

20/20 Kitchen Vision



The Companion Workbook

Every activity, journal prompt and checklist from the guide in one printable workbook. Work through it alongside the book, chapter by chapter.

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JOURNAL PROMPTS

What prompted you to do this renovation now?

If everything went perfectly, what would make this feel 100% worth it?

What are you most excited to change?

What do you currently dislike about your kitchen — not just aesthetically, but the daily frustrations and annoyances?

HOW DO YOU ACTUALLY USE THIS SPACE?

This is where most people skip ahead too quickly — and then end up with a beautiful kitchen that still doesn't work for their life.

Think honestly about how your kitchen is used day to day, not how you imagine you might use it one day.

ASK YOURSELF

What does a typical week of cooking actually look like in your house?

How many people use the kitchen at the same time?

Do you cook together as a couple or family, or does one person need the run of it?

How do you entertain — big dinner parties, casual Friday drinks, Sunday family lunches?

Do kids do homework at the bench? Does the bench become a dumping ground for bags, keys, and mail?

Walk through a busy moment in your current kitchen. Mentally replay it — a weeknight dinner, getting everyone ready in the morning, hosting friends. Where does it break down? Where do you lose time? Where do things pile up that you wish didn't? Where do you bump into someone else or run out of bench space?

These are your friction points — and designing them out is where a renovation really earns its money.

YOUR FLOW & ZONES

Once you understand how you use the space, you can start thinking about zones — dedicated areas of your kitchen that serve specific functions.

MAP OUT YOUR ZONES

Entertaining / serving zone

Drop zone (bags, mail, keys)

Primary cooking zone

Coffee / breakfast zone

Baking zone

Kids zone

Not every kitchen will have all of these — and that's fine. The goal is to identify what matters most to your life so your layout can reflect it.

STORAGE — BE HONEST ABOUT YOUR HABITS

Rather than guessing how much storage you need, think behaviourally. How do you actually live?

ASK YOURSELF

What must be within easy reach every single day?

What do you want completely hidden out of sight?

Which benchtop appliances do you use daily versus weekly?

Where does clutter consistently build up, and what's causing it?

What's your junk zone — and what ends up there?

TICK WHAT TO STORE

☐ Pantry food and dry goods

☐ Servingware and platters

☐ Small appliances stored away

☐ Kids snacks or lunchbox items

☐ Baking equipment

☐ Small appliances on the bench

☐ Pet food and accessories

☐ Cleaning and utility products

☐ Bins and recycling

☐ Linen or tea towels

This list tells you a lot about how much storage you actually need and what types of cabinets will serve you best. We'll come back to this in Chapter 8.

YOUR NON-NEGOTIABLES

Every renovation has a list of things the client will not compromise on. Knowing yours upfront saves you from making decisions under pressure later.

ANSWER HONESTLY

What are your three non-negotiables for this kitchen — and why?

What functional compromise will you absolutely not make?

What aesthetic compromise will you absolutely not make?

Is there anything you've seen in other kitchens that you definitely don't want?

NON - NEGOTIABLES

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

HOW DO YOU WANT IT TO FEEL?

This is one of my favourite questions to ask — and one of the most revealing.

Forget styles and trends for a moment. If you could describe how you want your finished kitchen to feel in three words, what would they be?

Here are some to get you started:

Warm. Calm. Refined. Timeless. Natural. Statement. Moody. Layered. Airy. Grounded. Elegant. Relaxed. Bold. Character-filled. Minimal. Decadent.

Write your three words here:

Now ask yourself — does your current kitchen feel anything like that? If not, what's the biggest gap between how it feels now and how you want it to feel?

This exercise will become your design compass. When you're deep in decision-making and you've lost the plot a little, come back to your three words. They'll bring you back on track every time.

DESIGN DIRECTION

Now let's get a little more specific about your aesthetic direction.

ASK YOURSELF

Do you lean more timeless and understated, or bold and characterful?

What homes, hotels, restaurants, or spaces have you walked into and thought yes, this is exactly it? What made them feel that way?

