

KITCHEN

STORIES



NEPTUNE

A close-up photograph of light-colored wooden kitchen cabinets. The image shows a vertical seam between two cabinet doors. The wood has a natural grain and is finished with a clear coat. Brass knobs are visible on the lower doors. A white countertop is visible on the right side. The lighting is warm and directional, creating soft shadows and highlights on the wood surfaces.

KITCHEN
STORIES

FOREWORD

A kitchen is so much more than the cabinets and appliances that fill the space. It is the place where you and your family gather to cook, eat, relax and chat. It is the heart of the home. And it is where the heart of Neptune lies. We've been designing crafted wood kitchens for nearly twenty years from our base in Wiltshire, and we understand that, while well-engineered, robust cabinetry is the starting point of any good kitchen, it's when you make it your own – with colour and hardware, furniture and accessories – that you truly fall in love.

So, whether you're starting out on a new kitchen journey or simply looking to add some interest and style to your existing space, our first ever Kitchen Stories has something for everyone. From fashion expert Lucinda Chambers revealing what she loves about her family kitchen to the epic story behind our marble work surfaces, we hope this edition inspires you to create the kitchen of your dreams.

For more compelling kitchen inspiration, head to
neptune.com/kitchen

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CHAPTER ONE

THE WORLD
OF KITCHEN

Discover inspiration in our kitchen collections,
furniture and accessories



Suffolk Kitchen in Salt with Calacatta Viola
marble worktop and splash back







Chichester Kitchen in Flax Blue with countertop cabinetry





Suffolk Kitchen with Ludlow bar stools



Henley Kitchen in Charcoal
with floor-to-ceiling dresser and ladder







Suffolk Kitchen with tongue-and-groove panelling



Henley Kitchen in Sage with a Butler's sink








Henley Kitchen in Classic Oak
with a double larder





THE
CURIOUS
CASE
OF THE
CABINET

Meet our kitchen
cabinetry collections:
Henley, Suffolk
and Chichester.

Kitchen cabinets: the backbone of our kitchens, holding (and hiding) everything from crockery and cutlery to essential dry goods and small appliances.

From the beginning of their kitchen-making journey, Neptune co-founders John Sims-Hilditch and Giles Redman made a promise: the craftsmanship and quality of Neptune's cabinetry would never be compromised by MDF or chipboard. Instead, they created a super-strong structure using cross-bonded ply panelling and solid timber frames along with traditional mortise and tenon and dovetail joinery. This dedication to heritage craft techniques means each kitchen cabinet is made with the same meticulous attention to detail as our individual pieces of furniture.

The adaptability shared by our three core cabinetry collections – Chichester, Suffolk and Henley – allows for flexibility depending on your taste as well as the style and architecture of your home. Each collection can be customised to make the finish truly unique, with over fifty paint colours, an extensive selection of hardware and work surface options, and a choice of fluted or plain glass for wall cabinets.



Our collections

HENLEY

Loved for the juxtaposition of exposed wood and painted textures, and its understated design details, Henley is the only cabinetry collection that offers either all oak, all painted timber, or a combination of the two. Henley also has many hidden talents. Deep, wide drawers, designed with further concealed cutlery drawers, are ideal for loading heavy pots and pans and piled-high plates, while bi-fold countertop cabinets can be used to create a deconstructed larder or a miniature breakfast station. You can extend the Henley collection into dining and sitting areas with complementary pieces such as a sideboard, bookcase or even a media dresser that cleverly conceals the tv.

Henley Kitchen in Constable Green with Classic Oak Island









SUFFOLK

Taking inspiration from traditional Shaker-style kitchens, Suffolk focuses on clean-lined cabinetry and recessed door and drawer panels, ideal for those who love more pared-back interiors while still looking for traditional cupboard storage. Offering the most cabinet sizes and combinations, it's currently also the only design in our collection that has a double larder, which regularly sits top of customers' kitchen 'wish lists'. All of our collections can include islands comprising of fitted cabinetry to suit the space but, alternatively, our freestanding Charlecote island has the look and feel of a classic grand prep table and is perfect paired with our Suffolk collection. The collection expands into other furniture pieces including a wine rack, sideboard and open shelving solutions.



CHICHESTER

The Chichester collection was our first kitchen design, created to deliver the feel of a fully bespoke kitchen at a more accessible price. Inspired by the grand working kitchens of the Georgian period, the Chichester features pronounced beading and decorative mouldings, alongside tongue-and-groove end panels. It can incorporate an ornate cooker hood for a smart country feel but is versatile enough to work just as seamlessly in a city apartment. The cabinets can be designed on small front supports to emulate freestanding furniture, or can be covered with traditional skirting, and feature classic roller catches which mean that, with a simple push, doors will click shut. You can add to the Chichester cabinetry with freestanding pieces such as a glazed or open dresser, a chopping block or potboard. Chichester is also our only style with a complementary laundry cabinet collection to create a harmonious run from kitchen through to utility or boot room.

Chichester Kitchen in Flax Blue





THE RIGHT FIT



As individuals, we're inclined to seek just the right amount of something. Never too big, never too small, not too bright and not too dark. It's called the Goldilocks Principle and refers to the concept of something falling within an optimal - or desirable - range. The principle also crops up in kitchen design, ensuring that a room works 'just right' whatever its size.



Small but mighty

The beauty of a more compact space is its ability to work efficiently and have everything needed within arm's reach. Less time is spent rummaging through drawers and cupboards because everything is (hopefully) organised with precision and space in mind. If you're after the illusion of a larger room, the key is to utilise vertical spaces and scale upwards. 'Using the walls efficiently and effectively and adding a ladder rail to reach high cabinetry can look very dramatic,' explains Jackie, kitchen designer at Neptune Edgbaston. If ceiling height is restricted though, avoid the space feeling boxed in with wall cabinetry by opting for open shelves that can still be used as storage for glass jars filled with ingredients that you regularly reach for.

In small spaces, it can be worth embracing strong colour. 'Using a darker tone all over can make a room really cocooning,' says Jackie. If you want to go for bolder colours on cabinetry, Claire, a Neptune Bath kitchen designer, recommends 'keeping work surfaces and flooring lighter, as they will bounce the light upwards.' Other considerations such as integrated microwaves and boiling water taps help to reduce the amount of worktop space used. And finally, remember that space saved equals more opportunity for displaying personal touches that will give your room a sense of individuality.



The in-between

Curious configurations and clever storage can help add interest to medium-sized kitchens. These 'fall-between' sized spaces will benefit from tall larder cabinetry and deep drawer storage (which often conceals further drawers within) like those found in our Henley collection. These configurations create a streamlined look in a busy room while still maximising storage space. Similarly, an integrated bin drawer installed close to food-prep areas, below-counter slimline chopping block units, and a dedicated breakfast larder which holds the coffee machine, kettle and toaster all reduce the number of excess items on display.

If you're keen to include a dining area within a medium-sized kitchen but are wary of eating into precious floor space, Claire suggests continuing the flow of worktops or an island to finish with a wrap-around bar seating area with under-counter space for stools. By maintaining the flow of cabinetry and work surfaces into an eating area, you continue the unfussy design while gaining additional, sought-after space.



A large welcome

Space to play with? Many larger kitchens work with open-plan living in mind, combining a dining area and maybe a relaxed snug too. When contemplating the layout and flow of a larger room, your kitchen designer can help you consider what Jackie calls ‘traffic management’ – ensuring an easy route to the fridge, for example, to avoid having to cross someone else working in the prep area.

For large kitchens to work best, they need zoning with layered lighting, pattern and texture to create pockets of interest. Overhead spots and task lights, pendants above islands, and floor and table lamps in dining spaces help to define different zones and create appropriate atmospheres for cooking or entertaining. Upholstered bar stools, Roman blinds, and patterned rugs under dining tables add textural points of interest. You might even consider zoning the floor – with a hardy herringbone tile or chequered stone around the prep areas, for instance, and warmer wood flooring for the relaxation areas.

Finally, when furnishing a larger space, it’s important to consider proportion and scale. Avoid filling every wall with cabinetry as it will feel like living in a wooden box. Instead, mix open and closed shelving and leave space for artworks, plants or bookshelves. When it comes to styling, encompass the room’s sense of generosity with tall vases or urns on a worktop, super-sized fruit bowls, and displayed items shown in multiples. Combining these elements of scale, zones and storage will help the large kitchen look impressive but still feel welcoming. In other words, your kitchen will be ‘just right’.



A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING

The best kitchen storage is all about the details.
Writer Amy Bradford explains how to get yours
perfectly organised.





Which room in your home contains the most stuff? For many of us, it's the kitchen. From pots and pans to food cupboard essentials, it has a lot of things to accommodate – which means storage needs to be super organised.

Whether a kitchen is big or small, you're sure to fill it, so the same rules apply. Chloë Locherty, a Neptune kitchen design specialist, stresses the importance of planning your space. 'A kitchen is a jigsaw puzzle,' she says. 'Decide on appliance placement first, then plan storage around it – spice racks and utensils near the hob, for instance.' Every kitchen needs at least one deep pan drawer, she adds. 'You can get so much more in them than cupboards, and you don't need to get down on your knees to reach the back. Maximise space with dividers inside.'

Neptune kitchens have intelligent features with Tardis-like powers. Even something as simple as the zig-zag shelf fittings magnifies storage potential, letting you position shelves at precisely calibrated levels so none of the cupboard's height is wasted. 'You can use them in our base and wall cupboards, larders and broom cabinets, so they work with everything from mugs to the vacuum cleaner,' says Chloë.



How to avoid the perennial problem of things lurking at the back of the cupboard? ‘Use our shelf risers,’ she suggests. ‘They raise storage towards the back, so things are visible and easier to reach.’ In many Neptune kitchens, you’ll also find small drawers concealed inside larger ones (useful for keeping cutlery organised alongside crockery) and larder doors that swing out with shallow shelves on the back and more racks inside. This is an excellent way to create a pantry – the dream kitchen feature – in a small room.

Making use of ‘hidden’ space is another tip. If you have high ceilings, consider a pantry cupboard that goes all the way up. ‘Our Chichester kitchen has an oak ladder that hooks on so you can reach the top shelves,’ advises Chloë. ‘If the cupboard is half-depth, you can still have worktop space in front. I’ve even created a corner arrangement with brilliant L-shaped storage.’ She also suggests hanging racks and pegs underneath cupboards – or on the sides. ‘Sometimes the simplest ideas are the most effective. I love our Ashcroft baskets, which fit inside other storage to keep things organised.’

Even the humblest kit can be enhanced with smart details: drawer inserts for spice jars that let you see the labels clearly; drawer dividers for knives that stop them knocking against each other so they stay sharp; narrow niches for chopping boards and tea towels; and the Orford wet store tray, which sits inside your sink cabinet and stops damp cloths cluttering the worktop. Think of it as elevating the everyday.



