worktop’s lip, obscured from view for a sleek appearance. As an alternative, install a pop-up plug socket with USB ports included on the top of the work surface that can be lifted up when needed. But always remember to account for these before building begins as electrics will need to be routed. Complete the set-up with barstools with good back support and an adjustable height so you can sit comfortably while you’re working away. Roundhouse kitchens start from £35,000. >





**EXPERT ADVICE**

“Don’t forget about the lighting around your island. If you use it as a preparation space, it should be well-lit from above. If it is a dining area, it is wise to install dimmable illumination in so you can change the mood.”  
*Yvette, features writer*

*Add some wow factor*  
**THE STATEMENT ISLAND**

Now, to make a real impact in your kitchen you could go for an all singing, all dancing design – imagine unusual shapes, a large scale, or luxurious materials with bold colours and textures. Think outside the box: consider curved edges or angular features such as in this Diane Berry Kitchens design using Alno cabinetry. Diane chose a textured metallic panel in Champagne overlaid with a laser-cut design for her client – and for extra impact, LED tape behind the geometric layer creates a soft glow at night. Chunky worktops and Tom Dixon pendants above finish the industrial look. Enlist the help of a designer, as they can advise you on practical considerations to make in order to achieve your dream kitchen. For example, if you want seating, think about how people will perch comfortably, and if you require built-in storage this will need to be factored in, too. A more conventional island can also still make a statement if you choose alternative shades or worktops contrasting to the rest of your kitchen cabinetry. Think dark charcoal against a lighter tone elsewhere, for example. A similar kitchen by Diane Berry would cost around £30,000.



**#TRENDING**  
Don't let a compact space stop you – even a small island can be very practical

*If space is limited*  
**THE COMPACT ISLAND**

Are you determined to achieve your dream of an island but the footprint of your kitchen is on the small side? Don't worry – there are still practical options out there. It is always sensible to have the most ergonomic unit for your space, so keep things simple with smaller designs and only use the island as extra storage as well as preparation space. Avoid installing any appliances on it, as these will take up a lot

of the space on the worktop and within the unit's shell to accommodate plumbing and wiring. For particularly tight schemes, you could even consider a portable butchers block that moves around on wheels as and when required. The small island shown here is the Slab design by 1909 in Dry Rose, complemented with the surrounding Graphite cabinetry. Kitchens by 1909 start from £22,000. **KBB**

*In Elinor's RADAR*



**Dream table**  
I adore Art Deco furniture – so when I spotted Swoon's Senzo dressing table, £399, at the press view of London Newcastle's latest residential development it went straight onto my wishlist.



**All about vinyl**  
For The Floor and More's autumn range of flooring is fully customisable – from changing the colour and size of the pattern to adding extra details. My favourite is the bold Carilla design, £48 per sq m.



**Lovely lights**  
Curiousa & Curiousa's new set of wall lights, named Sirens, draws inspiration from decorative tableware and is made by layering colourful hand-blown glass plates, bowls, and dishes – a great opportunity to add mix-and-match style to your bedroom.

**Out of this world**  
Celestial motifs inspired by the night sky feature in this year's AW19 trends, so Modish Living's orbital mirror would make a real statement no matter where it is placed – I'm thinking above a vanity. It is priced £135.



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