Are you drawn to clean-lined and minimal, or more detailed and heritage-influenced?

Do you prioritise low-maintenance finishes, or are you happy with natural materials that develop character over time?

Are there any existing finishes in your home — flooring, tapware, wall colours — that the kitchen needs to work with?

What are your hard no's aesthetically?

NOTES

YOUR VISION SUMMARY

Now pull it all together. Fill this in and keep it somewhere easy to reference — this is your north star for the entire project.

MY RENOVATION IS FOR:

THE THREE WORDS I WANT MY KITCHEN TO FEEL:

MY TOP FUNCTIONAL PRIORITIES ARE:

1.

2.

3.

MY NON-NEGOTIABLES ARE:

EXISTING FEATURES TO WORK WITH:

MY HARD NO'S:

Every chapter that follows will build on what you've just defined here. When a decision feels hard, come back to this page. Your answers are your filter — and they'll make the whole process a lot clearer than you'd expect.

Let's get into it.

YOUR BUDGET PLANNING ACTIVITY

Use this to build your budget before moving into the design phase.

STEP 1

Set your total budget

My total renovation budget (including contingency):

\$

My contingency amount (10–15% of total):

\$

My working budget (total minus contingency):

\$

STEP 2

Allocate across categories

Use the percentage guide in Chapter 2 to allocate your working budget. Adjust based on your specific priorities and scope.

CATEGORY	ALLOCATION %	AMOUNT
Cabinetry & joinery	%	\$
Appliances	%	\$
Trades — plumbing & electrical	%	\$
Benchtop & stone	%	\$
Remaining finishes	%	\$
Total	100%	\$

STEP 3**Identify your priorities**

WHERE DO I WANT TO INVEST MORE OF MY BUDGET?

WHERE CAN I BE MORE BUDGET-CONSCIOUS?

STEP 4**Confirm your constraints**

Which budget tier does my total sit within?

☐ Entry level	\$25,000 to \$35,000
☐ Mid-range	\$35,000 to \$70,000
☐ Premium	\$70,000 to \$120,000+

Does my vision from Chapter 1 align with what this budget can realistically deliver?

☐ Yes	I'm confident my vision and budget are aligned
☐ Partially	I may need to adjust some expectations or find additional budget
☐ No	I need to revisit either my budget or my vision before moving forward

A NOTE ON THE LAST QUESTION

If your vision and budget aren't aligned, that's not a problem — it's useful information. It's far better to know this now than after cabinetry has been ordered. The options are: find additional budget, adjust the scope of the renovation, or adjust the material and finish choices to bring the project within range. Chapter 7 (Finishes Breakdown) will help you identify where adjustments can be made without significantly compromising the outcome.

YOUR PRE-RENOVATION CHECKLIST

Use this to identify what applies to your project before you move into the design phase.

LIKELY IN SCOPE :

- ☐ Changing kitchen layout
- ☐ Removing or adding walls
- ☐ Moving the sink, dishwasher, or fridge
- ☐ Upgrading cooktop — particularly to induction or gas
- ☐ Adding island bench with power
- ☐ Replacing flooring
- ☐ Replacing cornice or skirting
- ☐ Repainting walls or ceiling
- ☐ Purchasing new appliances
- ☐ Installing feature lighting
- ☐ Adding or adjusting plumbing or electrical

WORTH CHECKING FIRST :

- ☐ Is there flooring under my existing cabinetry?
- ☐ What type of construction is my home — slab, double brick, or timber frame?
- ☐ Do I have ceiling or underfloor access for electrical and plumbing?

- ☐ Where is my switchboard located and does it have capacity for new circuits?
- ☐ Does my home have an existing gas connection?
- ☐ When was my home built — could asbestos be present?
- ☐ Is there any visible evidence of water damage, mould, or pest activity?
- ☐ Am I in an apartment with shared or restricted services?

☐ Does my home have an existing gas connection?

☐ When was my home built — could asbestos be present?

☐ Is there any visible evidence of water damage, mould, or pest activity?