The Kitchen Hero



The centrepiece of any Neptune kitchen is the larder cabinet. A feat of engineering, spatial ingenuity and organisational beauty, it encapsulates all the design elements a kitchen needs.



We can thank medieval cooks for today's larders. Back in the 1500s, a larder was an external cool store where meat was 'larded' (covered in fat) to be preserved. By the eighteenth century, they were dark, cool rooms off the main kitchen (often facing north to avoid the heat of the midday sun) which housed meat, dairy and dry goods. But with the arrival of the refrigerator into domestic kitchens from the 1920s, larders fell out of fashion and the space they occupied was commandeered for other uses.

Today, larders are again proving an important element of kitchen design, this time as built-in or freestanding models offering a host of useful storage options, enhanced organisation and accessibility of foodstuffs, and the advantage of a neat prep station that can be hidden away behind doors when not in use.

Our three kitchen collections all feature a carefully crafted larder cabinet. Each is built to our exacting design principles with a focus on traditional joinery, solid wood frames and modern engineering techniques.

- The single-door, full-height Chichester larder has spacious trays in the base for storing fresh produce like fruit and root vegetables.
- The Henley collection features a single-door larder with an additional rack at the front that swings out on hinges to maximise storage space and accessibility.
- Probably the most popular version is the impressive Suffolk double-door larder (you can also order a single-door model, for those tighter on space). A full-height, cavernous cupboard that includes drawers, door racks and easily adjustable shelves thanks to the traditional zig-zag stacking system. You can even choose to have a marble worktop installed, perfect for setting the space up as a prep area for breakfasts, keeping the rest of the kitchen tidy and clutter-free.

OUR LARDER STAPLES

With a focus on natural foodstuffs for all the family, this list is recommended by Sarah Jane Bellmaine, the lead chef based at our Wiltshire café, The Provenist.

It isn't exhaustive, but it is a good place to start when stocking your larder.

- Quinoa and lentils (*green lentils take a little while to cook but keep their texture and shape well*)
- Wild rice (*lower in calories and higher in protein than brown rice*)
- Oats (*rolled, jumbo oats are best for porridge and homemade granola*)
- Buckwheat flour (*this lends a nutty depth of flavour to pancakes, and is naturally gluten-free. It's also good for fruit crumble slices*)
- Extra dark drinking chocolate (*a delicious way to add extra depth and richness to a chilli dish*)
- Local honey (*another natural, low-GI sweetener that's also actually especially good to have around in summer if you suffer with hay fever as it can help build up your tolerance to local pollen*)
- Nut butter (*add to pancakes and porridge for a protein, antioxidant and good-fat boost*)
- Mixed seeds (*sprinkle over soups, porridge and smoothie bowls. Or toast in the oven and drizzle with some soy sauce to give extra flavour to your salads*)
- Chilli flakes (*a tasty must-have for smashed avocado or poached eggs on toast*)
- Beans (*butter beans or cannellini, dried or in tins, for making posh beans on toast*)
- Jars of capers (*fry, then sprinkle crispy capers on top of a pasta or risotto dish or blend into a salad dressing*)
- Miso paste (*for adding that essential umami flavour to stir fries or Chinese-style soups*)
- Popping corn (*the perfect quick treat for family cinema nights*)
- Sea salt flakes (*they're delicate enough for finishing dishes and melt well into sauces. We use Maldon salt in the café*)



This is

THE SUFFOLK LARDER

As any foodie will tell you, the best place for keeping many foodstuffs – from dried goods and root vegetables to soft fruits such as bananas – in good condition is a larder cupboard. And if there was a signature cabinet across all our kitchen collections which best represents a combination of traditional craftsmanship, smart engineering and good looks, it's probably the solid wood, double-doored Suffolk larder.

Complete with door racks and plenty of drawers, this larder is a Tardis-like cupboard, cleverly designed to offer an enormous amount of flexible stacking space thanks to the adjustable zig-zag shelving system.

Foodie storage heaven.

For more larder inspiration, visit
neptune.com/larderlove



Suffolk larder in Pink Peppercorn, also available as a single-door cabinet



WHY WE

Love

AGA

The AGA has earned its place in our kitchens and hearts thanks to its classic design and foolproof cooking ability.

Doodle your dream kitchen and chances are it will feature an AGA. The range reached iconic status many years ago – and not without reason. ‘The AGA has an emotional appeal. It is tactile, beautiful and very forgiving,’ says Laura James of AGA. ‘You don’t even have to be a good cook because it elevates the food – potatoes are crispier, cakes are moister.’

So how did this kitchen stalwart become so popular? In 1922, a Swedish scientist named Dr Gustaf Dalen was blinded in an explosion. Convalescing at home, he became aware of how dangerous and dirty the family’s cooking range was. He decided to change all that and designed the AGA: clean, economical and easy to use.

While he had success in his homeland, it was in the UK that the AGA found fame and was soon being produced at the same Shropshire factory that it’s still made in today. And, as testimony to good design genes, it has hardly changed since then. Its iconic spiral handles, triple-enameled body, and useful warming rail are all

as Dr Dalen imagined them. Following a few tweaks in the 1930s, it has only seen efficiency and technical improvements such as removable door inners that can be popped in the dishwasher and the introduction of electric versions of the classic oil-burning AGA.

As a hero of our kitchens, its appearance is always a point of discussion. The traditional vitreous enamel exterior colour is Cream, though Linen (a whiter cream) and Blush Pink are popular. More recently, AGA has re-introduced British Racing Green, which works well against dark blue or grey cabinetry.

But looks aside, it’s AGA’s culinary prowess that cooks love as it radiates heat from all sides of the oven, unlike a fan oven which heats up an element and disperses the heat via a fan. The AGA harks back to a traditional, more intuitive way of cooking when ‘cook in a moderate oven until brown’ was the recipe advice.

So, while it might be AGA’s authenticity that has earned it a place in our kitchens, it’s the range’s convivial pull that has firmly cemented it in our hearts.





FROM KITCHEN
to
KITCHEN-DINING



The kitchen: the heart of your home, so why not linger there as long as possible? With careful spatial planning and smart furniture choices, your cook space can also become your dining space.

While it was once the fashion to segregate our homes into separate areas, kitchens being the domain of the cook and dining rooms reserved for eating in, we've long since rejected that rather formal way of life. Kitchen, living and dining became better acquainted in the 1960s, and we learnt quickly that they get along rather well. In fact, so much so that contemporary homes are often defined by open-plan living and, at their core, kitchen-dining.



No longer solely for the act of cooking, modern-day kitchens are far more multifunctional than they are utilitarian. They epitomise a more leisurely and intimate way of being. For not only do we now eat in our kitchens, but we also work, relax and entertain in them, too. Luckily, successful open-plan living – or, rather, kitchen-dining – doesn't have to mean lofty, expansive and spacious. From rambling farmhouses to bijoux city terraces, a place to sit, eat and unwind can be worked into kitchens of all shapes and sizes.

One classic approach that perhaps best reflects this era of casual eating is to add a kitchen island. When set with stools around it, an island will become a table in its own right, but somehow with a more social, easy-going feel to it. And while you may think you need ample amounts of space to make room for an island, that doesn't have to be the case. Our expert designers can work with you to configure the perfect size and storage combinations to suit your needs. Or should you want a freestanding island that has the look and feel of a table, there's Charlecote, designed to be raised off the ground on legs to create a more open feel. Finally, take careful consideration to furnish your kitchen-dining space with the right bar stools – whether you need backrest support or a stool that tucks out of the way, we can do both.

Refectory-style trestle tables like the Arundel often suit larger kitchens, particularly those which have been extended to create a specific eating area. Pair them with long benches (for a streamlined look) or farmhouse-style chairs. Where space is more limited, look to smaller, circular tables that won't obstruct the flow of your kitchen. The round shape of our Moreton or Stratford tables, for example, offers a softer feel and will leave room to maneuver chairs. And for even smaller kitchens, a bistro table, such as the compact Sheldrake, offers a solution fit for purpose without taking up more space than needed. You could also add a rug to define a clear area for your table and help it become a feature in your room.

Finally, you might consider creating a kitchen nook. Easily squeezed into many rooms and surprisingly more compact than a traditional table and chairs, breakfast nooks, as they're so commonly referred to, encourage relaxed lounging and leisurely drawn-out mealtimes. Use our bespoke Buckland bench seating for a fitted approach that takes storage into account, or opt for a ready-made bench, like Wycombe, that fits comfortably in your space for a more economical, freestanding alternative. To complete the look, seat pads or cushions upholstered in a coordinating fabric (here we've used Fermoie Cove fabric) will add a layer of comfort to your set up.

The
ULTIMATE
KITCHEN
TABLE

The Arundel refectory table is a bestseller for a host of reasons.



If the kitchen is the hub of the home then, arguably, the kitchen table is the axis around which family life spins. A place to prep food, eat, work, create, entertain and talk long into the night; the table sees it all. From a compact bistro style to a twelve-seater trestle design, it's fair to say that a good table completes a kitchen.







King among kitchen tables is the Arundel refectory table. Solidly unfussy, its pure and simple lines combine form and function to create a timeless piece that can be passed down from generation to generation. With solid A-frame legs, visible dowel lock joints, optional extending leaves, the deep and chunky (45mm) tabletop, and a textured finish in solid oak, it fits seamlessly into both contemporary and traditional kitchens.

When it came to designing the Arundel, oak was always going to be the first choice of material. Our timber comes principally from the Appalachian Mountains, where trees are planted at a faster rate than they're felled (currently at a replacement rate of 2.5 times) and the oak is prized for its durability, tactility and beauty. Oak also has a long history in British furniture making. And, the Arundel's Natural Oak finish, which is wire-brushed to highlight the grain, adds a mellow warmth to the kitchen space.

On a practical level, the design team were aware that kitchen tables see a lot of action and need protecting to prolong their lifetimes, but they were also keen not to lose the raw quality of the oak. Luckily, our IsoGuard® sealant protects timber without detracting from its natural beauty. Unlike a traditional varnish or veneer, which leaves a layer sitting on top of the wood, IsoGuard® works on a penetrative level, soaking into the wood and

binding to the raw cellulose that it finds, coating it in a fine protective film, so leaving the wood surface looking and feeling naturally beautiful.

Historically, the un-hierarchical nature of the refectory table meant it was used in the dining halls of medieval monasteries where it fostered a mood of togetherness and belonging amongst the monks and their guests. And that sense of conviviality is continued today, where the informality of the tables suits busy family life and fits well into large or extended kitchens or acts as the central point in a kitchen layout where an island might otherwise sit.

