

#OneRoomChallenge 2: Chicago Urban Kitchen Rejuvenation - Envisioning the Look and Feel



We gathered backsplash samples and placed them behind our sink for a few days to decide if we found our desired look. (We didn't...yet.)

[Last week](#), I shared why we're remodeling our kitchen (spoiler: a water incident with our HVAC meant we had to move everything out and replace all of our floors) in the first of six posts of *Calling it Home* and *HouseBeautiful* magazine's twelfth season of [OneRoomChallenge](#). This week, it's about envisioning our look and feel!



Before we go any further, I highly recommend creating a Pinterest board with ideas and inspiration. I created this [Urban Kitchen Pinterest board](#). This helped us pick out the features we liked and the overall feel we were going for.

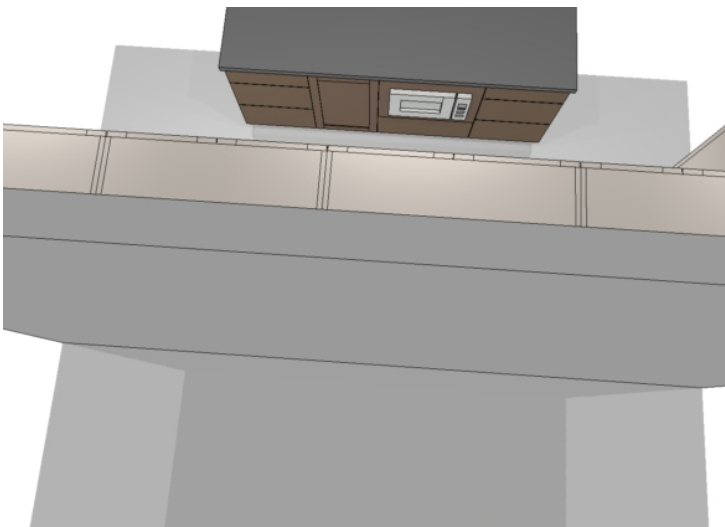
We also went into a few cabinetry stores to get ideas and talk to professionals. One professional recommended that a microwave above a stove (our original set up) could result in oil and cooking messes splashing onto white cabinetry (no, thank you!) since microwave vents aren't very effective and they reduce the space between stove and vent. This was an awesome tip and it inspired us to build in room for a light-weight and light-on-the-eyes hood/vent and move our microwave to be built-in to our expanded island.

One of the first decisions we had to make was pick our cabinetry and the layout/orientation. Why? Because if you don't purchase stock cabinetry (aka you go with custom), it can take about 5 weeks to receive them, longer in some cases. This was critical for us because the cabinetry delivery timing drove the timing of our contractor work beginning and also our move-out (and thus move-in

date, said the planner in me). Luckily, we had a very hands-on cabinetry provider who walked us through every step and several iterations of our renderings for the wall of cabinetry (with refrigerator, sink, and oven/stove and hood) and the island, which we decided to expand, level, and build our microwave into. We also added another level of cabinetry on top of the original one since we have tall ceilings and were looking for more storage. (Does anyone ever have enough storage?)



Here's a rendering of our wall cabinetry design.



Here's a small view of our island cabinetry rendering. The cabinet to the left of the microwave is a pull-out pantry!

The most important piece of the cabinetry design was providing precise measurements from our contractors to our cabinetry guru and it all came together one puzzle piece at a time! We were also given measurements for the vent/hood and microwave/trim kit (I learned this is the trim or border surrounding a built-in microwave) so we could order appliances that would fit seamlessly.

We also chose easy-glide and soft-close cabinetry (which roll for drawers and don't bang if a door) and built in a pull-out pantry and larger appliance drawer (for a mixer or slow cooker).

As the floors were being placed...



We went tile shopping at [The Tile Shop](#) for our kitchen backsplash (I bribed my better half with a dinner date afterwards.) While we saw subway tile carrara marble everywhere and the white/grey colors went with our motif, we found a smaller marble tile backsplash with mixed white and grey hues that gave us variety and would add some industrial, earthy texture and character next to our clean white cabinetry.



While I walked into The tile Shop looking for the left version of subway carrara marble, the right option took me by surprise and captured my interest right away. This was the winner!

Pro (I mean amateur) tip: Marble has to be sealed (and re-sealed periodically) if you choose it for countertops but for backsplash, there's less risk of cracking and damage.

And, we began matching paint colors (hello Home Depot paint swatches!):



We grabbed several paint samples to match up with the marble kitchen backsplash we chose.

Stay tuned for next week as our Chicago urban kitchen rejuvenation continues and we get closer to the big reveal! Also, check out the other awesome [Fall 2017 One Room Challenge](#) projects here, follow OneRoomChallenge on Twitter/Instagram, or search #oneroomchallenge!