☐ Am I in an apartment with shared or restricted services?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR TRADES:

[illegible]

WHAT STYLE IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Now that you've read through the styles, resist the urge to immediately decide. Instead, work through these prompts and let your answers point you in the right direction.

JOURNAL PROMPTS

Which two or three styles did you find yourself drawn back to as you read?

Which styles felt immediately wrong — and why?

How do you want your kitchen to feel? Choose three words.

What does your home's architecture and existing character suggest — and do you want to work with it or push against it?

Do you prefer minimal and clean, or layered and characterful?

Are you drawn to natural materials that develop character over time, or finishes that stay consistent and low-maintenance?

What do you consistently love in homes, hotels, or restaurants you've been drawn to?

What are your hard no's aesthetically?

TRANSLATING YOUR ANSWERS INTO A DIRECTION

Once you've worked through the prompts, use this as a loose guide to narrow your direction:

If you're drawn to clean lines and a sleek, streamlined finish: Modern or Minimalist.

If you gravitated toward light, calm, and natural: look at Japandi, Scandinavian, or Minimalist.

If you want warmth and organic texture without being rustic: Organic Modern, Mid-Century Modern, Coastal, or Contemporary.

If you love character, detail, and craftsmanship: French Provincial, Classic, Country, or Hamptons.

If you want your kitchen to make a statement: Luxe, Industrial, Mediterranean, or Eclectic.

If nothing felt quite right on its own: that's normal. Bring the elements you loved from two or three styles into your mood board and let the pattern emerge from there.

MOOD BOARD ACTIVITY

Now that you've reflected on your preferences and identified a loose direction, it's time to start collecting.

Using your journal prompt answers as a filter — not Pinterest as your starting point — begin gathering images that reflect the feeling you defined. The filter matters. If you open Pinterest without a filter you'll save everything and learn nothing.

WHAT TO COLLECT:

- Cabinetry profiles and colours that feel right
- Benchtop and splashback materials
- Hardware styles
- Lighting
- Overall kitchen shots that make you stop scrolling

HOW TO BUILD IT:

- **Digital:** Canva, Pinterest board, or a saved folder on your phone
- **Physical:** printed images, magazine clippings, material samples

ONCE YOU HAVE 15–20 IMAGES, ASK YOURSELF:

- What three words describe what I've collected?
- What colours, finishes, or materials keep repeating?
- What are my must-haves based on what I keep saving?
- Is there anything in my collection that doesn't belong — that I saved for someone else's life, not mine?

COMPLETE THIS SENTENCE:

My kitchen should feel _____, and the most important thing it needs to do is _____.

ACTIVITY

Choosing Your Layout

Using the decision questions and configuration descriptions, sketch your preferred layout option on a blank page. Include:

- External walls, windows, and doors
- Fixed elements that can't move
- Your preferred cabinetry configuration

WHICH LAYOUT DID YOU CHOOSE AND WHY?

ACTIVITY

Natural Light, Visual Balance & Traffic Flow

WHERE DOES YOUR PRIMARY NATURAL LIGHT COME FROM
AND HOW DOES IT AFFECT YOUR LAYOUT?

WHERE ARE THE POTENTIAL TRAFFIC COLLISION POINTS IN
YOUR LAYOUT?

IS THERE ANYTHING IN YOUR LAYOUT THAT NEEDS TO MOVE
BASED ON THESE CONSIDERATIONS?

Planning What Goes Where

One of the most overlooked steps in kitchen planning is physically accounting for everything you own before the cabinetry is designed. A beautifully designed kitchen that doesn't fit your actual possessions will require compromises from day one.

BEFORE FINALISING YOUR LAYOUT:

	Take stock of your current kitchen — what works, what doesn't, what you're keeping
	Measure the storage you currently use and how it's organised
	Lay your items out on the floor to match the approximate depth of your new cabinets and estimate how much width you need for each category
	Do a kitchen purge — remove anything you don't use regularly. Designing storage around items you never use is wasted space.

ACTIVITY

Zones & Workflow

Map your seven zones onto your layout sketch. Label each zone and note what will be stored there.