Bench seating is the classic choice for a refectory table, and the Arundel solid oak bench is available as a two-, three- or four-seater, with the option of a comfy, non-slip cushion for those who prefer a softer touch. Equally, kitchen chairs work well with the Arundel, and you could consider the Wardley dining chair as a complementary piece or try combining the best of both worlds with benches running the length of the table and Wardley carver chairs at either end.

Whatever iteration your kitchen table takes, it's ultimately the spot where family life plays out, guests are hosted, and memories made. The table is a special piece of furniture that earns its place in our homes and hearts.

To discover all of our tables, head to
neptune.com/tables

Q&A

with Neptune CEO, Aalish Yorke-Long

When did Neptune begin designing kitchens?

The first Neptune kitchen was conceived in 2007 by our co-founder John Sims-Hilditch. It came out of his desire for a crafted kitchen at an affordable price, and was made up of freestanding pieces that eventually evolved into the Chichester collection. John still has those early pieces in his family kitchen today!

What is the DNA of a Neptune kitchen?

Our kitchens are designed for real life, from integrated spice racks to flexible cabinetry and clever pantry solutions. We create with longevity in mind, using solid oak, solid tulipwood and hardwood ply, taking inspiration from English antiques to blend time-honoured craftsmanship with modern engineering. Our cabinets are also designed so they can be moved and reconfigured if your kitchen evolves. And finally, we embrace innovation. For example, our IsoGuard® treatment gives even more longevity to wood surfaces.



What else sets Neptune apart?

Our service – from the initial design consultation to installation. We regularly hear from customers that we're unique in the quality of the service we offer. There's also our one-hundred-year vision: our kitchens are crafted to last a lifetime, and so they come with a lifetime guarantee.

Why only three collection styles?

We lean towards classic shapes that respect British design heritage, and we're not about changing to reflect short-lived trends. We want people to add to their kitchen over the years. That's not to say we don't develop those styles: until now, we've only had a double-door larder in the Suffolk collection, but customers love it so much that we're introducing it to the Chichester and Henley collections too.

What would Neptune never do?

Use MDF! We never compromise on quality or introduce a design that hasn't been fully considered and proved to be practical, beautiful and easy to use.

Should you invest in a kitchen?

If you decide to invest in your kitchen, I'd say go for the best you can afford. Lots of us spend so much time in our kitchens; they should bring us joy, be practical and stand up to family life. And as we don't keep changing our collections at Neptune, you can always add new pieces like a larder or island at a later date.

Do you need a large space for a Neptune kitchen?

Absolutely not! Thanks to our storage solutions, you get a lot of bang for your buck. The slim larders optimise storage space, and you can stack up to three levels of wall cabinetry in a high-ceilinged room using our kitchen ladder for access.

Is there much style flexibility with a Neptune kitchen?

There is enormous flexibility. If a customer has a strong vision, our kitchen designers love to collaborate, but if they're more focused on performance requirements, we can support them through that journey too. With new hardware finishes (including our collaboration with Armac Martin), fluted or plain glass options, and fifty-two paint colours, the sky's the limit when it comes to delivering an individual vision.

How does Neptune work to different budgets?

We relish the creative challenge of realising a customer's dream within their agreed budget. It is so satisfying to show customers how they can achieve their vision thanks to smart choices around cabinetry, appliances and worktops. Our kitchen designers have many ways to flex within a budget to deliver that.

What's next?

We're returning to our roots and working on that freestanding concept that John Sims-Hilditch originally designed. We'll introduce modern interpretations of a freestanding island, chopping block and larder which customers can use as a base to start their design, or add to their existing kitchen. And we'll be expanding our kitchen accessories. It's an exciting time.

Tell us about your dream kitchen.

We live in our kitchen, so the room is all about informal entertaining and flexibility. I want to be able to cook while watching my daughters do their homework, to host Christmas lunch or throw a party with music and dancing, but also be able to work quietly in there, sitting next to the AGA on a chilly day. Oh, and the dog sleeps there too. So my perfect kitchen must deliver a lot! But, most importantly, it's a place to create memories for our family.

Our one-hundred-year mindset

Why do we plant seeds for trees we may never see grow?

Because it feels good to give back to nature, yes.

But ultimately, it's about preserving our future landscapes and livelihoods. It's the same approach we take here at Neptune with our one-hundred-year mindset, creating things that are built to last and standing firm against throwaway culture and fleeting trends. We design kitchens that will bear witness to family life unfolding and furniture that will become beloved heirloom pieces.



OUR PROMISE

TO YOU

How our lifetime guarantee promises to protect your kitchen for years to come.

Whether your kitchen is big or small, redesigning it can be full of important decisions. Considerations on style and functionality are entwined with the practical elements of budget and value. It's why we offer a lifetime guarantee on our kitchen cabinetry when it's fitted by our approved installation teams.

Our promise to you is backed by three core design principles:

One

Our solid timber cabinets, made from sustainably sourced solid oak, tulipwood and hardwood ply, are designed with the same thought and rigour as our standalone pieces of furniture.

Two

Our craftsmanship is rooted in traditional cabinet-making principles, constructed with precise mortise-and-tenon joints and drawer boxes secured with beautiful dovetails for guaranteed quality.

Three

Our expert design and installation teams can help guide you in your decision making, alleviate the load, and ensure your kitchen fits every one of your criteria.

Should any of your timber cabinets warp or crack from natural wood movement, we will repair or replace them. The guarantee also extends to our handles, hinges and other hardware.

Our guarantee is a promise to continue to care for your kitchen so it can be enjoyed over the years as the heart of your home.

To begin your kitchen journey, visit
neptune.com/kitchen

CHAPTER TWO

A TOUCH OF
PERSONALITY

Introduce an individual look and feel
to your kitchen



A kitchen featuring dark green cabinetry with open shelving displaying various dishes, a wooden ladder leaning against the wall, a window with a vase of white flowers, and a wooden island with a dark green base.

A KITCHEN FOR ALL ERAS

Creating a kitchen to suit the period of your home
means appreciating the building's bones.



VICTORIAN

The Victorian kitchen was divided into workstations – a food prep area, the scullery where the sink was housed, and a cool larder. For a modern interpretation, you could consider the Suffolk larder with its cavernous storage space. The dresser was another key element of the Victorian kitchen, and with the period's classic high ceilings, it could reach up to seven feet tall. The Chichester dresser would be a good alternative today. Most Victorian kitchens also featured a central wooden table where food prep happened and the family (or servants) ate. Usually made of pine, it was scrubbed clean with sand, soda and water giving it the distinct matt finish we appreciate today.

GEORGIAN

A traditional Georgian kitchen would have been in the basement, the domain of servants. It's still possible to capture that period elegance by focusing on symmetry, grand proportions, and a sense of light and space. The Georgians loved balance and harmony, and paid attention to the hidden details and craftsmanship in hinges and dovetail joints. Kitchen cabinets and walls were hand-painted in pale shades with a matt finish. Think Powder Blue, Lily or Old Chalk. Ornate cabinetry pieces such as the Suffolk cooker hood will echo the grand detailing of the period.

EDWARDIAN

Edwardian architecture tends to be airier and roomier than its Victorian predecessor. Slightly wider with similarly high ceilings, it includes intricate patterns on floors and architraves, and is rich in detail. Unlike the darker shades favoured by the Victorians, Edwardian kitchens tended to be fresh and white (there was a new focus on hygiene during this period), so opt for pale colours on cabinets and walls such as Snow and Salt. Glass-fronted cupboards became popular during this period too, so you could also consider clear or ribbed glazed wall cabinets.

Chichester Kitchen in Snow with Charlecote Island in Cobble

Opposite: Henley Kitchen in Charcoal with floor-to-ceiling dresser and ladder





CONTEMPORARY

Modern architecture is all about the interplay of light. Windows tend to be large and wide; open-plan living is key. Details are minimal and unfussy – from plain skirtings to the lack of radiators thanks to underfloor heating. Go for streamlined cabinetry and linear hardware. True to the social nature of a modern property, the Buckland bench seating system is not only space efficient but gives a dining area a clean, uncluttered feel too.

POST-WAR

Parquet flooring was a style statement during this austere period, though many smaller houses still had basic floorboards and rugs. For a modern interpretation, you could try a parquet design using Honister black slate tiles or Savernake oak flooring. Kitchens in this period were the domain of the housewife and were compact and functional rather than social. Today, a sympathetic solution would be to knock through a kitchen and dining room but keep the areas defined by flooring or decor.

COTTAGES

Cottage architecture is an evolution rather than a set period in time, but it shares characteristics such as low ceilings, exposed beams, uneven floors and awkward nooks. Historically, cottage kitchens comprised freestanding and un-matching furniture – a pine table would sit happily in front of an oak dresser on a stone floor. As cottage kitchens can be small, it's best to keep the scheme pale, and you can't go wrong with timeless Sage or French Grey in a kitchen that opens onto a country garden. A dresser and scrubbed wooden table complete the cottage vibe, perfect in its imperfections.

Henley Kitchen in Sage with a Butler's sink

Opposite: Chawton cabinet in Snow with Charlecote Island in Ink

Thinking outside the *(rectangular)* box



Open-plan kitchen-diner or narrow galley space, here's how to make the most of your kitchen's footprint.

There's a moment early on in a kitchen project when it pays to take a step back. A moment that calls for both an objective and a creative view. Objective, because you might question: does the door need to stay there? Why are we keeping the chimney breast? Creative, because you might see a way to carve out a utility area or turn an awkward beam into a focal point.

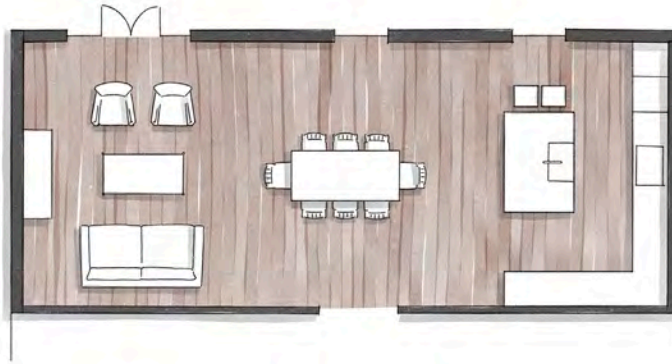
When architects look at a room, they tend to block-plan the space to make it as ergonomic as possible. 'An architect will consider the space in its entirety,' explains Fred Horlock, Neptune design director. 'They think outside the box and will be more inclined to move things like doors or even walls to improve the space.'

Given a large or awkward kitchen footprint, the architect might suggest creating rooms within rooms as an efficient solution. 'You can zone your storage and cleaning areas with a pantry and utility, or you might want to incorporate two sinks into the plan: a prep one and one that is more tucked away,' suggests Fred. 'Just remember that the "walk-in" feel is also important, so don't zone for the sake of it – there are always alternative ways to solve a layout.'

