

MODERN HOME INTERIOR FEATURES

Kitchens
Baths
Storage
Lighting
Smart Home Features
Flooring

KITCHENS

The **Transitional kitchen** is the most popular kitchen style, according to research by the National Kitchen and Bath Association. A transitional kitchen borrows features from both traditional and contemporary design. It combines cozy vibes with clean lines and neutral colors.

Modern kitchens are characterized by **clean, straight lines devoid of any ornamentation, or at least having as little as possible**, just like this neutral-palette kitchen. The handle less, slab-door cabinets here create a smooth flow throughout the kitchen.

Sleek, clean lines and updated state-of-the-art appliances make modern kitchens a popular design choice. Enhance the look and functionality of a kitchen with a few must-have kitchen features. Smart storage solutions, specialty appliances, and other upgrades can have a major impact without requiring a huge investment. Incorporate a few of these cool kitchen ideas into the design to boost organization, convenience, and style.



Black & White Kitchens



Narrow Pull-Out Drawer



Pet-Friendly Cabinet Features



Wine Refrigerators



Steam Oven



Built-in Refrigerators



Built-in Double Ovens



High-style Facets



Island Cook-tops



Commercial Style Range



Ample Kitchen Lighting



Secondary Sink



Trash & Recycling



Pot Filler



Coffee Bar



On-Counter Garage



Corner Storage



Deep Drawers



Full Extension Drawers



Glass Doors



Tray Storage Cabinets



Utensil Racks



Dishwasher Drawers



Divided Drawers



Pot Racks



Warming Drawers



Farmhouse Sinks

BATHS

Modern farmhouse style is all about creating a warm, welcoming space that feels updated and contemporary without appearing too overly trendy. Often sourcing from other design styles such as minimalist and Scandinavian, a modern farmhouse bathroom is above all calming and serene.

Though there are many ways to incorporate a modern farmhouse look into a bathroom, there are a few key details that often carry across the style. From rustic, reclaimed wood to vintage accents, focusing on the details is important in this universally appreciated aesthetic.



Modern Farmhouse



Barn Door



Matte Hardware



Wood Finishes



Texture Finishes



Tile Accents



Shiplap



Classic



Natural Materials



Storage



Black is Popular



Light & Bright



The Clawfoot



Wallpaper



Exposed Pipes



The Farmhouse Sink



Rustic Vanity

MODERN STORAGE FEATURES

Organization is the focus of many TV shows and social media channels these days - and it's starting to rub off on home buyers.

They want storage that doubles as decoration. Designated spots for all their belongings. Built-ins that make for easy, organized, and aesthetically pleasing living. Essentially, experts say, storage isn't just part of the home's form or function anymore. It's also a major contributor to its style.

"Consumers have become more focused on organization and storage for very specific purposes - likely inspired by the array of organization-themed shows," says Amber Shay, national vice president of design studios at Meritage Homes. "We've also seen storage being used as a decorative element lately, with containers in fun colors and designs to match the décor scheme."

What else is on-trend in storage these days? Here's what home buyers are asking for.



Taylor Morrison creates a built-in space in the home for everyday essentials.

1. Open Shelving

Open shelves are one way homeowners are looking to turn storage into a statement.

According to Lee Crowder, national director of design and model experience at home builder Taylor Morrison, open shelving has been a kitchen trend for a while - but, now, buyers are requesting it in bathrooms, too.

"This allows for storage with less cost than adding a built-in cabinet," she says. "It also speaks to the trend of having all your daily use items in clear organized containers or stacked on shelves for quick and easy use."

Custom, open shelving in closets - combined with hanging storage, drawers, and a variety of different-sized cubbies - is in-demand, too. These let homeowners display shoes, purses, accessories, and more, while also organizing their clothing in an accessible and often stylistic way.

"Consumers are leaning more toward customized storage and maximizing all of the vertical height that they have," says Anthony Carrino, vice president of design at Welcome Homes. "Typically, the depth of a closet is limited, so taking advantage of the entire wall is something you see consumers trying to do more of."

2. Roomy Pantries

Oversized pantries also are big sellers. For one, many homeowners have been bulk-buying since the early days of the pandemic (those toilet paper shortages probably had something to do with it).

On top of this, they're also looking for more display space - room to store their goods in an organized and beautiful way.

