

Updating Your Kitchen Without a Total Tear Out.



About the Authors

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The day after we got engaged we put a contract on our first rehab project. Over two decades later we still enjoy working together to take something dated and worn and make it look new again.

Over the years we've been D.I.Y. renovators, professional real estate broker and investor, kitchen designer, furniture builders, and Etsy shop owners. We've covered a lot of projects for roofing to flooring.

We've found our "forever" niche in the Kitchen Remodeling business. Specifically in cabinet updates through refacing and painting. We're still taking the old and making it new.

In this guide, we share our experience, ideas and opinions on how you can update your kitchen without a huge budget or making a huge, drawn out mess.

Table of Contents

- 01 **Introduction: What is a Minor Kitchen Remodel?**
 - 02 **Who Benefits Most?**
 - 03 **Elements of a Minor Kitchen Remodel**
 - 04 **What's the Best Order of Installation?**
 - 05 **Design Options: What to consider**
 - 06 **Cabinet Painting and Refacing**
 - 07 **Budgeting: An overview on Cost**
 - 08 **Free Project Evaluation**
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1

Introduction: The Minor Kitchen Remodel



What is a Minor Kitchen Remodel?

When your dreaming of a new kitchen, it's easy to watch HGTV and think you need to knock everything out and start over.

In reality, a lot of us can't afford that, nor do we want the hassle. So, we often naturally do it in a "minor" way. We update parts of the kitchen a little at a time.

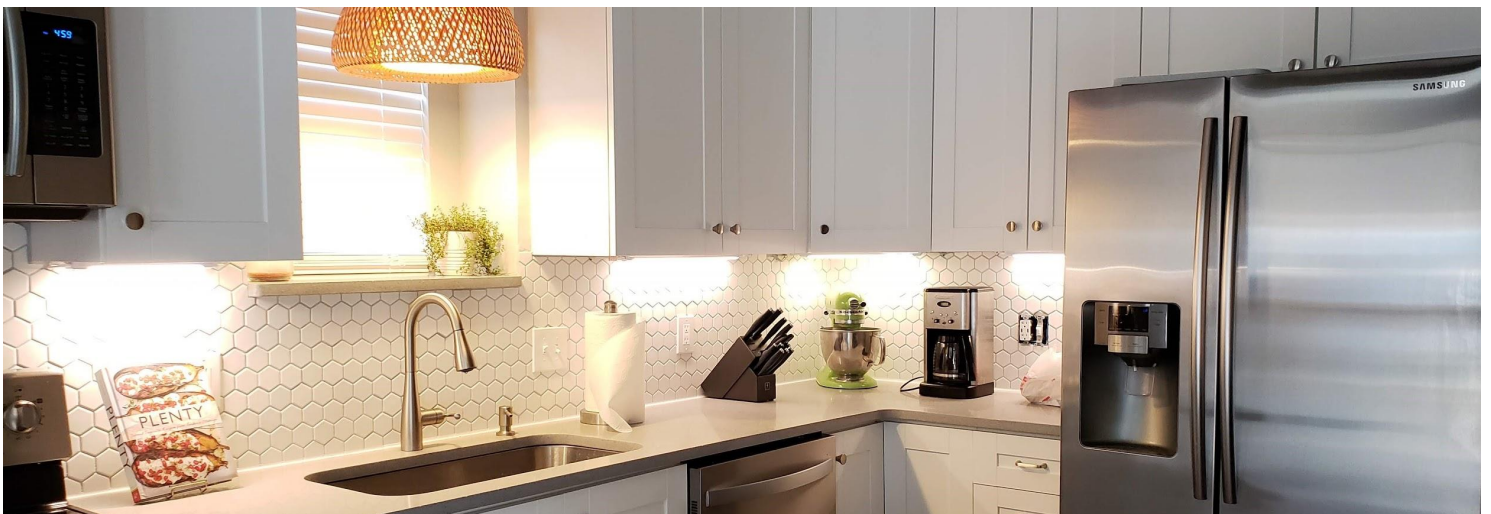
A Minor Kitchen Remodel can be done all at once, or you may do it gradually over years. Maybe the countertop needed updating, then some appliances, maybe even the flooring.

But what you may not know is that the cabinets can also be updated without tearing them out. Even updated to the same level as high quality custom cabinets.

In this guide, we'll look at options to get a major impact from a minor kitchen update.

Questions to ask yourself:

- **What part of the kitchen bothers you most?** Rank the design elements of the kitchen you like least to best. Consider updating in that order.
- **Does the layout function well for you?** Most homes built in the past 2-3 decades function well, they just look dated. They're prime candidates for a Minor Kitchen Remodel.
- **If I can get all I want with less stress and less expense, why wouldn't I?** We'll discuss your options, and show you that you can save money without compromising quality.