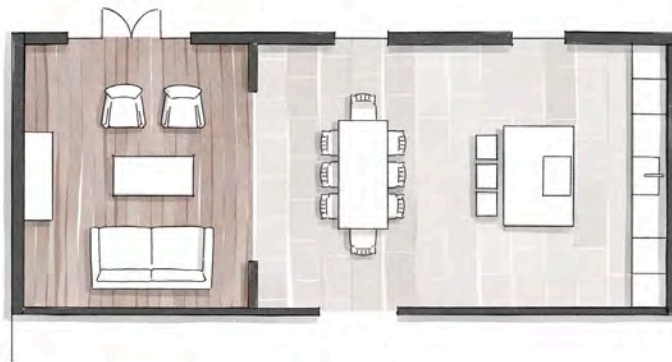
While the architect takes a broad view of the space, you still need to make the layout work for your lifestyle. 'Working with our in-store kitchen designers makes a big difference,' says Fred. 'It is your kitchen designer who will worry about the best access for the larder or where you'll sit to drink your mid-morning coffee.'

In open-plan layouts, functional storage allows the kitchen to be part of the living space, so look for cabinetry that works hard such as drawers-within-drawers and slots to contain chopping boards. But ultimately, remember that the kitchen is the heart of your home. As Fred points out: 'A new kitchen is one of your most important home investments, so it should be a space you love and that works for you.'

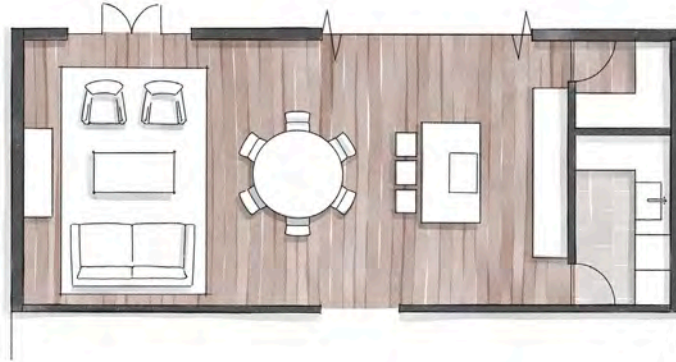
ONE SPACE, THREE PLANS



Open-plan rooms can be generous and airy, but don't feel the need to fill every inch of wall space with fitted cabinetry. This roomy layout enables keen cooks to maximise storage and prep areas and introduce flexible pieces like an extending dining table. Use furniture and rugs to clearly define the different areas.



A symmetrical floorplan, with the dining table at the centre, helps the room feel balanced and calm. You can change the pace with shortened stud walls ('nibs') or even a bank of high bookcases to create a dual-use room with a cosy living area away from the kitchen action.



Tuck domestic elements out of the way by building a pantry or utility room so the remaining kitchen space can be focused on relaxing, entertaining and socialising. A circular dining table works well in a smaller footprint and softens the flow of the room. Adding bi-fold doors will connect inside and outside.

FRED'S DESIGN TIPS

Imagine your dream kitchen, regardless of your actual space. You can then identify what elements are important to you and work them into your plan while letting go of the less key aspects.

Keep the areas around architectural details free. For example, don't butt cabinetry right up to a chimney breast; give it room to breathe. It will have a big impact on the room's sense of space.

Spring-clean your cupboards to identify what storage you really need. Why build cabinetry to store bulky items that you never use when you could free up and decorate the area to enhance the feel of the kitchen?

Too many heavy cabinets or too much busyness above the worktop can make a room feel oppressive, so mix in open shelving with glass-fronted wall cabinets, and embrace plain wall space as a spot to display art.

Consider where you position your sink. Unless you're super tidy, sinks will be messy areas, so you might not want it in the middle of your social island.

If you don't have a utility room, consider relocating your washing machine and drier to a downstairs loo or landing cupboard.

To talk to an in-store kitchen designer about your project, visit
neptune.com/kitchen

This is

BESPOKE CABINETS

The kitchen may be the domain of the family cook, but it's often also the family pet's favoured hang-out spot. Happily, during the consultation process, our kitchen designers can suggest and create beautiful bespoke solutions to make everyone in the family feel at home.

Here, a Chichester utility room, painted in Juniper, has been customised to create two comfy nooks for these lucky family dogs.

To explore our kitchen collections, visit
neptune.com/kitchen



Chichester cabinetry in Juniper





Making it Personal

Designing a kitchen that works for your particular space means you might want to look beyond the regular options for extra adjustments or individual details.



Henley Kitchen in Lead Light with Emerson pendants and Ludlow bar stools



Nooks, beams, chimney breasts or sloping walls. The bones of most kitchens include a smattering of awkward or irregular ‘features’ (to be polite) that make a cookie-cutter kitchen design all but impossible. Add to that the desire for a circular sink maybe or a particular sized cooker hood, and many people find themselves needing cabinetry, fixtures or accessories that aren’t immediately available.

As kitchen makers of over twenty years, we’ve designed pretty much every iteration of kitchen and resolved the most unusual of requests. From cabinetry created for the family dog to sleep in to cupboards that work around a three-generations-old AGA, or even the farm kitchen that needed to be painted in a shade that would disguise the mud when young lambs had to be nursed indoors – no challenge is too much.

Luckily, the three main collections offer a great degree of flexibility just by the nature of their designs. Henley focuses on deep drawer cabinets, Chichester has more cupboard options, and Suffolk is a combination of the two. And now, all the collections offer the option of plain or fluted glass panes for wall cabinets, while different larder cupboards can be customised with interior lighting and marble or wood work surfaces. Even

furniture pieces like the freestanding Charlecote island can be adjusted to create an overhang for bar seating, or cabinets and drawers can be configured to create an extra-slim – or extra-wide – fitted island.

Worktops too can be specified to lend a sense of originality, be it the thickness of solid wood or an elegant ogee-edged finish on a marble surface to elevate a classic island design. Hardware is also a good way to add an individual touch, and we offer an impressive array of handles in six finishes – from chrome to black-bronze and flattened brass – alongside an exclusive solid brass bar handle and knob, designed and made in the UK in collaboration with prestigious hardware brand Armac Martin, with the further option to order across the brand’s extensive range.

But what about those specific design elements that can make all the difference to the final result? Our UK workshops and in-store design teams are at hand to help with requests, from an original paint combination for the exterior and interior of cabinets to sourcing a brass kitchen tap. And they do it all with an eye to a customer’s budget – if a bespoke option proves too costly, then they can suggest an inventive combination using existing cabinetry, meaning no two Neptune kitchens will ever look the same.





MARBLE

The beauty of natural marble tells a story of heroic proportions. Editor Suzanne Imre talks to the stone experts who supply Neptune with marble (and other natural stone surfaces) for kitchen worktops and splashbacks.

MARVEL

The dazzling white quarries of northern Italy, where most of the Carrara and Calacatta marble Neptune uses for kitchen projects comes from, are a sight to behold. Mined first by the Romans, the vast quarries are breath-taking in scale and ambition. 'As you fly into Pisa, if you look towards the mountains, they look snow-capped,' says Nick Oldland, co-owner of Wiltshire-based Anything Stone, which supplies Neptune, 'but it's not snow: it's actually marble being carved out of the rock.'

Working with certified and trusted quarry owners and stone-cutting experts, Anything Stone curates and imports some of the best quality and most beautiful pieces of stone. While, today, the blocks are precision cut with the most technically advanced machinery and safety compliant procedures, the process is centuries old. That slice of marble that ends up as a work surface on a kitchen island has taken a journey from the depths of the earth.

Marble is formed through a sedimentary process over thousands of years – one that continues today. As limestone is compressed in the earth's crust, its properties alter, crystallising and turning into a metamorphic rock: marble. Clay, sand or other minerals form the distinctive veins and markings within the stone. It's a similar process for other stones, such as quartzite, which is formed from sandstone, and granite, which is formed from cooled molten rock, the addition of heat helping to make the stone particularly robust and thus a great work surface option.

Stone deposits are found around the world from Brazil to India, and the quarries are usually family run, passed down through generations. In Italy, quarry owners will blast and then prise the stone away in giant blocks. As the natural veining and markings are revealed, they will price the block based on its quality and beauty. These twenty-plus-tonne blocks are then sliced into slabs (Neptune uses thirty-centimetre-thick slabs as standard for marble worktops) and polished to achieve

the required texture, be that a mirror-polish or a more matt, honed finish which is less likely to show up marks. 'We then seal the stone with a penetrating protection treatment that makes it hydro-phobic,' explains Martin Birt, Neptune's account manager at Anything Stone. 'Water will sit in beads on the surface and, even if you spill a glass of wine over it, as long as you wipe it down promptly, it won't stain.'

Nick always advise Neptune customers to visit the slab yards to see the stone and select their final cut. But how to choose? 'Marble and granite are natural stones, so no two pieces are the same,' he says. 'They will all have imperfections in them but that is part of their story – they are pieces of nature.' Carrara, with its all-over pale grey veining, is the most affordable marble, while Calacatta, with its striking veined lines and areas of pure white stone, is more costly. Prices go up further when you look for strains of gold or other coloured pigments running through the stone.

'Always take your kitchen's moodboard with you,' advises Nick, 'and have an idea of what you want and your price range. It can be very seducing seeing these wonderful slabs of stone with their unique markings.' He also suggests thinking about how the slab's marks will sit in your scheme – will the veining be tucked in a corner of the kitchen or even cut away to make room for the sink, or will it line up nicely under a window? 'Consider taking some tape to map out the area of your cut,' he adds, 'otherwise it can be hard to visualise.'

Ultimately, though, Nick's advice is to approach your work surface selection as a journey and be prepared to view several slabs before finding your perfect match. Afterall, 'Every piece of marble comes with a unique story: it has emotion, tactility and beauty. There's just no substitute.'



*Speak to our kitchen designers
for more advice on selecting the best
work surface for your kitchen.
You can book a free consultation at
[neptune.com/kitchen](https://www.neptune.com/kitchen)*





CULINARY

COLOUR EXPERT AND AUTHOR
KASSIA ST CLAIR REFLECTS ON THE CHANGING
COLOURS OF OUR KITCHENS.

COLOUR

‘The importance of the kitchen,’ wrote Mrs Beeton in 1861, ‘can hardly be exaggerated – it is the great laboratory of the household.’ This would have been a novel idea to many of her readers, who were more used to kitchens being – if they were wealthy – the room where a cook presided and from which meals emerged, or – if they were poor – a semi-imaginary space above a hearth where potatoes were boiled. But something about Mrs Beeton’s idea of a kitchen and its importance to family life clearly struck a chord: her *Book of Household Management* sold sixty thousand copies in its first year and nearly two million by 1868. By the early 1930s and 1940s, the recognisably modern kitchen with its cabinetry, ovens and countertops had firmly established itself as the heart of the home. We’ve been trying to decorate it accordingly ever since.

