

The

ENGLISH HOME



Celebrating the essence of English style

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FESTIVE WELCOME

Beautiful homes dressed with seasonal sparkle

**EMBRACING
EVERY MOMENT**

Inspiring ways to create
memorable celebrations

**CHRISTMAS
AT HIGHCLERE**

Preparations at the
real Downton Abbey

**ATTENTION
TO DETAILS**

Thoughtful presents
Twinkling table settings

Magical touches

Delicious recipes and ways to make guests feel at home

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The convivial
KITCHEN

Ensure cooking and entertaining flow smoothly with a kitchen layout that works harmoniously for both hosts and guests



When December arrives, so, too, the season of entertaining begins. Whether drinks at the weekend, midweek suppers with friends, family meals with loved ones or a party with dearest friends, there is a constant demand on the kitchen.

For most of us, the kitchen is the heart of the home, and this is never more true than during the festive season in this most hard-working of rooms. With this in mind, it is crucial to think about how to create a seamless flow to make preparing, cooking and serving meals – in addition to socialising with family and friends – run as smoothly as possible.

ISLAND LIFE

A well-planned kitchen layout will ensure that preparing for celebrations can be as much of a joy as hosting them. This can easily be achieved by introducing key elements to the room and organising them in such a way as to enable easy access and swift movement from one zone to the next. “Intelligent use of space is key,” says Debbie Harradence, lead designer at Barnes of Ashburton. “The ideal layout, especially during the festive season, will ensure there is enough

space on a day-to-day basis, but with the option of creating extra room when required.”

Freestanding island units, worktables and moveable butcher’s blocks and trolleys make wonderful areas for food preparation, serving and storage. “Moveable kitchen islands make for a fun way to add versatility to an open-plan kitchen,” says Jamie Blake, creative director at Blakes London. “We recently designed an island on wheels for a client who loves to entertain. In the morning it is used as a breakfast counter, during the day it becomes a food prep space and when guests are expected, it is pushed up against a wall to become a buffet table, allowing the kitchen to open up into the perfect drinks mingling area.”

If large enough, a fixed island can be used to house an oven and hob with a downdraft extractor to remove cooking odours and steam, a second sink for washing salad and vegetables and a boiling water tap for hot drinks. There could also be room for guests to sit on bar stools and chat whilst the cooking is taking place.

Another advantage of having an island is that it can be used to divide the room into zones by separating the cooking area from the seating or relaxing spaces, for example. Charlie Kingham, managing director of

OPPOSITE Give the kitchen some festive finishing touches during the Christmas season. A mantel for instance, can be used to display pine cones, candles and foliage. *Linear kitchen, from £20,000, Harvey Jones*

ABOVE A combination of open and closed storage allows for quick and easy access to all the kitchen essentials. *Bespoke kitchen, from £35,000, McCarron & Co*