2

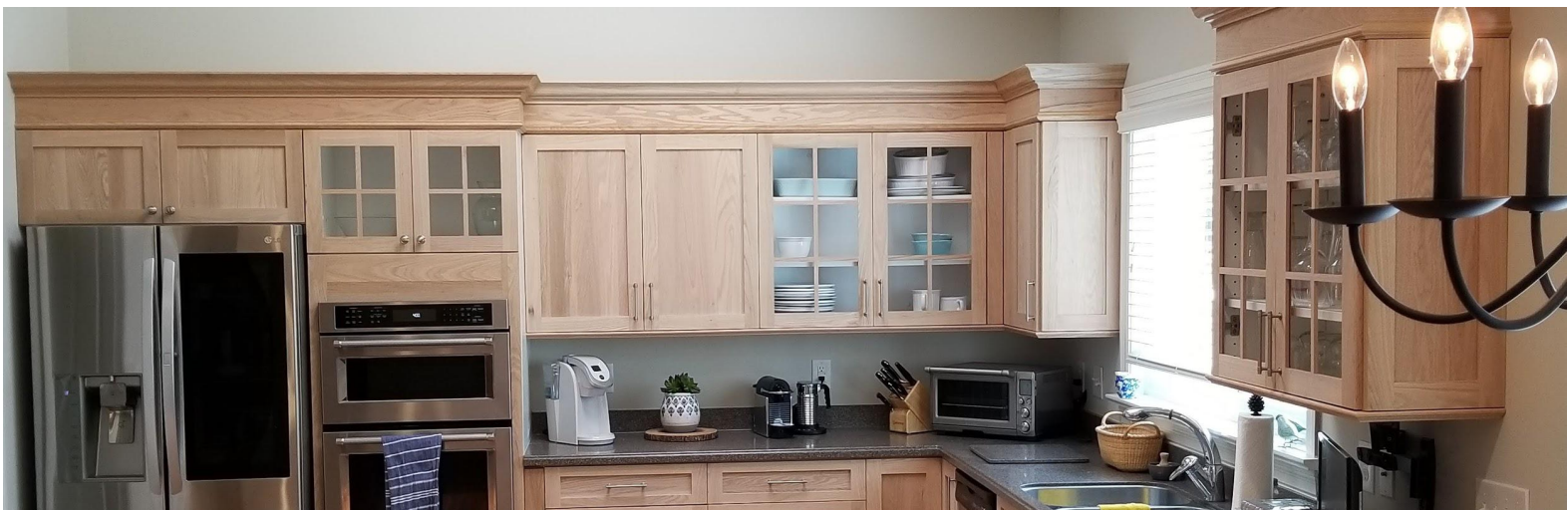
Who Benefits Most From a Minor Kitchen Remodel?



Big Winners!

You might enjoy a Minor Kitchen Remodel if...

- You don't like the idea of being without a kitchen for weeks.
 - With the strategies we discuss in this guide, you can space out the work, and only be inconvenienced a few days at time.
- You've got a kitchen layout that doesn't need major changes. No need to add the expense of plumbing and electrical.
- You've already invested in any of these...
 - Countertops and sink
 - Flooring
 - Backsplash
 - Appliances
- You like saving money.



3

Elements of a Minor Kitchen Remodel





Definition

According to the “Remodeling 2020 Cost vs. Value Report” (www.costvsvalue.com) a Minor Kitchen Remodel is described as:

“MINOR KITCHEN REMODEL—MIDRANGE In functional but dated 200-square-foot kitchen with 30 linear feet of cabinetry and countertops, leave cabinet boxes in place but replace fronts with new shaker-style wood panels and drawer fronts, including new hardware. Replace cooktop/oven range and slide-in refrigerator with new energy-efficient models. Replace laminate countertops; install midpriced sink and faucet. Add new resilient flooring. Finish with painted walls, trim, and ceiling.

A minor kitchen remodel by most definitions would be to replace all of the decorative elements and finishes, but leave the cabinets in place.

To the left is how the “Remodeling 2020 Cost vs. Value Report” interprets a minor kitchen remodel.

We’ll use this definition roughly in this guide, and refer to it specifically later in our analysis on cost.

The Main Elements

At Fresh Faced Cabinets, our specialty is improving your existing cabinets through Cabinet Refacing and Painting. We'll go into those services and how they work in a Minor Kitchen Remodel in great depth in later pages.

First, we'll go through the other common elements updated in a kitchen. Depending on your needs, we can work with our vendors/installers for these services, or we can coordinate with your preferred installers.

It's common for Stephanie to work with our clients to help with design and color choices on these service, whether we handle the work or not.

The Main Elements of a Minor Kitchen Remodel

- ★ Countertops and Sink
- ★ Backsplash
- ★ Appliances
- ★ Flooring
- ★ Cabinets





Countertops and Sink

Does it stay or does it go? That's an early question to ask as you plan your project. Countertops are pivotal in your decision making process when remodeling a kitchen.