For real traditionalists, creamy whites like Salt and Snow are the best option. The upper part of Victorian and Georgian kitchen walls would usually be whitewashed using a slaked-lime paint that was easy to make, cheap, and considered hygienic; below this would be simple glazed tiles, from which it was easy to wipe soot and grease.

Lanhydrock in Cornwall and Ickworth in Suffolk, both National Trust properties, demonstrate this approach admirably. You might also consider a mid-blue, like Neptune’s Flax Blue, for walls or cabinetry: historically, this colour was once believed to deter flies and, even if more recent research has disproved the theory, is both beautiful and soothing.

The taste for more vibrant kitchens came in the mid-twentieth century. In the wake of the Second World War, there was an explosion of consumer goods available in every shade from canary yellow to raspberry via chartreuse. ‘I love colour!’ one American woman told a researcher in 1955, revealing she hankered after pastel yellow appliances that would match the rest of her décor. More recently, we’ve been embracing darker colours in our kitchens, such as Neptune’s Smoke, Navy or Walnut. Dark blues, deep greens, chic greys and chocolate browns add drama and cosiness and work well with natural materials like marble and wood. We might no longer think of the kitchen as the laboratory of the home à la Beeton, but that doesn’t mean we should be afraid to experiment.



Neptune x Armac Martin solid brass bar handles and knob

This is
O S C O T T

For ironmongery buffs, it's non-negotiable. For the rest of us, it's worth understanding the difference in quality and feel between solid brass and cast brass. The former, like the brass hardware produced by British company Armac Martin, requires patience and very heavy presses to produce precisely forged hardware with few imperfections. (Cast brass, on the other hand, is when hot, molten metal is set in a mould, producing a lighter, less robust result.)

This year, we launch a solid brass design collaboration with Armac Martin: a contemporary bar handle, available in two sizes and six finishes. With traditional ball joints, it is a sleek, modern take on a kitchen classic.

Discover our full hardware collection, visit
neptune.com/hardware



USEFUL
&
BEAUTIFUL

The powder room (or downstairs loo to most) has long been the place to test out one's more daring creative visions. Now it's the turn of the utility room. It's time to unleash your imagination in your pantry, boot room or laundry and have some fun with colour, print and pattern in these hard-working spaces, says House & Garden editor, Hatta Byng.



Once, the idea of a decorated house was reserved for the privileged few. But over the last few decades, equipped with tools such as the edited paint chart and other decorating sources that cater for a variety of budgets, many more people aspire to an aesthetically pleasing home and understand the joy and comfort this brings to daily life.

A beneficiary of this relatively new appreciation are our utility rooms – the laundry, the pantry, the larder, the boot room, and so forth. Who wants to be ironing surrounded by the ugliness of washing machines and the prerequisite paraphernalia? The rooms that were once the domain of servants are now part of our everyday lives, and are given just as much attention as our kitchens or sitting rooms as we aspire to domestic bliss and a well-lived life. In fact, in my house, our pantry (which is just off the kitchen and where we do most of our washing up) has units and floor-to-ceiling storage cupboards painted in pillar-box-red gloss. The effect is quite dramatic and adds a degree of glamour, making the often endless-seeming time at the sink seem slightly less dreary.

I think we have a need to make these spaces pretty and appealing, and armed with our paint chart, this is all very possible. Some well-thought-out storage and a large sink – be it for giving plants a drink in your boot room or for washing big pans in your kitchen or scullery – for me, are a must. Mixing in vintage storage pieces (alongside well-planned, purpose-built cupboards and cabinetry) can also create an appealing environment and be a more sustainable and practical approach. Gathered skirts or curtains to cover shelves or washing machines always look very pretty, and, although they may appear slightly too regularly on my Instagram feed, they are an affordable, easy to achieve means of prettifying and hiding any mess.

But a word of warning: I think these days there can be a tendency to over decorate these rooms. Does a boot room really need a blind in an expensive fabric that is never going to be lowered, or a bench cushion that is only going to get muddy? I'd urge you to keep these hard-working rooms interesting but practical. And, if you are working to a budget, keep the last of your cash for interesting pictures or decorative objects for your utility walls that will bring more personality and soul. That said, a wallpapered boot room or laundry is an indulgence I may yet succumb to for its instant uplift.

Most of our laundry cabinets are part of the Georgian-inspired Chichester collection, but still complement all our kitchen styles. Thanks to painted cabinets designed for white goods, airing cupboards and wall-mounted, pull-out airing racks, broom cupboards and basket storage, with the help of our in-store kitchen designers, it's easy to configure a streamlined, efficient utility, whatever size the room.





Dualit

Dualit

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Dualit

Dualit

Dualit

Dualit

WHY WE

Love

DUALIT

A necessity in most kitchens, the humble toaster is elevated to icon status thanks to good design and quality materials.

A thumbprint mark on the inside of an electrical good might be cause for rejection by some manufacturers, but at Dualit, it's a badge of honour. 'Brian has powder-sprayed the toaster castings for over thirty years,' says Alex Gort-Barten, grandson of founder, Max. 'Every casting has his fingerprint on it where he's moved it ready for firing.' And adding to the personal touch, each Dualit toaster, manufactured in the West Sussex factory, is made by an individual person who includes their name on the base plate.

It's this hand-built, crafted approach, along with skilled engineering design, that has ensured the Dualit toaster has become a twentieth-century design classic. Its credentials are simplicity and honesty. Each part is connected with visible screws, making the toaster robust and easy to repair ('Built-in obsolescence isn't what we're about,' notes Alex). And the products share a visual language. 'We rely on pure geometry,' Alex says. 'Nothing too fussy, just vertical or horizontal lines and the same radius for curves.' The curved profile of the Dualit kettle is the same as the toaster's curves. It's an

attention to detail that the family-run business is proud of. 'Nothing is left to chance,' says Alex. 'It's an easy thing to say, but it requires obsessional detail.'

When it comes to materials, father Leslie Gort-Barten and son Alex are equally uncompromising. The toaster ends are made of expensive aluminium because it's solid and keeps the heat in. The patented ProHeat elements come from India and the wiring is sourced from Poland, 'because they have the best quality nickel and steel,' says Alex.

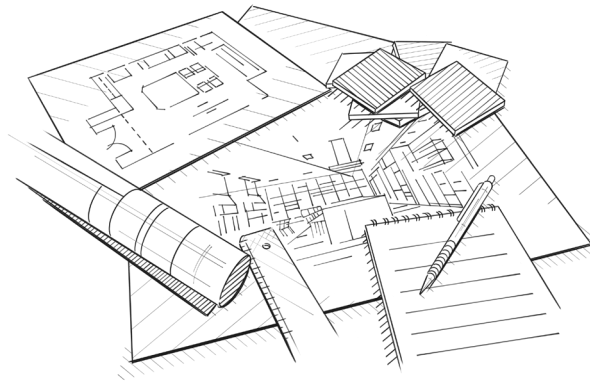
The classic exterior is stainless steel, but coloured options have proved popular from the start. 'Our first colour was a utility cream because it was the only paint you could get after the war,' says Leslie. Today, the toaster is available in a range of colours and finishes to suit different settings, from country to contemporary kitchens.

Ultimately, it's ingenuity and daring that drives the vision. 'Dualit is a company that is genuinely innovative,' Alex explains. 'We're never going to be the biggest or the cheapest, but we do strive to be the best.'

DESIGNING

YOUR KITCHEN

Our in-store kitchen experts offer a professional design service with a personal touch.



Your kitchen is likely to be one of the biggest investments you'll make for your home. So, while the cabinetry itself (how it's made and what it's made from) is important, feeling confident and reassured in the design process is equally as important, too. That's why our end-to-end Kitchen Design Service alleviates the stress of embarking on your new kitchen project. From selecting the right cabinetry, work surfaces and hardware to adding the final coat of paint, our expert designers, project managers and installers will provide dedicated one-to-one support at every stage of your design journey. And with over eighteen years' experience, we can combine our design expertise with your personal vision and specifics to create a truly unique kitchen.

What to expect, in a nutshell...

Nº 1

Free consultation

You'll meet with one of our expert kitchen designers in store to start mapping out ideas for your dream space. They'll walk you through each of our timeless cabinetry collections, talk through storage solutions, appliances and accessories, and answer any queries you may have.

Nº 3

Plans & visuals

They'll create A3 plans, elevations and colour renders, and meet with you to present your new kitchen along with a detailed quote. It's an opportunity to go over every element of your design and, should you want to, make any tweaks.

You'll find expert kitchen designers in every one of our stores. To book your first free consultation, visit neptune.com/kitchen

Nº 2

A home visit

Should you choose to sign up for the Kitchen Design Service, your dedicated designer will then visit your home (or can work from architectural plans) to get to know your space, discuss ideas and take precise measurements for you.

Nº 4

Specialist installation

Once your design is confirmed and your deposit is paid, you can begin the installation process. You'll meet your very own project manager and, if you choose to use them, our accredited installation team whose fitting service ensures your kitchen is guaranteed, by us, to last a lifetime.





INSTALLING YOUR KITCHEN

Our end-to-end installation service is designed to support your kitchen design project.

Click. The sound of the shutter closing on a Neptune delivery van. A new kitchen has been loaded on board, ready to head to its forever home. For our installation team, no job is too much of a challenge. From a second-floor flat in a Victorian city terrace to coastal homes that require checking the changing tides for access, at Neptune we welcome projects of every size, style and location.

What can I expect from the installation service?

After signing off designs, you'll meet with your own project manager and, on the first day of installation, the larger team who will be there through the next stages. Bringing years of experience, they'll help with any technical questions, undertake site surveys, and ensure electrical and plumbing layouts are just right for your design.

Do I have to organise anything?

Your dedicated project manager will oversee the project roadmap, coordinating other tradespeople, making sure tasks are completed as planned, and conducting checks throughout the process.

And what about the wider team?

We have a nationwide team of Neptune accredited installers who work together with your own appointed tradespeople (such as plumbers, builders and electricians) to ensure the process goes smoothly. Alongside them are our trusted decorators, who come in at the final stage to hand-finish cabinetry with your signature paint choice. This combined effort brings initial design visions to life through precision craftsmanship and expertise.

Start your kitchen project today and book your first free consultation at,
neptune.com/kitchen

CHAPTER THREE

TIME WELL
SPENT

Create a kitchen for cooking,
entertaining, working and enjoying



THE HEART
of
THE HOME



Historian, author and tv presenter Lucy Worsley contemplates what the kitchen has meant to generations of cooks over the centuries.



