

HOW MUCH SHOULD I SPEND ON MY KITCHEN RENOVATION?

Design + Build + Transform



AJ's Kitchens

What Does a Kitchen Renovation *Really* Cost?

Spoiler: It's not about square meters. It's about choices.

If you've ever Googled "average kitchen renovation cost," you've probably seen numbers like \$25,000 or \$40,000 tossed around. But here's the truth: those averages are meaningless without context. A \$20K kitchen can be a smart refresh or a money pit. A \$100K kitchen can be a showpiece, or a logistical nightmare.

This guide breaks down what you're really paying for and how to budget based on value, not just cost.

A Smart way to Budget: 3-15% of Your Home's Value

A widely accepted benchmark in New Zealand is to allocate between 3% to 15% of your home's current market value toward your kitchen renovation. This range helps ensure you're investing enough to add value without overcapitalising.¹

- **3- 5% range:** Ideal for cosmetic upgrades - think new benchtops, splashbacks, and cabinet fronts.
- **5-10% range:** Allows for layout changes, custom cabinetry, benchtops and upgraded appliances.
- **10-15%+ range:** Suitable for full custom kitchens with premium finishes, structural changes, and integrated tech.

For example, if your home is valued at \$1 million, a kitchen budget between \$30,000 and \$150,000 is considered reasonable depending on scope and finish level.

What considerations drive the cost?

Kitchen renovation costs in New Zealand vary widely, but here are the key factors that shape your final spend:

- **Layout changes:** Moving plumbing, electrical, or walls adds complexity and cost.
- **Kitchen Design and Size:** Larger kitchens generally involve more cabinetry, which increases material and labour costs, while any kitchen with a complex design will take longer to plan, manufacture, and install.
- **Cabinetry:** Drawers cost more than cupboards due to added hardware and labour. Mechanisms like bifold hinges, LeMans units, lift-up doors, and push-to-open systems also add to cost. Material choice and cabinet style also makes a difference - for example shaker style cabinets cost more than plain doors.
- **Benchtops:** Porcelain and granite are more expensive than engineered stone or quartz. Engineered stone costs can vary widely based on colour choice and manufacturer.
Appliances: Integrated or high-end brands require precise cabinetry and can quickly raise your budget.
- **Trades:** Plumbing, electrical, tiling, plastering and painting all contribute to the overall cost

According to recent NZ renovation guides, basic kitchen updates start around \$15,000–\$30,000, mid-range renos land between \$30,000–\$60,000, and high-end custom builds can exceed \$80,000+.

What's the ROI on a Kitchen Renovation?

Renovating your kitchen isn't just about aesthetics, it's one of the most value-adding upgrades you can make. According to insights from Pridex Design, a well-planned kitchen renovation in New Zealand can increase your home's resale value by up to 10%.³ That's a significant return, especially if you're planning to sell within the next few years.

In Auckland, where the median house price is currently \$978,000 (as of November 2025),² a 10% uplift could mean nearly \$98,000 in added value - more than covering the cost of a mid- to high-end kitchen renovation.

Of course, ROI depends on:

- The quality of materials and workmanship.
- How well the design suits the home's layout and buyer expectations.
- Whether the renovation avoids overcapitalisation.

When done thoughtfully, it's an investment that pays off - both in daily enjoyment and long-term value.

Budgeting by Value, Not Just Cost

Unlike flooring or painting, kitchens aren't easily priced by square meter, they're priced by decisions. A small kitchen with high-spec cabinetry, finishes and appliances plus layout changes can cost more than a larger, simpler one.

Instead of asking how much will it cost, ask:

- What functionality do I need?
- Where do I want to invest (e.g. storage, durability, aesthetic, functionality, resale)?
- What compromises am I willing to make?

This mindset shift helps you avoid false economies, such as a door facelift, which might seem cheaper, but retrofitting misaligned old cabinetry often costs more in labour than replacing it with custom-fit units that last.

Three Sample Budgets (and What They *Actually* Get You)

These aren't quotes—they're frameworks to help you think:

\$10K-\$20K

Cosmetic refresh: new benchtops, handles, door fronts

Best for: Rental upgrades, short-term improvements, some DIY involved

\$20K-\$60K

Mid-range reno: custom cabinetry, layout tweaks, stone benchtops, new appliances

Best for: Most family homes, resale-conscious renovators

\$60K-\$100K+

High-spec: full redesign, premium materials, integrated appliances, lighting plan

Best for: Forever homes, design-led renovations

A well-designed kitchen isn't just beautiful, it works hard. Spend where it counts: cabinetry, benchtops and layout. Save on finishes if needed by selecting more budget-conscious options that still look great, you can reduce costs without sacrificing style or durability. And always budget for the unexpected! Because at the end of the day, a new kitchen doesn't just change your space, it changes your life!

Sources:

¹ REINZ (Real Estate Institute of New Zealand), Property Value Trends and Renovation ROI Insights. www.reinz.co.nz

² Archant, How Much Should I Budget for My Kitchen Renovation in New Zealand?. archant.co.nz

³ Pridex Design, Kitchen Renovation Cost Breakdown and Planning Advice. pridexdesign.co.nz