It Stays:

- Stone countertops have been common place in new builds and in homeowner updates for years, and continue to be popular. You can save thousands by keeping a good countertop and designing a Minor Kitchen Remodel around it.
- Your stone countertop will be revived with new design elements around it. With the right cabinet and backsplash improvements we often see the old countertop stands out and looks new to the kitchen.

It Goes:

- Laminate countertops are the most common to replace, and certain stone tops that don't match current decor trends.
 - Quartz has been the most popular countertop replacement.
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Other Countertop Considerations

In a Minor Kitchen Remodel, here are some considerations for deciding on the right countertop option for you:

- The type of sink: Sinks typically are selected and installed with the countertop. Farmhouse sinks can be an option in a minor update, the existing sink cabinet can be modified.
- Popular Trends:
 - Quartz with the look of marble
 - Waterfall for a modern look
 - White on white with touches of gray





Backsplash

There are a lot of fun options in backsplash tile from refined glass and marble, to ceramic that looks like reclaimed wood.

Things to consider

- What are your long term goals?
 - If you plan to sell, go for a timeless look. For example subway tile and tumbled stone became popular around the same time 20 years ago. Today homeowners are tearing out their tumbled stone and subway tile is more popular than ever.
 - If you plan to grow old in your home, go for the look you love and don't be afraid to get creative.
- What are your layout options?
 - Larger areas above sinks and ranges are great for adding accent tile for more interest
 - For long runs of backsplash with no variation in height consider, drawing the viewers eye up with a herringbone pattern or lantern shaped tile.
- What are your obstacles?
 - Older homes often have thick set tile that is labor intensive to remove. Look into options for installing tile over your existing tile



Appliances

Appliances are pretty straight forward, but there are a few things to consider when your planning a Minor Kitchen Remodel.

- Refrigerator Size: Taller fridges can cause problems, here's some common solutions:
 - Often times the “knuckles” of the hinges above the fridge don't allow the doors to fully open. When we replace doors we get shorter doors for the fridge cabinet.
 - When possible, the fridge cabinet can be replaced with a shorter one.
 - Leave some room on the sides for doors to swing open.
- Microwaves:
 - Older kitchens that had range hoods have often been replaced by microwave hoods, but they hang too low. The microwave cabinet can be removed and a shorter one installed.
 - Get countertop microwaves of the counter with a microwave shelf cabinet.
- Dishwashers: When adding floating floors over an existing floor, consider the dishwasher will be in a “hole”; make sure can it be removed in needed.



Flooring

With the open concept homes of today, we often see the same flooring material from the dining and living room carried into the kitchen. So flooring selection can have many variables to styles and cost.

Popular choices today are hardwood, laminate and luxury vinyl.

Things to consider

- Hardwood is beautiful and timeless. It comes in a variety of finishes, woods and installation options
 - Finishes: polyurethane top coat vs. oil finish. Polyurethane is easy to clean and maintain, but shows knicks and scratches that can be costly to repair. Oil finishes, such as tung oil, require some yearly maintenance in heavily used areas, but are less prone to knicks and scratches that are easily repaired
 - There are many wood species to choose, from oak to exotic. Consider how the wood grain and color go with the cabinets you have or the type of cabinets you would like in the future. Will the wood grains fight or compliment each other?
 - Floating vs. nail down. Floating is less expensive to install and is great for the DIYer. Nail down is a thicker material allowing for more refinishing ability down the line
- Laminate offers durability in a variety of styles. Consider a laminate that is rated for wet areas
- Luxury vinyl offers a variety of styles and is rated for wet areas. The finish color on vinyl is thinner and can wear through showing white areas.
 - Consider putting throw rugs in works zones such as sink and range area.



Cabinets

When considering remodeling your kitchen many people are not aware of the dramatic improvements that can be made to your existing cabinets. Here are a number of questions you need to ask yourself to see if a Minor Kitchen Remodel for your cabinets is right for you.

If the answer to most of these questions is yes, then you may want to continue to learn more:

- Am I happy with the overall layout and placement of appliances and fixtures in the Kitchen?
 - Any redesign I may want with my cabinets is minor additions or subtractions that don't require permits? (i.e. moving plumbing, electrical, or knocking out walls, etc.)
 - Is your primary distaste with your cabinets decorative, like an out-of-date door style or paint/stain color?
 - I've already spent a lot of money on countertop and/or flooring updates, can I keep them while updating my cabinets?
 - Do you hate the idea of a long and messy remodeling project?
 - Will I be staying in this home long enough to justify a major remodeling investment?
 - Is it possible to get the custom cabinet look I want without breaking the bank?
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Cabinet Refacing and Painting

Cabinet Refacing and Painting is probably the least known option in a Minor Kitchen Remodel. Most people think that they have to tear out all of the cabinets to get a new cabinet look.