"The pantry is becoming a very trendy place in the home to not only organize but maximize your storage," Crowder says. "If you scroll through Instagram or TikTok you will see so many people color-coding their snacks and making sure every grain and pasta is in a clear container."

Working pantries - which have room for appliances, trash cans, and even prep work - are big, too.

"Buyers are also looking for homes with a separate pantry in or off the kitchen to store not only food but those items and small appliances that are used not as often to declutter kitchen counters," says Kyle Arruda, lead designer at MBA Builders. Also opens counter tops can be used as an in-office work space.

3. Drop Zone Storage

Drop zones - also called mudrooms - are another storage must-have for many buyers. These entryway areas can help owners keep stray shoes, coats, backpacks, and bags at bay and ensure a more organized household.

"Seeing the shoes, bags, and daily items scattered about can drive you a little nutty," Crowder says. "Having a built-in space for those daily essential items at the entrance - usually from the garage - really gives you peace of mind that the items are organized but also that everyone can find what they need when it's time to actually leave the house."

Having a variety of storage options in these rooms is key, Carrino says. These can include storage benches, hooks, cubbies, shoe racks, shelves.

"In the mudroom, bench and shoe storage have become key design features," Carrino says. "Depending on the household, this can translate into a place to sit down to put on or take off your shoes, as well as either cubbies or coat hooks above. Oftentimes, I'll see households take into account the number of members in their families and include a coordinating number of coat hooks, cubbies or even school type lockers."

Builder - By [Aly J. Yale](#)

THREE BASIC TYPES OF LIGHTING

LIGHTING

The single most important concept in creating a good lighting plan for the home is to use an array of different types of lighting. "My best advice whatever you're doing, whatever you want to achieve, is to create three layers of lighting—ambient, task and accent," says Patricia Rizzo of the Lighting Research Center. Too many people make the mistake of expecting one type of lighting to do it all. Each type meets a particular need.



AMBIENT

Also called general lighting, ambient lighting provides overall illumination for a room, and is intended to create a uniform light level throughout a space, independent of any special lighting that may be needed in targeted areas of a room. In most home settings, when a person steps into a room and flips on a switch, ambient lighting illuminates the space. Ambient lighting takes many forms, including: ceiling-mounted or recessed fixtures that direct light downwards; wall sconces or floor-lamp torchieres that wash the walls with light; cove, soffit and valance lighting that bounces light off ceilings and walls.



TASK

Targeted to a particular area of a room, task lighting is intended to illuminate a specific function. Areas of a home that require task lighting include kitchen counters where food will be prepared; living room seating areas where reading will take place; and home office desk surfaces where paperwork will be done. In a kitchen, under-cabinet lighting provides task lighting for a countertop; in a living room, a table lamp is often used for task lighting to accommodate reading.



ACCENT

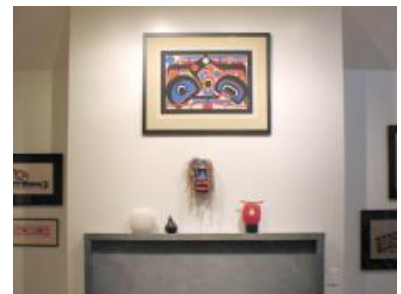
Also called highlighting, accent lighting draws attention to a particular object, such as artwork, sculpture, plants or bookcases. Accent lighting is often used outdoors, to highlight a beautiful tree, plant or water feature, or to draw the eye to a particular area of the landscape. Recessed or track lighting is often used for accent lighting, with adjustable fittings that allow light to be focused precisely even on a small object.

When planning the layers of light in a room, it usually makes sense to consider the ambient lighting first, then consider task and accent lighting. "I like to move from general to specific when planning the lighting for a room," says lighting designer Markus Earley of Providence, R.I. With rooms that are heavily task-oriented, however, such as home offices, some designers focus on task lighting first. And in a hallway that doubles as a photo or art gallery, accent lighting might be the first consideration.



"It's so important to think about how you really use a space, and what you do in specific rooms," says interior designer Bruce Fox, partner at Wells & Fox, which has offices in Chicago and Boston. "Only then you can start to identify where you need task lighting and accent lighting."

Layering Light



TYPES OF LIGHTING FIXTURES

LIGHTING

Many options exist for providing light in a home, from integrated architectural solutions that require contractors and tradesmen, to decorative lamps that need only be placed on a table and plugged in to the nearest outlet. Although some types of fixtures are more commonly associated with a particular layer of lighting - ambient, task or accent - most fixtures are versatile enough to be used in a number of ways.