Does your zone sequence follow the fridge → prep → cook → plate → serve workflow? If not, what needs to adjust?

ACTIVITY

Configuration Details

WHICH ZONES WILL BE PRIMARILY DRAWERS AND WHICH WILL USE DOORS?

WHERE WILL YOU USE WALL CABINETS AND WHERE WILL YOU INTRODUCE OPEN SHELVING?

WHAT CEILING HEIGHT TREATMENT ARE YOU CHOOSING — TO CEILING, BULKHEAD, OR OPEN GAP?

STEP 6**Key Dimensions**

These are the dimensions a designer references constantly throughout the layout phase. They're not rigid rules — every kitchen is different and your height, your household, and your specific space may call for adjustments. But they are the starting point from which all adjustments are made.

BENCHTOP & CABINETS HEIGHTS

ELEMENT	STANDARD	NOTES
Benchtop height	900mm	Increase to 920-950mm for taller users
Base cabinet depth	600-650mm	This is to accommodate appliances. Can be less if no appliances.
Wall cabinet depth	320-350mm	450mm to accommodate wall microwave
Standard cabinetry height	2100mm-2400mm	Depends on sheet size. Larger sheet sizes add to the cost.
Ceiling height cabinetry	To ceiling	Pair with shadowline or bulkhead

CLEARANCES & WALKWAYS

ELEMENT	MINIMUM	RECOMMENDED
Between facing benchtops	900mm	1200mm for larger households
Around island	900mm	1100-1200mm if multiple people in space + appliances
Dishwasher door clearance	Full door extension + 400mm	Confirm no adjacent door conflicts
Oven door clearance	Full door extension + 400mm	Avoid positioning opposite a walkway

ISLAND BENCH DIMENSIONS

ELEMENT	STANDARD	NOTES
Island Depth (working surface)	600-900mm	
Island depth (working + seating)	900-1200mm	
Seating overhang	300-400mm	Minimum for comfortable knee clearance
Island Length	1200mm minimum 2000-2500mm standard	If you have the space, make the island to suit slab size (won't require joins)
Bar stool height (900mm bench)	650-700mm seat height	If you are having a thick stone profile, it will eat into the height for stools. Keep this in mind.

SPLASHBACK & LIGHTING HEIGHTS

ELEMENT	MINIMUM	RECOMMENDED
Splashback height - electric cooktop	600mm	
Splashback height - gas cooktop	650mm	
Microwave in wall cabinet	450-500mm above benchtop	Safety - don't go higher than eye level
Wall oven height (to top of oven)	1700-1850mm from floor	Brings oven cavity to comfortable working height
Pendant height above island	700-800mm above benchtop	Bottom of pendant at or below eye level

APPLIANCE PLANNING ACTIVITY

Use this to consolidate your appliance decisions before moving into the design phase.

STEP 1

Confirm your appliance list

APPLIANCE	FREESTANDING OR INTEGRATED	BRAND / MODEL (IF KNOWN)	SPEC SHEET DOWNLOADED
Cooktop			☐
Oven			☐
Rangehood			☐
Dishwasher			☐
Fridge / Freezer			☐
Microwave			☐
Steam Oven			☐
Warming Drawer			☐
Coffee System			☐
Wine / Bar Fridge			☐
Zip / Boiling Tap			☐

STEP 2

Reflect on your current setup

WHAT FRUSTRATES YOU MOST ABOUT YOUR CURRENT APPLIANCE LAYOUT?

ARE THERE TRAFFIC FLOW ISSUES THAT AFFECT HOW YOU USE THE KITCHEN?

WHICH APPLIANCES DO YOU USE DAILY AND WHICH RARELY COME OUT?

DO YOU PREFER APPLIANCES HIDDEN, INTEGRATED, OR ACCESSIBLE ON THE BENCH?

