



# LET THERE BE *White* The Timeless Style of the White Kitchen



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SIGNATURE KITCHENS



Trends come and go, and to the dismay of many a homeowner, nothing dates a home faster than a trendy kitchen past its prime. But one palette defies both trends and time: the white kitchen. White is always a classic; it is never just a trend. And, white kitchens don't date themselves, and will often blend with the architectural style of the home.

We see white in high fashion, interior design, product design, and even architecture. White retains its classic timeless look, and it readily adapts to any size and style, from traditional to postmodern. A small white kitchen complemented by wood tones and interesting paint colors, for example, has a cozy feel; and a more generous footprint can be elegant and sophisticated. And, white is reminiscent of the traditional cottage kitchen, especially in northern Michigan. The cottages of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were quite simple, but very charming, and the style is still appreciated today.

A critical change in kitchen cabinetry has given the white kitchen its impetus. Twenty years ago, kitchen cabinetmakers focused on determining the best wood

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species or stain for the kitchen, but not anymore. Wood floors have really grown in popularity and there is a larger variety available, such as walnut, Brazilian cherry, and quarter-sewn oak, and it can sometimes be challenging to find a complementary wood cabinet, but white cabinetry with a wood floor provides classic contrast.

So how does one create personal style with white? Overall color or just a pop of a bright shade can be concentrated on smaller areas. I like to use color and wood tones for butler and walk-in pantries. And, the kitchen island or a built-in hutch is a perfect place to make a color statement with paint or wood stain. Plus, backsplashes, a critical design element in the twenty-first century kitchen, lend themselves to a variety of glass, stone, ceramic, or metal tile finishes. Hardware—drawer pulls, knobs, and handles—are the jewelry of the kitchen and provide just the right touch of sparkle on a white backdrop, whether hand-crafted or factory-produced. For example, white cabinetry is beautiful with polished nickel hardware, a stainless range hood, and a decorative mixed media backsplash.

Updates are easy to accomplish in the white kitchen, giving homeowners a broad range of choices. Wall color is a fast and relatively inexpensive change, and a new hardware style will freshen the space. White is both a palette and a backdrop. It responds to any application of color, decoration, or accessories. The white kitchen is here to stay. □



### Liz Firebaugh

Certified Kitchen Designer, Liz Firebaugh, has created over 2,000 custom kitchens, and in the process, accumulated a sizable collection of awards and accolades. Significantly, Firebaugh earned the Pinnacle of Design award, the National Kitchen & Bath Association's highest industry honor. Her work has been published nationally in *Midwest Living*, *Cabin Life*, and *Better Homes and Gardens Kitchens + Baths*, to name a few.



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