Architectural. The three most common forms of architectural lighting are cove, soffit and valance; all three are integrated into the room's structure. Cove lighting is located in a ledge, shelf or recess high up on a wall, and the light is bounced toward the ceiling or upper wall. Soffit lighting is located in a soffit or cornice near the ceiling, and the light radiates downward, washing the wall with light. Valance lighting is located in a wood, metal or glass valance (horizontal shield) mounted above a window or high on the wall, and the light bounces both upward and downward. The technique of bouncing light off walls and ceilings is known as indirect lighting, which is favored by many lighting professionals because indirect lighting minimizes shadows and glare. Architectural lighting is most often used as ambient lighting.



Recessed

Installed above the ceiling, this type of lighting has an opening that is flush with the ceiling. A recessed light requires at least 6 inches of clearance above the ceiling, and insulation is essential to ensure that condensation does not drip into the fixture. Recessed lighting sends a relatively narrow band of light in one direction; it can be used to provide ambient, task or accent lighting.



Track. Mounted or suspended from the ceiling, track lighting consists of a linear housing containing several heads that can be positioned anywhere along a track; the direction of the heads is adjustable also. Track lighting is often used for task or accent lighting.



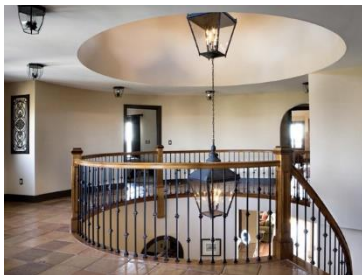
Undercabinet. Mounted under kitchen cabinets, this type of lighting can be linear or a single puck-shaped fixture. Undercabinet lighting is extremely popular as task lighting in a kitchen.



Pendants. Suspended from the ceiling, a pendant light directs its light down, typically over a table or kitchen island. A pendant can enhance the decorative style of a room. Pendants can provide ambient or task lighting.



Chandeliers. Suspended from the ceiling, chandeliers direct their light upward, typically over a table. They can enhance the decorative style of a room. Chandeliers provide ambient lighting.



Ceiling. This type of fixture is mounted directly to the ceiling and has a glass or plastic shade concealing the light bulb. Ceiling fixtures have been common in homes for nearly a hundred years, often providing all the ambient light in a room.



Wall Sconces. Surface-mounted to the wall, sconces can direct light upwards or downwards, and their covers or shades can add a stylistic touch to a room. Wall sconces provide ambient or task lighting.



Cove Lighting. Cove lighting is placed in a ledge, shelf or recess high up on a wall, and the light is bounced toward the ceiling or upper wall. In this bedroom, the cove lighting illuminates the ceiling above the bed, adding a romantic feel.



Soffit lighting, is another type of architectural lighting, radiates downward, washing the wall with light. In this bedroom, soffit lighting adds interesting dimension behind the bed.

HGTV

By: Jill Connors

INTERIOR – SMART HOME FEATURES

Selecting the right smart home solution provider means a world of difference for a home builder's customers and their bottom line.

BrightSuite

It is no secret how revolutionary smart homes have been to home buyers and home builders alike. With the added convenience, security and lower costs that they provide, buyers' appetites for the latest and greatest technologies have become insatiable. Additionally, in the never-ending drive to differentiate from the competition, these solutions have become a key selling point for builders across the country.

Herein lies the problem for builders. They do their best to meet buyers' expectations, but with so many new smart home offerings and unproven technologies now available, it is difficult to know which solutions are reliable. Furthermore, with buyers' expectations and needs frequently outpacing builders' abilities to assess new smart home technology, a trusted smart home provider with scalable solutions is more important than ever.



Smart Homes Sell

While some builders would rather not deal with the risks of making a bad investment in an unreliable provider or spending the time and effort to select solutions on their own, they also know they will be leaving money on the table by avoiding smart homes altogether. According to research, smart homes sell up to 38% faster than traditional homes and with a sales price of over 21% higher. The end result for home builders? Newly built smart homes sell seven days faster with a price boost of nearly \$9,000*.