That is simply not the case! A knowledgeable and skilled refacer or cabinet painter can improve your cabinets, often to the point of appearing and functioning as new cabinets, at a fraction of the cost.

We have many articles and guides in our Learning Hub on our Website: FreshFacedCabinets.com. You can visit them for more detailed information on the Ins and Outs of cabinet refacing and painting installations.

For the purpose of this ebook we'll stick to the reasons you might consider refacing your cabinets in the context of an overall Minor Kitchen Remodel.



Cabinet Considerations

In a Minor Kitchen Remodel, here are some considerations for deciding on the right cabinet option for you:

Cabinet Refacing:

- Best Option when “New Cabinet” Look is desired.
- Allows for Door Style Change
- Most Dramatic Improvement.
- Able to replace/add select cabinets to match refacing.

Cabinet Painting:

- Best Option when cabinets are in good shape and in-style.
- Color change only.
- Least Expensive Option.
- Not as cost effective if cabinets are in poor condition due to extra prep.

Options Available for Both Methods:

- Crown and under cabinet molding.
- Decorative cabinet panels and Island wainscoting.
- New Soft-Close Hinges.
- New Wood Drawer Boxes with Soft-Close Glides.
- Trash Can and Pull-Out Trays.
- Add, Remove Or Replace Cabinets



4

What's the Best Order of Installation?



Plan Your Project

If your not sure where to start, here are some common scenarios that might affect which order you want to do your projects.

There is no right or wrong way. Installers in any trade are accustomed to working around the other. But if your considering doing more than one at once, there are factors that may affect your process.

Appliances:

- When possible it's best to be installed last. However, it's important to have them picked out prior to the other installations. It's helpful to discuss your selections, and have the specs/dimensions, so your installer can suggest options and prepare properly.
- Cabinet replacements and additions may be required for certain size appliance changes.

Flooring:

- Can go either way. Discuss with all installers their preferences.
- It's easier to paint prior to a flooring install, but depending on type of floor installed, a quarter round may need to be added at base of cabinets.

Countertops:

- Can also be installed before or after a cabinet refacing or painting.
- To get the job fully completed in the least amount of time when refacing, we often have the countertops installed while the doors are being manufactured.
- If adding lower cabinets that require a countertop, most countertop installers will require them to be in place for measurement.

Backsplash:

- Must be installed after a new countertop.
- If keeping the existing countertop, it can be done before the cabinets.

Cabinet Painting:

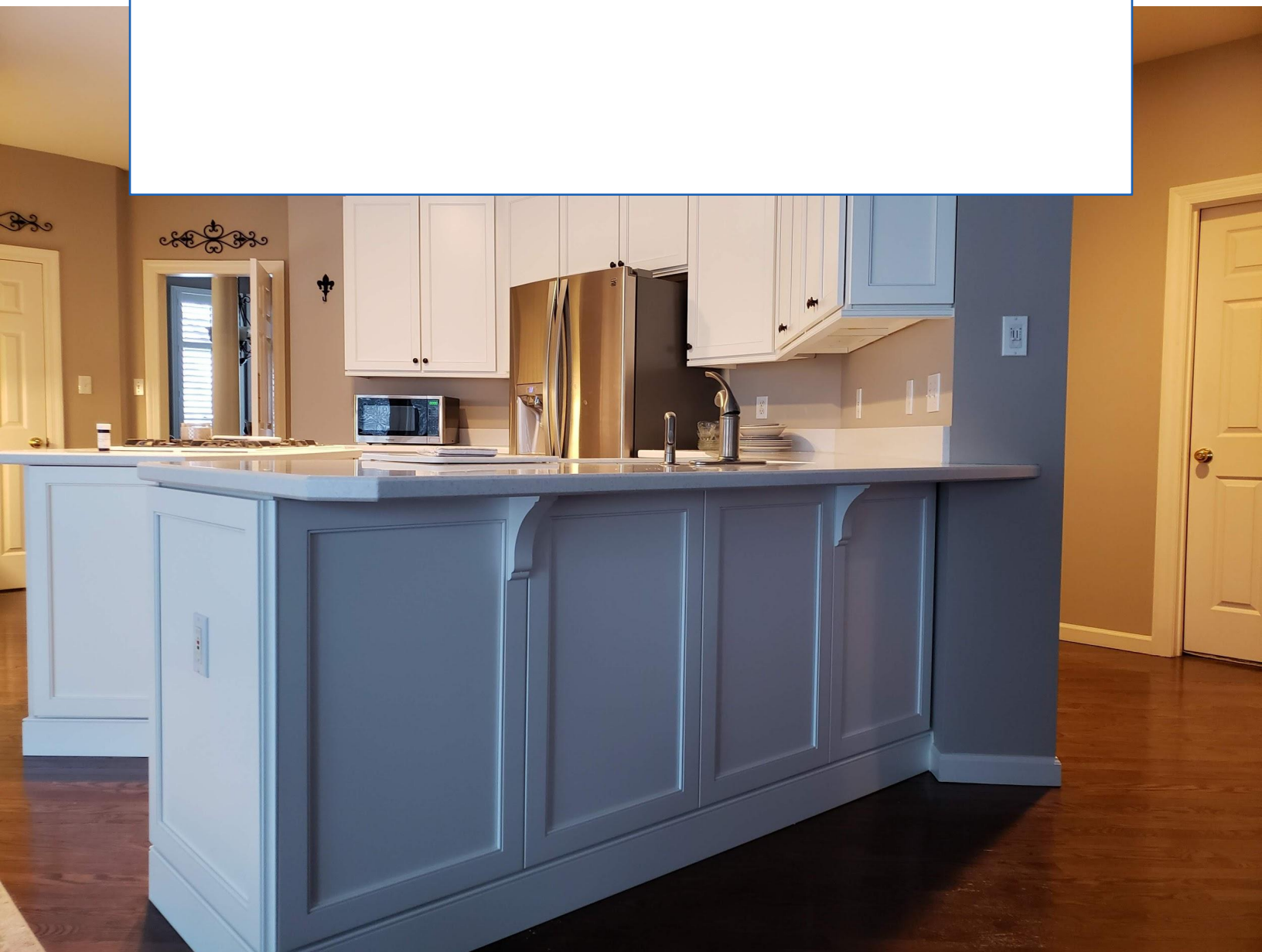
- We prefer any backsplash or even wall painting to be done prior to cabinet painting. Newly painted cabinets are not cured enough for painters tape to be applied during other installations.

