

Lighting With Style

The right light - the right touch

Good light helps make any kitchen safe and comfortable. Natural light is important, but think about the places that natural light won't reach or light well. Consider cloudy days, and remember that much of the work will be done in the evenings.

That means artificial light is key. Multiple light sources and different modes of lighting will reduce shadows, glare or blind spots, and put enough light right where it is needed for kitchen activities.

As a rule, you should provide a mix of three lighting modes.

- **Ambient light** - For overall room illumination, typically provided by ceiling, track or recessed lighting fixtures. The number and placement of fixtures should provide even illumination without dark spots or "hot" spots.
- **Task lighting** - For shadow-free, concentrated lighting of food preparation and other kitchen work activities. Typically comes from under-cabinet fixtures or strips, or hanging fixtures such as pendent lights.
- **Accent lighting** - Contributes a decorative element and helps create focal points such as a dish display, a favorite painting, or an eating area. May come from high-intensity recessed or track lights, or hanging fixtures.

Each of these modes should be separately controlled, so the proper mix of lighting can be selected for each activity in the kitchen. Dimmers for ambient and accent lighting will enable you to alter the mood or look of the kitchen, as well as the overall lighting level.

And of course there is a choice of light type. Often a combination of these types is the best plan, utilizing the advantages of each.

- **Incandescent** - The traditional choice for its warm effect. Produces quite a bit of heat.
- **Halogen** - A brighter, "whiter" light for the same or lower wattage. Longer life than standard incandescent.
- **Fluorescent lamps** - Now includes a variety of colors and warmth, to create the same effects as incandescent. Lamps are available for use in all types of fixtures, as well as the traditional tubes. These use less energy; produce less heat, longer lasting.