If I have a day off, I'm often to be found stirring vegetable soup. To me, it's relaxing to stand by my hob in its island unit, at the centre of my open-plan flat in London. As I stir, I sometimes like to think of the giant changes in women's lives that have taken place since the soup-makers who've gone before me.

For example, I imagine the inhabitants of a medieval peasant's cottage like the one you can visit at the Weald and Downland Museum, a collection of historic buildings in Sussex. With its thatched roof and windowless stone walls, it was a place that sparked my love of history as a kid.

My airy modern flat is light years away from it, but perhaps the one thing that connects me to that cottage life is the idea that cooking lies at the heart of a home.

The open hearth was so important the medieval authorities didn't enumerate buildings or souls but hearths, and made people pay a hearth tax. Over a flat firestone in the centre of the cottage, women cooked pottage, a sludgy soup named for the round-bottomed iron pots that were easy to nestle into a sandy floor if you didn't have a table.

When British people began to live in towns, though, and aspired to bigger houses with servants, cooking was pushed into the background. It became posh to eat in a different room, a dining parlour, or even an elegant banqueting house, and to keep food preparation out of sight and out of mind. The grandest Georgian country houses had kitchens in separate blocks.

In Victorian cities, with space at a premium, kitchens were squeezed underground, into dark and dingy basements. They were unpleasant places to be. It amazes me that the Victorians were so slow to adopt labour-saving devices. When the dishwasher was invented (by a woman – naturally) it didn't catch on, because domestic labour was so plentiful and cheap.

The one big innovation was the switchover from the open fire to the enclosed cooking range for greater fuel efficiency. And people replaced their cauldrons with flat-bottomed saucepans for cooking on a hob like mine.

After the First World War, though, domestic service was beginning to come to an end. And you get the sense, for the first time in centuries, that homeowners had to re-enter their kitchens. They made the best of it, reinventing fancy cooking as a middle-class pastime. Even the intellectual Virginia Woolf went for cookery lessons, although she managed to bake her wedding ring into a suet pudding.

Since then, we've had this idea that cooking can be a high-status activity, and that a kitchen is worth making beautiful. Unlike the hardworking woman who lived in that windowless cottage, I make soup not because I have to, but because I want too. But it's true for both of us that the kitchen's where domestic life truly unfolds.

A KITCHEN TO LIVE IN



For Devon-based hoteliers
Hugo and Olive, their new kitchen
had to balance family life with their
love of hosting and entertaining –
and colour.

Henley Kitchen in Classic Oak and Burnt Sienna,
with Charlecote Island in Burnham Red

Above: Sailing under sunset by Olive Guest. See more of
Olive's art work @oilsbyolive and @glebehousedevon







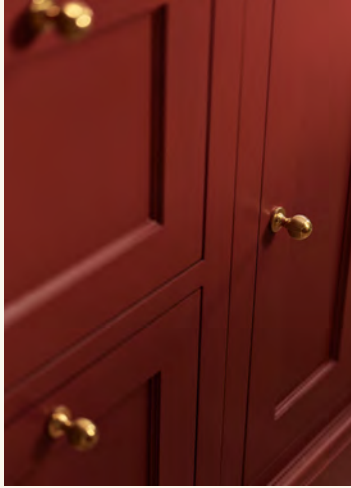


As the paint dried and the Neptune installers completed the finishing touches to their new Henley kitchen, hotelier and chef Hugo Guest and his artist wife, Olive, (who together run Glebe House, a guest house and restaurant in Devon) knew exactly what they had planned for the space once the dust had been swept away. ‘The island is the hub of family activity,’ says Hugo. ‘Our boys are four and two and we love cooking with them – baking, rolling out pasta. Generally getting very messy.’

But this kitchen has been deliberately designed to be versatile too, with a seating and library area to one side, a tucked-away utility room, and a big dining table for entertaining. ‘We were living in a small two-bedroom flat while the building work was going on so haven’t been able to host any friends, other than at Glebe House itself,’ adds Olive. ‘We have a long list of friends to invite over now.’

For keen vegetable-grower Hugo, linking the garden and surrounding countryside to the kitchen was also a key consideration. ‘We have a big kitchen garden that we created from an empty field to serve the restaurant,’ he explains, ‘but there is always surplus veg, which we like to pick with the boys. We grow everything seasonally from radishes and broad beans to kale, fennel and artichokes. Currently, it’s a surplus of Swiss chard!’

Hugo recalls they chose the Henley collection because ‘the design was simple but had nice detailing; it sits perfectly between modern and traditional style’, and they loved the inclusion of the natural oak cabinetry. Colour was an important way to connect the outside and in and, inspired by the earthy clay shades of the nearby Jurassic cliffs, the couple mixed Burnt Sienna on cabinetry alongside Henley’s natural oak finish, and used Burnham Red on the island (with Farrow & Ball’s ‘Fake Tan’ on the tongue and groove panelling).



They were also influenced by the years they spent living and working in Europe. ‘Our style is inspired by the country kitchens of Italy and France,’ says Hugo. ‘That use of natural wood and stone and warm, earthy colours that feels anchored in the surrounding environment.’ The subtle terracotta chequerboard floor is a case in point: ‘It feels so warm and inviting and transports me to my favourite parts of Italy,’ he adds, noting that laying the floor was ‘a real labour of love – I hadn’t quite appreciated it would need six coats of sealer, but it was worth it.’

Claire Birkbeck, the Bath-based Neptune kitchen designer who worked with Hugo and Olive on the project, recalls the couple had clear ideas from the start. ‘They wanted to make it a really joyful space, somewhere with lots of character and colour, and they also wanted to make sure it fitted their family life set up. As a designer, it was all about making it a hardworking space with good storage, but one that also feels fun and creative.’

For artist Olive, layering colour and pattern onto the warm terracotta base was the next step. ‘I introduced pattern through the floor tiles, our collection of pottery and plates, and soft furnishings. For me, pattern is an instinctive thing – when you see a pattern you like, it just feels right. Not all patterns work together though. I tend to layer different shapes – a geometric with a floral maybe, or a large, wide pattern with a smaller print. And I always choose a thread of colour that ties the patterns together.’

The couple mixed in vintage finishes with the antique brass taps by Perrin & Rowe and a reclaimed butler’s sink in the utility. They worked with designer Claire to select the softly dappled marble for the work surfaces and added lighting such as the Athena scalloped shade, which Olive felt suitably reflected their coastal location.

‘Our original vision was to make the kitchen a place to cook and host but also for our family to live in and relax,’ says Hugo. ‘This is how we imagined it, but Neptune made it a reality.’

*To begin your kitchen journey, talk to our kitchen design team at
neptune.com/kitchen*



*You'll find
me in the
kitchen*



My kitchen holds a very special place in my heart because I designed it whilst flying. I know that might sound a little curious, but I decided quite early on when we had moved into our Victorian family house in west London that it had to be the biggest, most practical room in the home. So, I took my time, jotting down thoughts and ideas about how I wanted the kitchen to look and feel whenever I got the chance in a notebook I kept for the kitchen project.

The kitchen has a big table in the middle – that was my starting point – and I knew everything would need to revolve around that. I learnt very early on that every family member and all our guests want to be where the cooking takes place, so there is lots of space around the table with mismatched chairs that we can add onto as and when.

There is a bright red AGA, which we inherited, so it's always warm and very cosy in the room. The best piece of advice I was given was to have two sinks. I know this might seem a bit excessive, but it has proved so useful: one of them is huge enough to hide all the washing up in, the other is smaller but big enough to drain vegetables.

There are always flowers on the table and candles lit in my kitchen. Plates are stacked on a big wall rack with more open shelving to display all the decorative plates and serving platters that I have collected over the years on my travels. I painted the room a neutral colour to provide a calm foil for all the busyness of the objects. Green is definitely the predominant colour, and there

is plenty of print scattered around, including the curtains which are a vintage floral fabric from katharinepole.com. It's the room that I rearrange the most, moving objects, cushions and lights around, always 'tweaking'.

What I love about the kitchen is that I can be alone in the space, working at the table, or cooking for between one and ten people, and it expands and contracts to hold whoever is around. We often have people to stay so it is the room they gravitate towards and help themselves to whatever is going. I like to think the kitchen is a large part of why people come and stay. It's definitely not my cooking (I was once asked if I could move on from page thirty-four in the cookbook), though it might be my husband, Simon's! The Green Roasting Tin by Rukmini Iyer is now my firm friend and ally.

One decision I made when the children were growing up was to build a veranda off the kitchen with huge double doors leading out to the garden, so it really feels like a room for all seasons. A fire can burn in the brassiere outside during winter and, in summer, the kitchen leads effortlessly into the garden. And when it's raining, it's wonderful to be outside yet dry, listening and watching the rain on the roof.

This kitchen has made all our best family memories, where we gather, cook and laugh.

With a career in the fast-paced world of fashion – first as fashion director of Vogue for twenty-five years and now as co-founder of Collagerie, the curated fashion, interiors and lifestyle shopping experience – Lucinda Chambers finds balance and solace back in her much-loved family kitchen.



WHY WE

Love

TABLE SETTINGS

Taking time to prepare a well-laid table is always
going to be time well spent.

It's no secret that some of the best conversations happen over meals, be that casual family gatherings or longer dinner party suppers. And while food and conversation are important elements at mealtimes, so too is the table setting. Who hasn't walked into a home as a guest and felt pleasure at the sight of a beautifully laid table awaiting them. A sign that the host has taken time and care to welcome you, their creativity with flowers and candles and tableware setting the stage for the experience and memories to come.

Considered table settings are no modern convention. King Louis XIV was the first monarch to offer place settings for each guest. Until then, drinking cups had been shared between diners. By the eighteenth century, table settings had become extremely elaborate with a focus on symmetry and uniformity. Unsurprisingly, the Victorians formalised the etiquette, especially the placement of cutlery, driven by the desire to express wealth and status.

Thankfully, today, life is more relaxed, but the basics of table settings haven't changed that much. There are some cultural differences – the French lay placements with the tines of the forks facing down (apparently to

show the silversmith's hallmark on the underside), and the Americans always place the napkin on the left whereas in Britain its position is optional. But despite our differences, appreciation of a well-laid table is universally shared.

At Neptune, the focus is on tableware that feels comfortable to use and is beautiful to look at – simple, artisanal crockery from Portugal in organic shapes and soft earthy colours, pure linen tablecloths and napkins, and well-weighted cutlery. Glassware designs range from chic cocktail glasses to refined wine glasses and casual tumblers.

