

Should You Actually Put a Microwave in a Kitchen Island? Pros Weigh In

By [SARAH LYON](#) | Published on 06/13/24



Design by [TriVistaUSA](#) / Photo by [Kip Dawkins](#)

Are you considering incorporating a microwave onto your [kitchen island](#)? Many people opt to do so for a variety of reasons, both functional and aesthetic, which we will explore in further detail below. Keep reading to learn about considerations to prioritize when installing a microwave in your kitchen island, according to interior designers.



Anthony Wilder Design-Build / Photo by [John Cole](#)

Why Should You Install a Microwave in Your Kitchen Island

There are many reasons why installing a microwave in your kitchen island is a smart idea, as explored below.

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Aesthetics

Installing a microwave in your kitchen island is a great way to camouflage this appliance—as Mark Schubert, the founder and principal designer of [Phillip-Harrison](#), says.

"Microwaves are often placed in kitchen islands as they are often out of sight and hidden behind the island so guests do not necessarily see them," Schubert says.

Easy Cleaning

[Cleaning the microwave](#) is never a fun chore, but it becomes a bit more manageable when the microwave is lower to the ground, Shannon Kadwell, kitchen and bath designer with [Anthony Wilder Design-Build](#), explains.

Function

When a microwave is installed in a kitchen island, it is easy to access while preparing meals.

"The island is usually the central hub of a kitchen and placing a microwave in the island keeps it within reach when needing to reheat leftovers, quickly melt butter, and do other minor tasks," Schubert says.

Dealing with hot foods becomes less of a challenge, too. Kadwell explains how, unlike wall mount microwaves, you won't need to reach up or pull down hot items. You'll be able to easily reach in and pull hot items onto the countertop.

As a bonus, this setup is particularly ideal for children or those in wheelchairs as well, Marni Thompson, an interior designer at [TriVistaUSA](#), explains. She adds that microwave drawers now have a lock feature, which many parents appreciate.

Socialization

Installing a microwave in your kitchen island is beneficial in other ways, too.

"It also encourages social engagement, as the kitchen island often serves as a gathering point for family and friends," Mary Gordon, VP at [InSite Builders & Remodeling](#), says.



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Considerations for Installing a Microwave

Costs

Schubert says that usually, the most expensive cost involved in installing a microwave in a kitchen island is paying for the appliance itself. You will also want to budget for adding electrical wiring to the island, he adds.

Thompson shares that generally, drawer microwaves are on the pricey end and can sometimes cost \$1,000.

Location and Space

When installing a microwave in a kitchen island, it is best to place it toward one end of the island, Schubert explains.

"Most people center themselves on their island when working in their kitchen, so by placing it to one end, it is still usable by others in your household without impacting your workflow," he says.

This setup will be particularly beneficial if your island has a sink, which can cause even more of a jam, Rebekah Zaveloff, co-founder and creative director of [Imparfait Design Studios](#) and [KitchenLab](#), explains.



Design by [InSite Builders & Remodeling](#) / Photo ...

Installation Process

Schubert says that installing a microwave in a kitchen island is a simple process. Before installing the appliance, the designer notes that you should make sure that it will fit in the allotted space, review the electrical requirements and placement of the outlet, and install any additional trim needed.

Keep in mind that when you place a microwave in a kitchen island, it does not need a vent, though it does require one when [located above an oven range](#).

However, this can be a negative feature because any burn smells won't be able to be properly vented out of the house, Thompson explains.



Model and Size

Schubert generally recommends installing drawer microwaves in kitchen islands since they're easier to access below a counter.

Zaveloff explains that drawer microwaves are generally 24 inches wide. She explains how a slightly wider cabinet will help get a perfect flush install.

FAQ

What kind of microwave goes in an island?

Most people will use a drawer microwave in an island.

Does a microwave in an island need a vent?

Microwaves in kitchen islands do not require vents. However, any smoke or odors may not be properly vented.

Where is the best place to put a microwave in an island?

Designers recommend placing a microwave off to one of the sides of the island to maximize workflow.