Cabinet Refacing:

- We have preferences when you are doing any of the above work at the same time, but when refacing we have worked around all situations as they have required.
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4

Design Options: What to Consider



Solutions

There are too many design and installation methods to cover for each element. We'll hit on some common solutions we see in Minor Kitchen Remodels, and any important considerations related to each.

Since we specialize in Cabinet Refacing and Painting, we'll be a little more detailed in those options.

Appliances:

- Plan on the size before you buy. We've seen many instances where the fridge bought was too large, and forced into a space with unsightly modifications to make it fit.
- Gas or Electric: If you want to change, know that some expense will be required to run the proper line. If your basement is finished below, the cost can increase.

Flooring:

- Think about long term wear. Hardwoods are popular, but in a kitchen with heavy use they can get dings and scratches, and are susceptible to water damage.
- Floating floor options are also popular, and are easy to install. Again, kitchen spaces can be harder on flooring, make sure you get a quality level that can handle the extra traffic and abuse.
- If doing flooring first, think about future updates around the flooring. Will the flooring you choose have gaps at the cabinets, or can it be fitted under them? Quarter round or other base molding may be required at these intersections.

Backsplash:

- Depending on the age of your home and how existing backsplash was installed, the demo of the old tile can be the toughest part. Discuss with your installer their preferred method of removal. Some like to take the tile off, others prefer to cut the whole drywall out and start from a fresh sheet.
- Backsplash can be a great place to add style and color to the kitchen. When deciding on a tile style think about how it will look long term. Will it look dated in a few years?

Countertops:

- The most popular countertops recently have been quartz.
 - If on a tight budget, there are newer laminate countertops that mimic stone. They can even have undermount sinks.
 - A Minor Kitchen Remodel usually allows the countertop to be installed at any time in the process since the cabinets stay in place. If replacing lower cabinets or adding an island, the countertop will have to be measured and installed after the cabinets are set, extending the project completion time two to three weeks.
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Solutions, contd.

A Minor Kitchen Remodel doesn't mean you have to skimp on design and functionality. In fact, it often means you can splurge on some features you normally wouldn't be offered in most boring builder grade cabinet lines.

Decorative Panels and Wainscoting:

- One of the most common elements of a showcase kitchen are decorative panels on the ends of cabinets and around islands and peninsulas.
- We almost always make these standard in any refacing job. We order doors and large panels to fit and are affixed to the cabinets.
- For paint jobs, we build the panels and wainscoting on-site and paint them with the cabinets.

Upgraded hinges:

- It may seem like a small thing, but new soft-close hinges on doors are big improvement over the slamming hinges you may have now.

New Drawer Boxes and Undermount Soft-Close Glides:

- Add this upgrade and you will think you have new cabinets.
- We install solid wood dovetail drawer boxes and high quality soft close glides.

Modify Cabinets for Pot and Pans Drawers:

- Another popular feature in modern cabinet lines are deep, full extension pots and pans drawer cabinets.
- We can evaluate with you whether any of your cabinets can be modified to deep pots and pans drawers.
- We can also modify cabinets with two small drawers, into one wide drawer.

