

How to furnish a kitchen affordably and sustainably?

In most Estonian homes, kitchens are the heart of the home, where family gathers after a long day or where house parties are held. Yet Estonian kitchens tend to be rather small, which makes kitchen furnishing a challenge. How to decorate kitchen in an affordable and sustainable way?

IKEA interior designer Baiba Freija brought out that when furnishing a kitchen, it is most important to bear in mind comfortability. "As the kitchen is built for years, I advise to take time and carefully think about where and how everything will fit. It is best to play and imagine how the kitchen will look and work in the future, by simulating cooking and storing away the food," said Freija. For example, one could stand up and imagine where you will come back with products, where the fridge should be, how to move around the area where food is prepared, check out which side is most convenient to open the cabinet door, etc.

While furnishing the kitchen, it's useful to apply the ergonomic triangle rule. "The first corner should be designer for when you come into the kitchen, place your purchases and access easily the fridge. The second point is the sink and the work surface, where food preparations take place and from where you should easily reach the refrigerator and sink. And finally the hob or stove are, where you cook," explained Freija.

IKEA designer brings out that one difference that all Baltic countries have from the rest of the European countries, is that people prefer to plan the entire kitchen in advance and do not leave any space for future improvements. "In other European countries people are more flexible, they have spaces which they fill in with movable trolleys, mobile kitchen islands, open shelves. All of them help to have adjustable kitchen, which you can expand when needed or reduce when you have guests coming over, especially when these kind of solutions do not cost much, i.e. the movable tray SUNNERSTA can be purchased from 24,99 Eur" said Freija.

More space and better lightning

IKEA interior designer explained that like in all Baltic countries, kitchens in Estonia are rather small and often lack counter and storage space, and proper light solutions. "In most kitchens there's only one lamp in the middle of the ceiling, yet light is needed for all working spaces, also on the working surfaces where you chop and prepare food," said Freija. She added that more light could be easily assured by placing light solutions under the upper kitchen cabinets. The cozyness can be added by placing some led-lights near floor under the lower cabinets.

Storage space could be easily doubled by creative wall systems, where you can hang different kitchen appliances like knives, dipper and whisk, grow herbs or spices or place smaller pots and pans. "These wall systems, i.e. rails which prices starts from 1,49 Eur, when fully equipped can be used in every kitchen and together with the organizing solutions for kitchen cabinets or drawers, can increase storage space up to 1/3. It also gives better functionality and a modern look for the kitchen," Freija noted. She stressed that the less items are laying on the working space, the more practical the kitchen is.

Kitchen cabinets out of recycles plastic bottles

IKEA designer stressed that ensuring sustainability has become popular also in kitchen furnishing. “As people are more environmental conscious, they put more attention to sustainability in every possible aspect. For example, we’re not talking about only the need to have different waste bins to recycle our waste, but that people care about the material of which their future kitchen is made of,” explained Freija.

In order to ensure a smaller environmental impact in kitchen production, IKEA has developed a kitchen line KUNGSBACKA which is a true sustainability hero as the kitchen cabinet fronts are all produced from recycled plastic bottles and fillings from renewable recycled wood resources.

In addition, LED lamps in the kitchen help to save energy and water faucets water. “Water faucets with aerators can help to reduce water consumption up to 40%, which is a remarkable saving,” said Feija.

IKEA designer believes that the more timeless the kitchen furnishing is, the better as then you do not need to renew your kitchen after a couple of years. “For example, a timeless kitchen using METOD kitchen parts will have a 25 year guarantee, meaning they’re meant to be last-longing to serve people for decades,” explained Baiba Freija. On the same time they are flexible – fronts can be changed with changing trends or needs.

IKEA designer noted that usually it is believed that kitchen furnishing or renewal is quite expensive, but she brought out that even with 100 euros you can make a difference and when spending a couple of hundred euros you can furnish your kitchen entirely. “When budgeting it is important to bear in mind that you should allocate half on furniture and half on household appliances,” said Freija.