



How to Survive a Kitchen Remodel

Living through a kitchen remodel isn't always fun, but these steps will help you work around a kitchen in disarray.

There's no escaping the inconvenience, but with some smart planning, it doesn't have to wreak havoc on your household. Follow these tips to make the remodeling process as smooth as possible.

1. Designate a kitchen stand-in. Eating out all the time gets tiresome, not to mention the strain it can put on your budget. And no matter how much takeout you bring home, you'll still need a spot to make school lunches, pour a bowl of cereal or brew coffee. Set up a temporary kitchen somewhere that's out of the way of construction.

If you're lucky enough to have a morning kitchen or a guesthouse, you can turn that into food-prep central. Or outfit a corner of the basement, garage or workroom with a few portable tables, standalone shelves, storage crates and folding chairs.

2. Winnow down your kitchen gear. During a remodel, your cooking and eating routine will be disrupted, and no matter how much you love to cook, ambitious meals will be a challenge.

Keep things simple and pare down to the kitchen tools you really, truly can't live without. Be merciless — how often are you going to use your food processor or waffle iron? Stash the essentials close at hand and store the rest.

3. Plan meals around small appliances. Portable workhorses such as slow cookers, microwaves, toaster ovens, electric griddles and skillets, hot plates and coffee makers can get you over the mealtime hump.

Move your fridge to your temporary kitchen, if possible; if not, invest in a minifridge and a chest freezer (check Craigslist or [Freecycle](#)), or borrow them from a friend.

4. Stock the pantry with disposables. Without your usual spot to wash dishes, you'll be getting creative (the bathtub, an outdoor hose, a cooler full of sudsy water).

Make life easier by stocking up on recyclable or biodegradable plates, napkins, cups and utensils. You'll streamline cleanup and cut down on the stress of your temporary displacement.

5. If the weather cooperates put your grill to work. Here's a secret: Your grill can do almost anything your oven can. Need to roast meat or vegetables, or bake pizza? Look to the grill. You can even channel your Scout days and use it for foil-packet meals, pans of biscuits and rolls, skillet pies and cobblers and, of course, s'mores.

6. Keep a stash of nonperishable snacks. When you're starving but can't face putting together a full meal in your makeshift digs, snacks can save your stomach.

Peanut butter, crackers, dried fruit or fruit leather, canned goods, trail mix and more can make for quick meals in a pinch.

7. Leave town for a short time, if you can. If you're considering a vacation or need to schedule a business trip, now might be a good time, assuming you're comfortable with the remodeling work continuing in your absence. Bonus points if you're visiting relatives — you might score a home-cooked meal or two.

8. Remember the big picture. In the grand scheme of homeownership, this is but a short period of inconvenience amid years of kitchen bliss. Keep the process in perspective and treat it as an adventure. When you're hard at work in your sparkling new kitchen, the temporary hassles will fade from memory.