Additional Storage Features:

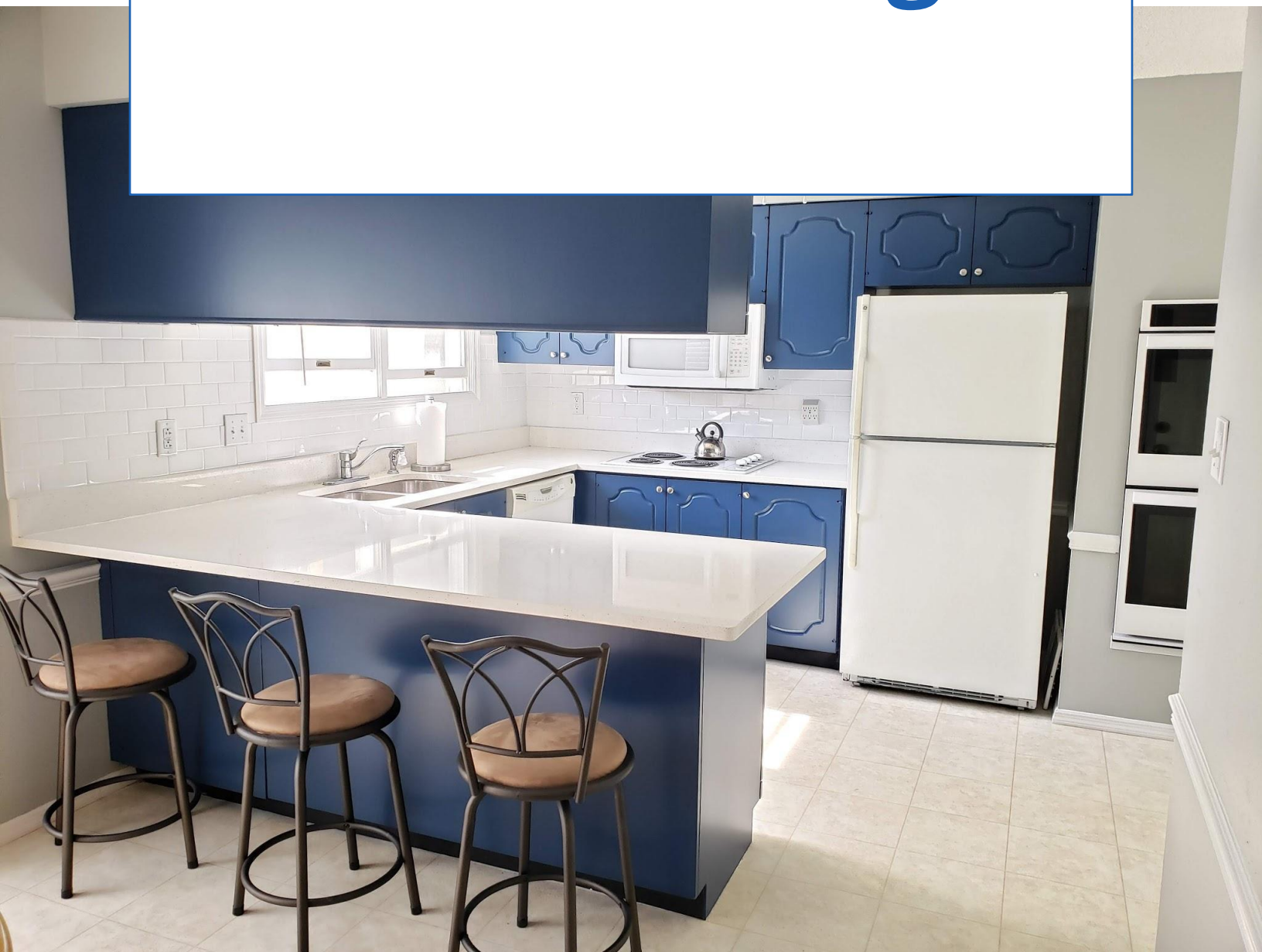
- Add trash can pull outs, and pull out trays inside cabinets.
- Make a pantry more accessible with a stack of pull out trays.

Crown Molding and Under-Cabinet Molding:

- Top off the cabinets with a nice crown molding, and even a more custom look with under-cabinet molding.
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4

Cabinet Refacing and Painting



Installation Methods Overview

We have a great deal more specific information in our Guides on our website, FreshFacedCabinets.com. Find them in our Learning Hub and our Before and After Photo Galleries.

We'll briefly hit on the highlights of the options we provide for your cabinet upgrade, and links to more detailed information on our website.

Cabinet Painting:

- For full cabinet painting, we do all high quality spraying. We use a cabinet rated 2K Polyurethane that provides a factory-like finish with excellent durability.
- We spray on-site, both cabinets and doors. Masking off the kitchen spraying the cabinets, and typically a spray booth in the garage for the doors.
- A sprayed finish costs significantly more than a brush and roll application, but the finish is superior in look and feel.
- Molding and decorative panels can be built to enhance the look.