Happily, creativity rules when it comes to a beautiful table setting. Mixing patterned and plain china, arranging inventive and unexpected centrepieces, using a mishmash of candlesticks – anything goes. Colour is a useful starting point and will help establish the mood of the tablescape. And while there are the traditional rules for setting plates, cutlery and glassware, there's also plenty of scope for individuality and self-expression. Ultimately, a pretty table setting is not just the stage for meals but a platform for making memories with loved ones.

This is

CLOVELLY STONEWARE

The picturesque coastal city of Aveiro in Portugal is famous for its meandering canals and for the quality and craftsmanship of its centuries-old pottery workshops. It's where our Clovelly collection of ceramic tableware is made, using local Portuguese clay renowned for its natural strength, durability and rich pigmentation.

Designed for everyday use, the collection of bowls, plates, mugs and serve-ware is both dishwasher and microwave safe. Available in two colourways – Reactive White and Crackle Grey – Clovelly's organic shapes are finished with a hand-applied glaze creating an artisanal feel. The perfect platters for a relaxed meal at any time of day.

Discover the full collection at,
neptune.com/clovelly





Dressing your Kitchen

THE NEPTUNE WAY

Walk into any Neptune store and you may well fall in love with the welcoming and elegant ambience of the kitchen spaces. For this, we can thank Georgina (or George, as she generally goes by) who leads the team of creatives who style our store kitchens into spaces you'd like to call your own.

Our stores are designed to feel more like homes than showrooms. So, tell us, how do you go about making the kitchens look and feel real?



Our store kitchens capture a moment in time, whether that's sitting down for tea with family or preparing dinner and drinks for friends. If it's the latter for example, we might put out a chopping board with fresh herbs on, waiting to be chopped, and fill a tray with wine glasses. And we'll follow that story through into the connecting living space as well, filling our Piccadilly bowls on the coffee table with amaretti biscuits for an after-supper treat.

How does the styling process work? What steps do you take to get to the final look?

It all starts with our seasonal story. I work closely with Meaghan, our art director, to build an understanding of the styling themes we're showcasing in our Stories magazine and on our website and social media, and we'll then translate these in store. For spring for example, we might fill lots of glass Belmont jars with pulses and beans in lighter colours to reflect a fresher seasonal palette. Whereas we might style a darker, moodier kitchen with jars filled with black beans and kidney beans for autumn.

What's the best way to bring personality into the different kitchen collections?

Let the space reflect your lifestyle. If you want a more casual country look and feel, think about using rustic tableware and textured table linens. For more elegant townhouse kitchens, like our Henley kitchen, I would suggest displaying a contemporary vase styled with stems that are more structural, and crystal glassware on open shelves for a little sparkle.

Is there anything you steer clear of when styling Neptune store kitchens?

We never do things that you wouldn't do in your own home. We wouldn't overdress a table with place settings at every seat, copious layers of cutlery, and neatly folded napkins. Because how often do you do that in your own home? And we would never go out and buy a fake cake to display, for example. Every prop you see is real, has a purpose, and is a considered thought.

What about in your own kitchen? How does your styling at home compare?

I have a Suffolk kitchen painted in Dove Grey with piles of white crockery stacked up on shelves, wooden chopping boards which I've accumulated over the years leaning on the side, and foliage – usually eucalyptus mixed with something seasonal – on the island. It looks like it could be a Neptune store to be honest. It is, however, a little bit messier, with lots of letters and bits of paper hanging around.

And finally, as someone who styles for a living, what tips would you give to somebody who is looking to add the final flourishes to their kitchen?

Cluster rather than clutter: place things with consideration rather than trying to do too much and running the risk of it looking messy. Add texture where you can by layering chairs and benches with sheepskins, cushions and throws. And think about colour – styling is an opportunity to add something unexpected to your palette, be it the colour of cookery book spines, coloured linen, or simply the vibrancy of a bowl of lemons and limes.



For more styling ideas for your kitchen, visit your local Neptune store.
[neptune.com/our-stores](https://www.neptune.com/our-stores)

LET THE
SEARCH
BEGIN



UNCOVERING AN INTRIGUING
ANTIQUE OR VINTAGE FIND AND
LEARNING ABOUT THE HAND
OF ITS CREATOR IS A SURE-FIRE
WAY TO SATISFY OUR INNATE
INQUISITIVENESS. LAYERING SUCH
DISCOVERIES INTO A KITCHEN
SCHEME GUARANTEES TO BRING
CHARACTER, INTEREST AND
LIFE TO THE ROOM.

The splash of red across an oil painting. The dark wood of a high-backed Windsor chair. These vintage pieces may not have been destined for a kitchen during their original creation, but they inject personality into a kitchen and influence how it evolves.

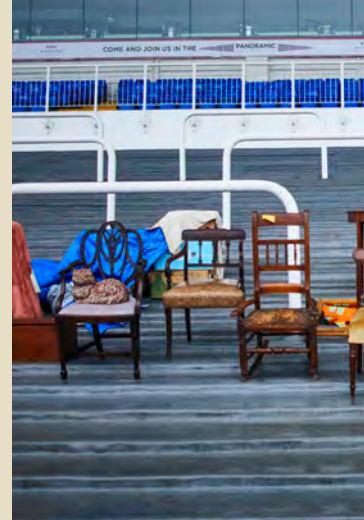
And the best way to find such treasures or start a collection? A visit to one of the many antiques fairs, bric-a-brac markets or car boot sales around the country is a good start. The choice and variety can be overwhelming, so we asked the experts how they source and buy one-off pieces for those finishing touches to a kitchen.

Meaghan Hunter, Neptune art director and stylist, recounts how she recently discovered a solid oak plate rack during a trip to Kempton: 'Originally it would have

been used in sculleries of Victorian households to allow plates to dry; now I'd use it as a focal point in the kitchen to display decorative plates.' It also pays to do a little research before the shopping expedition to know what to search for. For example, look out for flatware with a solid silver stamp or the beautiful green Moroccan Tamegroute ceramics from the mid-seventeenth century, distinguishable by their drip, drop, and ripple textures. Similarly, there are many unique styles of antique glass, from the fine, colourful Murano glass of Italy to the lightly patterned 'Depression glass' that emerged during the Great Depression in America in the 1920s.

There's a real joy in discovering pieces that hold history in every curve, chip and cut. 'Uncovering these pieces, it becomes a passion project and a story to share when you're entertaining,' says Anna Unwin, stylist and specialist in sourcing bespoke antiques for clients (@anna.unwin). A magpie when it comes to pottery, Anna focuses on searching for individual pieces in similar colours and materials, not worrying about finding a full collection – 'I find you then take great pride in gathering a perfect, mismatched but coherent set.' Accumulating a variety of glassware can lead to apothecary-style displays on dressers or make for a colourful table setting. 'If you want to avoid glasses looking too mismatched, present them on a tray and suddenly they're a collection,' suggests Anna.

It's this gathering nature that makes a kitchen feel more authentic too, injecting character and introducing pieces that have a story. Don't be afraid of purchasing a slightly damaged set of traditional Chinese white and blue porcelain plates if the seller can provide the history, as these pieces can make the most spectacular kitchen wall art. Plus, there's a pleasure in knowing you're a part of a product's life cycle.



When sourcing for kitchens, antiques adopt a multipurpose function. Take traditional French marmalade pots: they look elegant when displayed in a row along a shelf but they're also vessels for holding cutlery and utensils. Similarly, French Confit pots – originally used to preserve food – today look striking on a kitchen island when filled with large arrangements of flowers or stems. Another staple of the kitchen is tin-lined copper pans, with the most authentic designs identifiable by their French 'Villedieu CVD' stamps and substantial weight. They're renowned for conducting heat extremely well when cooking, and the warm earthy colour of the copper means that, when hung, they become glowing works of art.

Whether you're seeking out specific pieces or looking to curate artistic displays, it's worth considering how an antique will sit alongside your other collections. Meaghan suggests 'layering found objects with your favourite everyday tableware' as this will inject colour, storytelling and that special decorative touch, too. Over time, your home will begin to reflect your own stories of antiques hunts, lively bartering with traders and collecting passions, the joy of discovery and the interesting people met along the way, all weaving the tales of a life well lived.

OUR TOP THREE TIPS FOR VISITING AN ANTIQUES FAIR

Look beyond the existing colour or pattern on upholstered furniture.

If there's a beautiful frame or shape that you love, and the piece is structurally sound, there's no reason you couldn't re-upholster it in your preferred fabric.

Chat to the vendors. It's worth making a connection, not only because they tend to be interesting individuals, but especially if you're trying to grow a collection. Most sellers will source similar items and can let you know if new pieces come in.

Measure up your space before leaving the house. You want to bring a tape measure with you to check the size of the furniture you're buying but you also need to know that it's going to fit the desired space in your home.



BOOK CLUB

BY JACK STURGESS



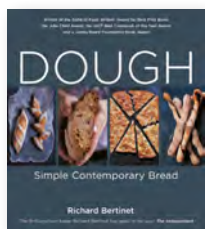
Some things in life feel like magic. Like mixing flour, water, salt and (sometimes) yeast into dough, and giving it a little of our care and attention to create something incredible: breads of all shapes and sizes, from baguettes to brioche and everything in between.

As an ex-chef, now bread making teacher, I understand that bread making can sometimes seem tricky – scary even – especially for a beginner. But with a handful of principles, a little knowledge of the process, and some all-important practice, confidence is found. Don't be afraid to try because, once you crack it, a world of amazing bread will open up before you.

Dough. Simple Contemporary Bread

Richard Bertinet
(*Kyle Cathie, £18.99*)

I'd been making bread for a while before meeting Richard Bertinet in 2007, but it was his first book, *Dough*, that truly opened up the possibilities for me. Mr Bertinet shows us just how versatile bread dough can be; with just a few yeasted dough base recipes, you can make a huge variety of different breads. His 'slap and fold' kneading technique is a unique and fun way to begin to understand the dough.



Bread Therapy

Pauline Beaumont
(*Yellow Kite, £12.99*)

Making our own bread is about much more than a pleasing sandwich or crunchy slice of toast. The quiet nature of the process brings calm and pause to our otherwise noisy, fast-paced lives. When you do it, you'll feel the benefit. In *Bread Therapy*, Pauline Beaumont puts these feelings into words for us, uncovering the fact that the simple act of turning flour into a proud loaf can be the very antidote to the stresses of life itself.



Slow Dough: Real Bread

Chris Young and the bakers of the Real Bread Campaign
(*Nourish Books, £20*)

The Real Bread Campaign works to celebrate real bread. Not the loaves in the local shop full of magical powders and hocus pocus, but the real food version made with traditional ingredients, crafted with love, and given time to develop amazing flavour. *Slow Dough: Real Bread* brings together recipes from the minds of creative bakers all over the UK that are free from additives and celebrate the natural process in all its glory.



