

your home

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Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers



current KITCHEN TRENDS

According to a survey from meal kit delivery company HelloFresh, 35 percent of millennials who own a home or are likely to purchase a home in the next few years said the kitchen is the most important room when it comes to the house hunt. But what features are trending?

Here are some to look out for, in case you're in the market to update your kitchen or are selling your home and hoping to attract more buyers:

Stone countertops and tile backsplashes. While granite is still the frontrunner for countertops, marble and quartz are also growing in popularity. Meanwhile, interest in tile backsplashes has been growing steadily.

Stainless steel appliances. Perhaps unsurprisingly, stainless steel continues to be the most popular look for appliances and one of the most searched-for keywords in relation to kitchen features.

Breakfast bars and islands. Sixty-four percent of respondents in the HelloFresh survey said that a big island is a must-have feature in their dream kitchen. Interest in breakfast bars has also been growing steadily.

Entertaining extras. While they may seem extravagant to some buyers, extra amenities such as wine fridges, double ovens and outdoor kitchens are rising in popularity for those who like to entertain.

TIPS FOR HIDING MESSSES WHILE SELLING A HOME

An important part of the home-selling process is showing it to prospective buyers. Unfortunately, that means tidying up even more frequently than you normally would, so buyers can focus on the house's features rather than your household items. While it may not be possible to keep your home completely mess-free when you have children, below are some tips for keeping the chaos to a minimum:

Under-bed storage. If there's enough space under their beds, encourage kids to keep their rooms tidy with rolling plastic or rattan storage bins. Then, use an oversized comforter or quilt—or strategically placed blankets—to hide the bins from sight.

Built-in storage. It may be impossible to keep things from leaving kids' rooms and entering the living room. Utilize furniture with built-in storage, such as ottomans, or clear a drawer in the entertainment center specifically to tuck away any roaming toys, games and other items.

Baskets and trunks. If you don't have much built-in storage or discreet space to take advantage of, consider buying decorative trunks or baskets with lids that you can place around your home.

Suitcases. If you need to store toys in the back of a closet, put them in suitcases that you can easily roll and move rather than bulky plastic bins. Suitcases are also a more discreet storage option than bins when buyers glance inside the closet to gauge how much space is available.

Donation. While your kids may feel attached to every toy, stuffed animal or plaything they own, it might be time to downsize the collection. Suggest that they start a donation pile, so that their unused items can bring joy to other kids instead.

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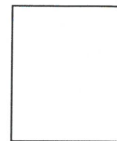


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5 Home Features THAT MIGHT BE A WASTE OF MONEY

When looking for a home, there are always features seemingly everyone says you need. But by reconsidering those, you may save yourself a pretty penny. Here are five features to reconsider, especially if you're trying to buy a house on a limited budget:



1 Close access to mass transit. Regular commuters and people who don't own cars might be vying for homes near public transit systems. But if you won't be relying exclusively on these systems, you can save yourself a lot of money by living farther from these hubs.

2 A big yard. All of that open outdoor space may look tempting at first glance. However, ask yourself how often you'll really be using the yard. Do you have pets or children that will play in it? Will you do any outdoor entertaining? If not, the cost and time spent on lawn maintenance and landscaping may not be worth it.

3 A top school district. Some parents will pay top dollar to send their kids to specific

schools—and to live in the best school districts. If you don't have or plan on having children while living in this house, you may want to do a little research into school districts during the homebuying process and avoid the areas where costs are higher.

4 Amenities you won't use. Whether it's a built-in wet bar or a double oven in the kitchen, the cost of these amenities are reflected in the home's final price. Ask yourself if you'll really take advantage of these features before committing to the purchase.

5 More space than you need. While large living spaces and extra rooms are nice to have, will you really use them? Be honest with yourself—and save money on the price of a home, as well as on heating, cooling and cleaning costs, by buying a smaller home

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