STEP 3

Placement Priorities

Mark what appeals to you:

APPLIANCE STORAGE:

- ☐ Appliance garage with pocket doors for daily-use appliances
- ☐ Dedicated appliance cabinet for less frequently used items
- ☐ Appliances accessible on the bench at all times

BUILT-IN OPTIONS

- ☐ Wall-mounted oven
- ☐ Fully integrated fridge
- ☐ Fully integrated dishwasher
- ☐ Built-in microwave or combination oven
- ☐ Integrated cooktop ventilation

BONUS PROMPTS:

Use this space to explore your thoughts further:

WHAT IS YOUR NON-NEGOTIABLE WHEN IT COMES TO APPLIANCES?

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO INVEST MORE OF YOUR APPLIANCE BUDGET?

WHERE ARE YOU COMFORTABLE SPENDING LESS?

YOUR FINISHES & STYLE

DISCOVERY ACTIVITY

Use this to pull together your finish preferences across every category before moving into the design phase.

JOURNAL PROMPTS

What feeling or mood do I want my kitchen to evoke?

Which finishes and materials am I most drawn to?

Are there colours or textures I love or strongly dislike?

What finishes already exist in my home that the kitchen needs to work with?

Where do I want to invest more of my budget, and where am I comfortable saving?

Finishes Checklist — tick what resonates:

CABINETRY

- ☐ Flat Profile
- ☐ Shaker or V-Groove
- ☐ Fluted or Architectural Profile
- ☐ Finger-pull or handleless
- ☐ Woodgrain Finish
- ☐ Polyurethane (painted finish)
- ☐ Melamine
- ☐ Timber Veneer or Solid Timber

BENCHTOPS

- ☐ Laminate
- ☐ Engineered Stone
- ☐ Natural Stone
- ☐ Solid Timber
- ☐ Porcelain / Sintered Stone
- ☐ Corian / Solid Surface
- ☐ Concrete
- ☐ Stainless Steel

SPLASHBACKS

- ☐ Plain Tiles
- ☐ Feature Tiles
- ☐ Stone (matching benchtop)
- ☐ Glass or Mirror
- ☐ Natural Stone Cladding
- ☐ Window
- ☐ Stainless Steel
- ☐ Venetian Plaster / Limewash

HANDLES

- ☐ Door Mounted (bar, knob or cup)
- ☐ Edge Pull
- ☐ Finger Pull (j-pull or sharknose)
- ☐ Push-to-open
- ☐ Recessed
- ☐ Matching Lip

FLOORING

- ☐ Solid Timber
- ☐ Engineered / Floating Floor
- ☐ Tiles
- ☐ Vinyl / Hybrid

LIGHTING

- ☐ Downlights
- ☐ Surface Mounted Downlights
- ☐ Under Cabinet LED Strips
- ☐ Island Bench LED Strip
- ☐ Feature Wall Sconces

BUDGET REFLECTION

WHERE DO I WANT TO INVEST MORE OF MY BUDGET?

WHERE AM I COMFORTABLE USING MORE BUDGET-FRIENDLY OPTIONS?

ARE THERE SPECIFIC BRANDS, PRODUCTS, OR FINISHES I ALREADY LOVE?

ACTIVITY

Design Your Cabinet Interiors

Now that you understand what's available, use this activity to identify the internal solutions that will genuinely improve how your kitchen works for you.

STEP 1

Reflect on your current storage

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST FRUSTRATIONS WITH YOUR CURRENT KITCHEN STORAGE?

ARE THERE ITEMS YOU CONSTANTLY STRUGGLE TO FIND OR REACH?

WHERE DOES CLUTTER CONSISTENTLY BUILD UP AND WHY?

DO YOU NEED MORE HIDDEN STORAGE, MORE OPEN DISPLAY AREAS, OR BOTH?

STEP 2**Confirm your carcass specification**

Questions to ask your cabinetmaker:

- ☐ What board material are you using for base cabinet carcasses — standard particleboard, MR, or HMR board?
- ☐ What jointing method do you use for cabinet box construction?
- ☐ What hardware brand are you specifying — Blum or Hettich?
- ☐ Is soft-close included as standard across all doors and drawers?
- ☐ Are internal fittings quoted separately or included?