Customizable and Scalable Solutions

With a smart home program, builders can provide the latest home security, automation and sustainable technologies to buyers and truly stand out from competitors. One example is BrightSuite, which is powered by Alarm.com and built on a scalable, reliable platform that integrates with popular brands in energy-efficient homes. It also offers financial structures that allow home builders to generate new revenue streams from new smart home sales.

"Our team's background and expertise provide our clients with a unique and unparalleled perspective. As a trusted partner in sustainable homes, we don't just provide smart home systems; we're ready for today while planning for tomorrow," said Alison Kaufmann, Manager of Customer Energy Solutions at BrightSuite.

When selecting a smart home solution provider, builders need to make sure it will work with many of today's most popular and trusted products. For instance, BrightSuite's app helps homeowners realize the potential of their smart home technology because it works with top products including but not limited to:

Smart Locks

Yale Smart Locks
Schlage Smart Locks

Video Doorbells

BrightSuite Smart Video Doorbell

Google Nest

Smart Thermostats

Eaton

Ecobee

Google Nest

Linear

Lutron

Radio Thermostat

Stelpro

Trane

Smart Lighting

Jasco/GE

GoControl/Linear

Leviton

Eaton

Deako

Inovelli

Lutron

INTERIOR - HOME FLOORING

The floor is the largest surface in the home, and picking the best type of flooring for the space depends on budget, lifestyle and personal tastes. Each type has its unique benefits, and determining which flooring is best depends on each room's needs and location.

Popular flooring options include wood, engineered flooring materials, vinyl, tile and carpet.

NOTE: *The beginning half of 2021 has seen an unprecedented labor shortage as a side effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. In conjunction with this, demand for materials and construction jobs has skyrocketed. As a result, material prices may be higher than those reported here, and lead times may be longer than usual for both labor and materials.*

Hardwood Flooring

Hardwood flooring comes from a solid piece of milled wood and contains solid wood all throughout. Popular hardwood varieties include maple, oak, walnut or cherry. Its versatility and quality make it a desirable flooring option for many home buyers.



However, it's one of the more expensive flooring materials on the market and does take regular maintenance, such as using a specialty hardwood floor cleaner once a month and applying a fresh coat of finish every three to five years, to keep them looking great. The average cost for installed hardwood flooring is **\$5 to \$10 per square foot**.

Pros

- Increases home value
- Can be refinished multiple times
- Many options available
- Strong and durable

Cons

- Expensive
- Can incur scrapes, scratches and dents in high-traffic areas
- Susceptible to moisture damage
- Not suitable for bathrooms, laundry rooms and basements

Engineered Wood Flooring

Engineered wood flooring offers the look of real wood at a more affordable price than solid wood. The floor features a thin layer of hardwood bonded over a high-quality plywood substrate. It's as durable as solid hardwood flooring and can last as long with proper care.

Engineered wood flooring is a good choice for DIYers to install, which will save you money on installation costs. The average cost for installed engineered wood flooring is **\$4 to \$9 per square foot**.



Pros

- DIY-friendly
- Has real hardwood top layer
- Greater resistance to moisture and water than real wood
- Less likely to warp
- Multiple installation methods

Cons

- Can't be refinished more than once
- Not fade-resistant
- Wide variation in quality
- Can sound hollow underfoot
- Emits VOCs

Laminate Flooring

Laminate is an affordable flooring option for homeowners who prefer an alternative to carpet but want to avoid the cost of hardwood or tiles.

The floors consist of a particleboard wood base topped by wood or tile photo beneath a clear plastic protective layer. This flooring is very DIY-friendly, and laminate offers a multitude of texture and color options. The average cost for installed laminate flooring is **\$3 to \$7 per square foot**.



Pros

- Inexpensive compared to wood
- Easy to clean

- Scratch-resistant
- DIY-friendly
- Many styles and colors available

Cons

- Susceptible to moisture damage
- Chips easily
- Does not look and feel like wood
- Has a hollow sound underfoot

Vinyl Flooring

Vinyl flooring is extremely water-resistant and won't sustain damage even if water sits on the surface for an extended amount of time. Composed of plastic, it's available in plank, tile and sheet form.