Cabinet Door Replacement (Hand Painted/Stained Cabinets):

- Our most popular option! The biggest impact for the expense.
- New doors with a full overlay are ordered and the cabinets are painted or stained to match.
- Decorative end panels can be added to cabinets and islands to add a custom look and match color and finish to the new doors.
- Crown and undercabinet molding can be added.
- In some instances, like if the existing crown molding stays, we may spray the finish on the cabinets.

Cabinet Refacing with Veneer:

- What would be considered a traditional refacing, doors are replaced as above, but a matching veneer is adhered to the front of the cabinet frames.
- This method is a bit more expensive. If you are going with a lighter wood stain, or need a different grain match to the new doors, than a veneer is sometimes necessary.
- As above, all decorative panels and moldings are available.

Upper Cabinet Replacement:

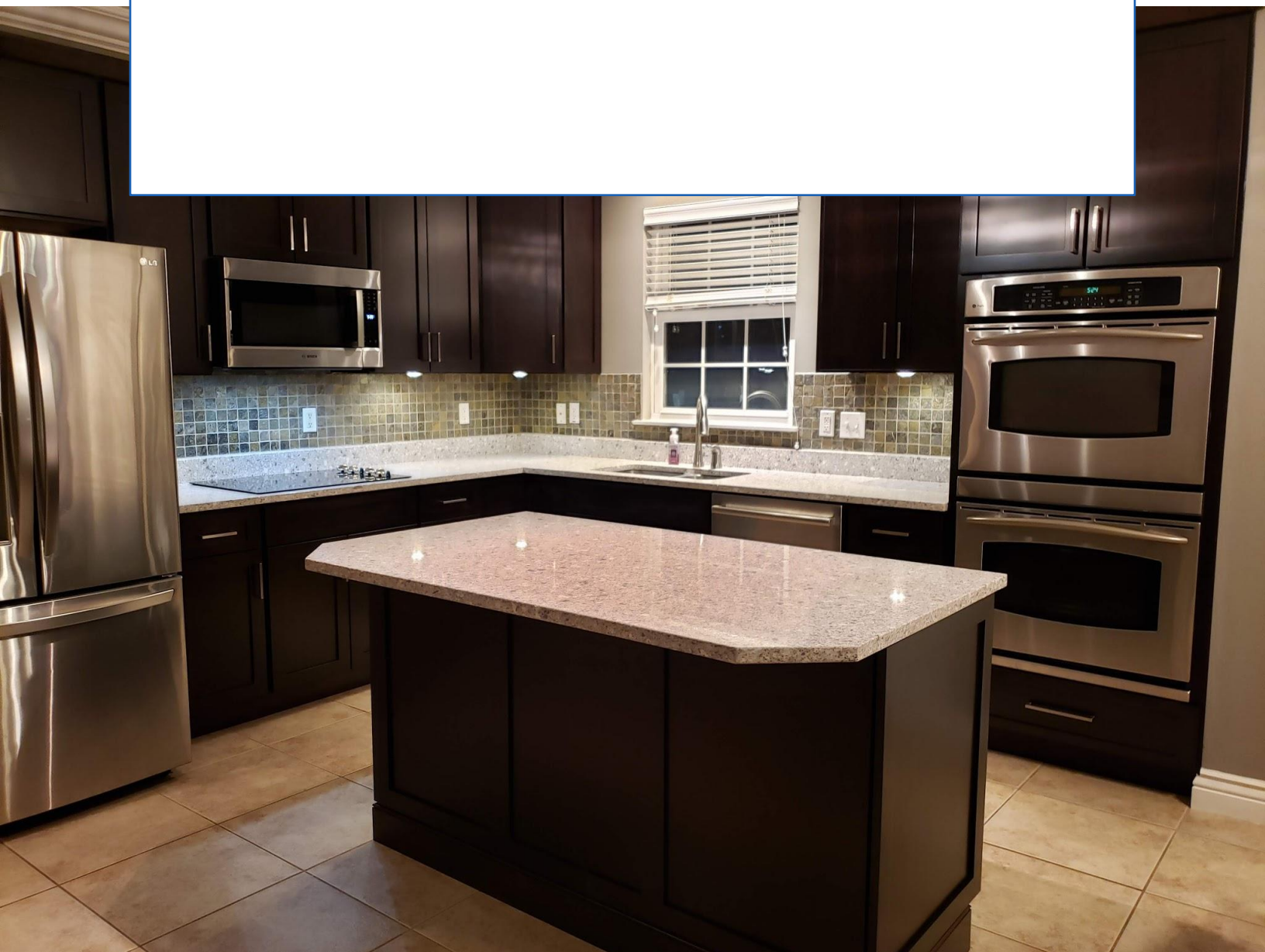
- A great way to get a full remodel look. Replace all the upper cabinets, usually going from 30" cabinets to 42" cabinets.
- The lower cabinets stay in place and are refaced to match.