STEP 3**Prioritise your internal fittings**

Tick what appeals and mark your priority level — essential, would like, or nice to have:

DRAWER ORGANISATION

- ☐ Cutlery and utensil organisers
- ☐ In-drawer knife block
- ☐ Spice inserts
- ☐ Plate and bowl organisers
- ☐ Pot and pan dividers

CABINET SOLUTIONS

- ☐ Built-in wine rack
- ☐ Integrated shelf or cabinet lighting
- ☐ Integrated power in drawers or appliance cabinets
- ☐ Lift-up wall cabinet doors (Blum Aventos)
- ☐ Pocket door system for appliance or pantry cabinet

CABINET SOLUTIONS

- ☐ Inner drawers
- ☐ Pull-out bin system
- ☐ Pull-out pantry
- ☐ Pull-out shelves or racks
- ☐ Vertical dividers for trays and boards
- ☐ Sink drawer
- ☐ Kickboard drawer

CORNER SOLUTIONS

- ☐ Magic corner / fold-out system
- ☐ Le Mans / swing-out unit
- ☐ Corner drawers
- ☐ Lazy Susan

STEP 4

Internal Colour Preference

- ☐ Standard white — clean and neutral
- ☐ Matching cabinetry colour — seamless and high-end
- ☐ Woodgrain interior — warm and natural
- ☐ Contrasting colour — bold and considered

Bonus Prompt: Open every drawer and cabinet in your current kitchen. Note what works, what frustrates you, and what you wish existed. That list is your brief for this chapter.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

YOUR PROJECT SUMMARY

Before moving into the finishes schedule, take a few minutes to complete this summary. It captures the key decisions you've made throughout the book in one place — and it's the first thing to share with any professional you engage.

MY RENOVATION IS FOR:

THREE WORDS MY KITCHEN SHOULD FEEL:

MY LAYOUT CONFIGURATION:

MY TOP THREE FUNCTIONAL PRIORITIES:

1.

2.

3.

MY NON-NEGOTIABLES:

MY CONFIRMED APPLIANCES:

DOOR MATERIAL AND PROFILE:

BENCHTOP:

SPLASHBACK:

HANDLES:

SINK AND TAPWARE:

MY BUDGET RANGE:

MY TIMELINE:

QUESTIONS I STILL NEED TO ANSWER:

BEFORE YOU SIGN ANYTHING

Once you've selected your cabinetmaker, review the contract or agreement carefully before signing.

Confirm the following in writing:

☐ The full scope of works — exactly what is and isn't included

☐ The agreed timeline — manufacture lead time, installation date, and completion date

☐ Payment terms — deposit amount, progress payments, and final payment timing

☐ Variation process — how changes to the scope are agreed and priced

☐ Warranty terms — on cabinetry workmanship and hardware

☐ What happens if something is incorrect or damaged?

If anything in the agreement is unclear, ask for it to be explained and amended before you sign. A reputable cabinetmaker will have no issue with this. One who is reluctant to clarify terms in writing is telling you something important.

YOUR TRADE BRIEFING CHECKLIST

Use this to confirm you have everything ready before approaching cabinetmakers and trades for quotes.

Your brief is ready:

☐ Project summary completed (from Chapter 9)

☐ Floor plan drawn with dimensions

☐ Elevations sketched for key walls

☐ Finishes and fixtures schedule completed

☐ Appliance spec sheets downloaded and compiled

☐ Timeline confirmed

Questions prepared for cabinetmaker meetings:

☐	Is manufacturing done in-house or outsourced?
☐	Is installation done by your own team or subcontracted?
☐	Who is your stonemason — do you work with them exclusively?
☐	Are trades in-house or referred to independent contractors?
☐	What is your warranty on cabinetry and hardware?
☐	What does your project management process look like?
☐	Can you provide references from recent clients?

Before signing:

☐	Minimum three quotes received and compared like for like
☐	Full scope of works confirmed in writing
☐	Timeline agreed and documented
☐	Payment terms understood and agreed
☐	Variation process confirmed
☐	Warranty terms confirmed in writing
☐	Rectification process understood