

Top Eight Kitchen Features for Community Kitchen Programs

Source: The Stop Community Food Centre

Every community kitchen will have a different space to work with and different resources, so there is no one right design for a kitchen. Here are some elements to consider and examples of what's worked well for us.

- 1. Work spaces:** The more you can create separate hubs of activity and spread them around, the better. Keep dishwashing area away from stoves and ovens, hand washing sinks away from dish sinks and fridges and freezers away from other hubs of activity. Having lots of different work surfaces makes it easier to keep people from colliding and to separate them if they don't get along. If you have participants in wheelchairs, you'll want to have a prep space at an accessible height.
- 2. Island:** An island that is big enough for 12-15 people to gather around is ideal – it lets everyone watch demonstrations. With an electrical outlet in the island, you can also set up appliances. But don't install an island that is so big people can't move around the space safely, including opening oven and fridge doors. Islands can be designed to offer more storage space, under-counter fridges or room for stools.
- 3. Eating spaces:** A separate eating space from the kitchen allows "teams" to rotate food prep, table set-up and clean up, making more efficient use of time. A table or island in the kitchen is a more efficient use of space, but then you need to organize your time in the kitchen differently.
- 4. Safety/Public Health regulations:** Public Health requires a separate hand washing sink. Think about how oven/fridge/freezer/dishwasher doors open into the space, particularly if there is an island. Removing hot trays from an oven is particularly challenging if there is no room to turn around. Watch out for corners sticking out in places where people will be bending or reaching (like sinks). Putting rubber corners on after the fact doesn't work. Beware of trip hazards – cords or protruding drain covers. Have an easily identifiable and properly equipped first aid box (plus people who are trained how to use it). Make sure you have the correct fire extinguishers, as different types of fires use different systems.



community food centres
CANADA good food is just the beginning



5. **Appliances:** Gas appliances are great for speed and for giving people an opportunity to become comfortable using them, but a regular-sized electric stove will work. Convection ovens really do work faster and can make a difference if your time for cooking is short. Commercial appliances are great but expensive and not necessary if budgets don't allow. Also see the list of recommended kitchen equipment.
6. **Pantry:** You will thank yourself for including a BIG pantry that is separate from kitchen if possible to control access. Well-labeled shelves and rolling bins for bulk purchases of dry goods will help to keep it organized.
7. **Ventilation:** Operable windows are ideal, but any way that you can set up a cross-breeze (doors, fans) will make a difference on a hot day with a room full of people.
8. **Other equipment:**
 - Garbage/compost bins should be accessible to everyone while they're working. Small tabletop bins at each prep station reduce unnecessary movement and make it easier to monitor what's going into the compost
 - Have lots of cutting boards (colour coded for hazardous/non-hazardous foods) and racks for drying/storing them
 - Good storage for pots/pans/baking trays – hanging racks are good use of space but beware of stacking pans on flat surfaces that you have to reach over your head to access
 - Wipe boards for calendars, task allocations and today's menu
 - Rolling bake trays are great for drying those giant baking pans and getting prepped ingredients out of the way, but you need floor space to store them