Links:

- ◆ [Cabinet Refacing Guide](#)
 - ◆ [Cabinet Painting Guide](#)
 - ◆ [How We Paint: Our Painting Process and Materials](#)
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4

Budgeting: An Overview on Cost





Cost Vs. Value

Definitions from the "Remodeling 2020 Cost vs. Value Report" (www.costvsvalue.com)

MINOR KITCHEN REMODEL—MIDRANGE In functional but dated 200-square-foot kitchen with 30 linear feet of cabinetry and countertops, leave cabinet boxes in place but replace fronts with new shaker-style wood panels and drawer fronts, including new hardware. Replace cooktop/oven range and slide-in refrigerator with new energy-efficient models. Replace laminate countertops; install midpriced sink and faucet. Add new resilient flooring. Finish with painted walls, trim, and ceiling.

Vs.

MAJOR KITCHEN REMODEL—MIDRANGE Update outmoded 200-square-foot kitchen with functional layout of 30 linear feet of semi-custom wood cabinets, including 3x5-foot island; laminate countertops; and standard double-tub stainless steel sink with standard single-lever faucet. Include energy efficient range, vented range hood, built-in microwave, dishwasher, garbage disposal, and custom lighting. Add new resilient flooring. Finish with painted walls, trim, and ceiling.

If you remember, we had the definition of a Minor Kitchen Remodel - Midrange from the "2020 Remodeling Cost Vs. Value Report." Now we added their definition of a Major (Full) Kitchen Remodel - Midrange.

You can find all the data on their website, but here's a quick analysis of their numbers as it relates to the St. Louis area.

We'll find that an average Minor Kitchen Remodel in the St. Louis area is almost one third the cost of a Midrange Major Kitchen Remodel, and you receive a hire return on your investment.

A Minor Kitchen Remodel - Midrange in St. Louis averages a Job Cost of **\$23,872** with a Resale Value of **\$14,773** resulting in a **61.9%** Cost Recouped.

Compared with a **Major Kitchen Remodel - Midrange** average Job Cost of **\$69,479** with a Resale Value of **\$36,947** resulting in **53.2%** Cost Recouped.

Budgeting Overview

We have some great resources with more specific pricing and budgeting figures for each of our installation methods here:

- ❖ [Cabinet Refacing Cost and Pricing Guide | Fresh Faced Cabinets](#)
- ❖ [Fresh Faced Cabinets Kitchen Pricing Scenarios.pdf](#)

Here are some broad budgeting numbers that you could expect based on our experience. There are obviously wide ranges based on design choices and size of kitchen:

- If you are doing a complete Minor Kitchen Remodel as suggested in the Cost vs. Value report, **\$20,000-30,000** would be pretty normal. Their scenario includes a high end laminate countertop, but most people spend a bit more on quartz.
- The good news, most people aren't doing the whole thing at one time. You are probably like most of our clients and spent on different elements over time, and already have a nice countertop or appliances or flooring, etc.
- Due to the dramatic differences in flooring layouts it's too hard to range costing on flooring, but the more common updates range from:
 - Backsplash - \$1,000 to \$2500.
 - Countertops (Quartz) - \$3,500 to \$8000
 - Appliances - \$3,000 to \$5,000.
- For Our Cabinet Services these are the typical ranges for our most typical jobs:
 - Cabinet Painting - \$3,600 to \$6000
 - Cabinet Doors with Paint - \$4,300 to \$7,000 (Large Kitchen to \$12,000)
 - Full Cabinet Refacing - \$5,000 to \$10,000 (Large Kitchens to \$15,000)
 - Replace Upper Cabinets - \$9,000 to \$14,000 (Large Kitchens to \$20,000)

Some Final Thoughts About Refacing Vs. Cabinet Replacement

If you are looking at updating all the decorative elements in your kitchen you may be thinking there is nothing minor about \$20,000-\$30,000! You may even get a bid for all new cabinets in that price range..

And yes, we've lost bids to contractors who price new, budget grade cabinets lower than our refacing bid. But, when comparing quality, new doesn't always mean better. For example, a brand new Chevy may not be the better deal than a fully, equipped low mileage pre-owned Cadillac.

Make sure you compare the quality elements that count most: Is the door construction and finish a high quality? Are the hinges soft-close and state of the art? Are they solid wood, dovetail drawer boxes with soft-close glides? Are you getting decorative panels and molding that provide a custom cabinet look? And, most importantly, will the install be done at a high quality, professional level?

If you are comparing the same quality and features, then refacing will be a competitive alternative, and will be a far more enjoyable installation process.



Free Project Evaluation

If a Minor Kitchen Remodel looks like a great option for you,
click for our [Cabinet Refacing Project Evaluation | Fresh Faced
Cabinets.](#)

Thank You! We hope to hear from you soon,

Dave and Stephanie Short

[Go To Evaluation Form](#)

www.FreshFacedCabinets.com