Luxury vinyl plank (LVP) and luxury vinyl tile (LVT) are two forms that have gained popularity recently because of their durability and variety of styles available. The average cost for installation varies depending on the form; the average range is **\$1.50 (sheet vinyl) to \$6 or more (LVP and LVT) per square foot.**



Pros

Good for kitchens, bathrooms, laundry rooms and basements
 Durable
 Water- and fade-resistant
 DIY-friendly
 Many design choices available
 Easy to maintain

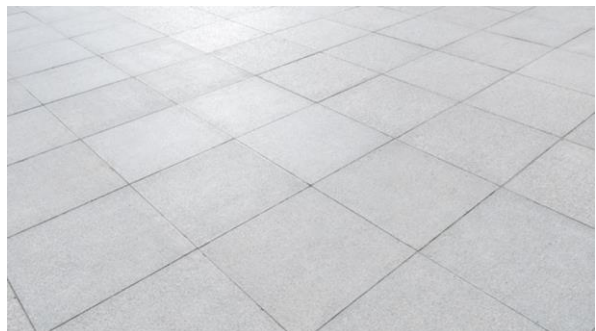
Cons

LVP and LVT is more expensive than laminate
 Lower ROI than wood

Tile

Tile flooring is a popular choice for moisture-prone areas like bathrooms and kitchens. The most common tile materials are ceramic or porcelain. Tile is water-resistant, durable and comes in a variety of styles and colors.

The installation cost varies depending on the material; for instance, glazed ceramic is less expensive than porcelain tile. The average cost



ranges from **\$2.50 per square foot** for ceramic tile and **\$3 to \$10 for porcelain tile**.

Pros

- Waterproof
- Durable
- Long-lasting

Cons

- Expensive
- Hard to install
- Lot of prep work is needed before installation
- Cold and slippery

Stone Flooring

Natural stone, such as granite, marble, travertine and sandstone, are popular flooring choices for both indoor and outdoor spaces. Like ceramic and porcelain, stone is extremely durable and waterproof. The stone's finish determines the amount of care needed to maintain the floor. However, stone offers natural beauty and quality that is unparalleled by most types of flooring. The average costs range from **\$5 to \$10 per square foot**.



Pros

- Bold and elegant
- Long-lasting
- Waterproof

Cons

- Expensive
- Hard to install
- Lot of prep work is needed before installation
- Cold and slippery
- Difficult to maintain

Linoleum Flooring

Linoleum is a durable, eco-friendly flooring option made from linseed oil and cork. Linoleum flooring is affordable and easy to install. The flooring comes in sheet form and in a variety of colors and styles. It is resilient (made with elastic materials) and can last for decades if cared for properly.



Linoleum is gaining in popularity as flooring manufacturers offer more modern colors and styles. The average cost to install linoleum flooring ranges from **\$4 to \$8 per square foot**.

Pros

- Inexpensive
- Eco-friendly
- DIY-friendly
- Available in a variety of colors and patterns
- Requires little maintenance

Cons

- Does not increase home value
- Easily dented or cut
- May darken or turn yellowish when exposed to sunlight
- Not suitable for moisture prone-areas

Carpet

Carpet is a favorite flooring option for homeowners, especially in bedrooms. It comes in a variety of colors, materials and textures. Carpet technology has improved over the years, and modern carpets have stain-resistant qualities. It's also the most cost-effective flooring option on the market.



Carpet installation varies in price, depending on the type of material and thickness of the carpet padding. The average cost of installing carpet ranges from **\$2.50 to \$10 per square foot**.

Pros

- Soft and warm on feet
- Visually warms up the space
- Multiple colors, materials and designs available
- Great for soundproofing
- Stain-resistant varieties exist

Cons

- Hard to clean
- Can stain
- Shows wear pattern
- Not suitable for allergy sufferers

Alternative Materials

Flooring isn't limited to the materials mentioned above. There are plenty of non-traditional materials used for flooring. Here are some alternative materials to consider:

- **Cork:** A natural material made from a cork oak tree's bark that features excellent fire resistance and sound-blocking ability
- **Rubber:** A natural material with good resilience and a non-slip surface
- **Bamboo:** An environmentally friendly choice that is a real wood alternative to hardwood floors
- **Terrazzo:** A durable composite made of natural stone chips and resin

Bottom Line

Choosing the best flooring option isn't as simple as selecting the best-looking or the one that's on sale. Several factors such as moisture, durability, ease of maintenance and budget greatly influence the decision. A new floor can be an investment, so floor choice should balance needs with style. Using the best flooring installation companies will ensure the job is done correctly.