Tartine Bread

Chad Robertson
(*Chronicle Books, £30*)

In this beautifully photographed book, Chad Robertson tells the romantic story of the legendary Tartine bakery. Every aspect of his San Francisco sourdough process is documented in meticulous detail, and it's simply wonderful. If you're just beginning your sourdough journey, this may be a little much. But if you're here for the ride, it'll be one you turn to time and again as you practice, accrue experience, and pick up tips and techniques to develop your very own signature sourdough.



Bread Every Day

Jack Sturgess (*Ebury, £25*)

In *Bread Every Day*, Jack Sturgess starts from the premise that most breads – even the fancy ones – don't need loads of hard work. He's passionate about using every last crumb, hence why the thirty featured recipes range from classics such as bloomers and ciabattas to bagels and sweet buns but also include ideas such as spaghetti meatballs that use up stale bread or gooey chocolate pudding made with leftover doughnuts.

Opposite: Jack photographed by Andrew Hayes-Watkins

In the kitchen

Feeding friends and family is one of life's simple joys.

In this issue of Kitchen Stories we share with you four recipes, devised over the years by our teams at The Provenist, to offer healthy, balanced and delicious meals. Whether you rustle up a protein-packed salad, a hearty supper dish or an indulgently fruity cheesecake, we say good food, shared with loved ones, is nourishment for both body and soul.



WARM PUY LENTIL SALAD

with red chicory, long-stemmed broccoli and soft boiled eggs

Makes: enough for four as a starter or side dish

Put aside: at least an hour for soaking and an hour for prepping and cooking

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 200g puy lentils | 10g fresh mint |
| 150g shallots | 15ml balsamic vinegar |
| 140g red chicory (about three small heads) | 1 tsp honey |
| 100g long-stemmed broccoli | 1 lemon <i>zested and juiced</i> |
| 2 cloves of garlic | 4 eggs |
| 1 litre vegetable stock | 15ml olive oil |
| 15g fresh parsley | |
| 5g fresh thyme | |



WHAT TO DO

- 1 Start by soaking the lentils in cold water for at least an hour, then drain and pour them into a large saucepan and cover with the vegetable stock. Bring to the boil and cook for about 15 minutes (the longer you soak them, the quicker they cook so keep an eye out for them). They should be tender but not mushy. Drain your lentils and rinse them under the tap before tipping them back into the saucepan.
- 2 Whilst your lentils are cooking, pre-heat your oven to 180°C, then place your eggs in boiling water and cook for six minutes. Run under cold water, peel and put aside.
- 3 Next, finely slice the shallots and garlic and add them to a saucepan with a little of the oil and the thyme, and allow to cook until soft – they'll take about 15 minutes. Once they're translucent, add in the balsamic vinegar and honey and cook down until the liquid has evaporated. Pour the shallots into the lentils, add in the lemon juice and zest along with the chopped parsley and mint, and season with salt and pepper.
- 4 Arrange the broccoli on a small, lined baking tray and drizzle with a little oil before baking in the oven for about eight minutes, until they're beginning to char and feel tender.
- 5 To assemble your salad, break up the chicory leaves and cut any larger leaves in half lengthways. Warm the lentils on a gentle heat (you may want to add in a little more olive oil at this point) and check the seasoning. Stir the chicory and broccoli through the lentils, place on a large serving plate and top with the eggs, cut into halves.



SMOKED HADDOCK, SWEDE & CELERIAC GRATIN

Makes: enough for eight

Put aside: two hours and ten minutes, including an hour and ten for baking and ten for cooling

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

1 large swede (about 600g)
1 large celeriac (about 850g)
3 cloves of garlic
2 leeks *washed and trimmed*
150g Gruyère cheese grated
1 tsp wholegrain mustard
10g fresh thyme
15g fresh chives

1 bay leaf
100g spinach
300g smoked haddock (undyed)
250ml crème fraîche
200ml good quality vegetable stock



WHAT TO DO

- 1 Start by washing and peeling the celeriac and swede. Then, using either a mandolin or very carefully with a knife, slice both into thin rounds (a little tip, if you're using a knife, is to slice one end off first so they sit flat while you're chopping). Set aside the celeriac. Bring a large saucepan to the boil and blanch the swede for about eight minutes before taking it out to drain and cool in a colander.
- 2 Now, roughly chop your leeks and garlic and sauté them in a little oil with the thyme until they're soft and translucent. Once cooked, turn the heat down, add in the bay leaf, mustard, stock and crème fraîche and bring to a gentle simmer. Stir through the spinach, chopped chives and 100g of the gruyère cheese, and season well with salt and pepper.
- 3 Next, dice the haddock into roughly one-inch chunks, and lightly grease an oven-proof dish (about 28 by 23cm) with a little oil.
- 4 You can now start building your gratin. Begin with the swede and celeriac, laying them in the bottom of the dish. Follow these with the haddock before topping with the stock mixture. Continue building your layers until you reach the top of the dish, then finish with a sprinkle of the leftover cheese.
- 5 Bake your gratin in a preheated oven at 180°C for 40 minutes. Take a peek and, if it looks like it's colouring too quickly, cover it in foil before returning it to the oven for a further 30 minutes. Check the vegetables are cooked and tender with a knife, then remove your gratin from the oven and allow it to stand for at least ten minutes before cutting it into portions.



ROAST CHICKEN, PEARL BARLEY & CAVOLO NERO SOUP

Makes: six (with enough for leftovers)

Put aside: 20 minutes for prep and two hours for cooking

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

1 free-range chicken *organic too if you can*
150g pearl barley *rinsed and soaked in cold water for an hour*
3 large red onions
1 bulb of garlic *cut in half lengthways*
2 sticks of celery
20g chives *fresh*
50ml extra virgin olive oil
1 unwaxed lemon
100g cavolo nero *fresh*
100g peas *frozen*
3 bay leaves

WHAT TO DO

- 1 Pre-heat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan) or gas mark six.
- 2 Slice the onion into rounds and scatter them around the base of a large roasting tin along with the garlic halves, bay leaves and roughly chopped celery. Rest the chicken on the top, breast side down, and then fill the tray with a litre of cold water before putting it in to roast for 90 minutes while you put your feet up.
- 3 About ten minutes before the chicken is due to come out, you can prepare the cavolo nero by slicing it finely into long strips, and then setting it to one side. Now turn your attention to the chive oil by simply chopping the chives as finely as possible and tipping them into a serving jug filled with 50ml of olive oil.
- 4 Once the oven timer has pinged, take a large saucepan and rest a sieve over the top. Get the chicken out of the oven and put it to one side, then pour all of the fresh chicken stock from the roasting tin through the sieve and into the saucepan. Compost your vegetables, remove the sieve and add another 750ml of boiling water to the pan.
- 5 Rinse the sieve and then use it to swill the pearl barley in cold water before adding it to the stock pan. Let it bubble on a medium-high heat for 20 minutes.
- 6 As the barley bubbles, shred the chicken off the bone, ready to go into the soup shortly. Have a taste of the barley, and if it's tender, then it's ready. Add the cavolo nero, peas and all of the chicken to the pan and let them cook through until the greens have wilted – it should take no more than three minutes.
- 7 Finally, add the lemon zest and seasoning, ladle into soup bowls and drizzle with a good dose of chive oil.

BLACKBERRY, CASHEW & DATE CHEESECAKE

Makes: 8-10 slices

Put aside: 50 minutes for prep and two hours for chilling

Suitable for vegans



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

For the base

200g dates *pitted*

150g almonds

1 tsp coconut oil

A pinch of salt

For the filling

250g cashews *raw – not roasted or salted*

200g blackberries

40ml pure cane or maple syrup *organic*

60ml coconut oil

50ml oat milk *or any plant-based milk*

Half a lemon *juiced*

For the topping

150g blackberries

20ml pure cane or maple syrup *organic*

One lemon *zested*

WHAT TO DO

- 1 Pre-heat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan) or gas mark six, and then line the base of a 20cm springform tin with baking parchment.
- 2 While the oven is coming to temperature, use boiling water to soak the cashews and dates in separate bowls – this should take about 20 minutes.
- 3 As soon as the oven's warm enough, scatter the almonds onto a baking tray and roast them for ten minutes before setting them to one side to cool.
- 4 Drain the dates and blitz them in a food processor with the almonds, salt and coconut oil until they form a dough-like consistency. Scoop it out and press the mixture firmly into the lined tin as your cheesecake base and then pop it into the fridge to firm up while you make a start on the filling.
- 5 Next, drain the cashews and use a blender to mix them together with the rest of the filling ingredients – use the highest speed because you're looking for a smooth, spreadable consistency. Dollop the blackberry mixture onto the chilled base, spreading it evenly, and then take it back to the fridge to set for at least two hours.
- 6 Now to make the topping. Using your blender once more, let it crush the blackberries and whip up the maple or pure cane syrup for you in one go, before carefully drizzling it over the chilled cheesecake and leaving that to set too. If you're in a hurry, place it in the freezer for at least 30 minutes, only releasing it from the tin when it feels firm.
- 7 Top with the lemon zest and an extra drizzle of syrup then you're ready to slice and serve.



COMMITTING

TO A BETTER WAY

In a world where a more sustainable lifestyle is a shared aspiration, the best-made kitchens need to work hard. Here, we explore eight ways Neptune kitchens epitomise a commitment to circularity, quality and longevity.

Nº 1

A one-hundred-year mindset

We believe your kitchen should be with you for the long haul. It's why we design furniture to last for a hundred years and more. The timeless styles, quality materials and classic joinery of our kitchens take an enduring approach that stands firm against fleeting trends and champions anti-waste and anti-throwaway culture.

Nº 2

Lifetime guarantee

Kitchens should be able to withstand everyday family life and still give you a lifetime of use. It's why, when fitted by our accredited installers, our kitchens come with a lifetime guarantee: a promise to continue to care for and maintain your kitchen's cabinetry, handles, hinges and more, so you can continue to enjoy them.

Nº 3

Paints, with conscience

While you may have pondered the colour of your kitchen paint, you might not have ever considered its formula. Made in Britain by our partner with five generations of expertise, Neptune paint is water-based, low in VOCs (volatile organic compounds) and practically odour free. This means it's a good option for your home, the environment and your health. With our kitchens built to last a lifetime, the painted cabinetry can also be touched up over the years, giving it a new lease of life.

Nº 4

Smart solutions

It's often the clever details in a kitchen – like fold-out drying racks or built-in bins for recycling, general waste and food – that you might not have thought about, but that will help you lead a more eco-conscious lifestyle. We offer three types of bin cabinetry, which can be used individually in smaller spaces or mixed together, and then discreetly hidden behind a run of beautiful cabinetry.

Nº 5

Traditional craftsmanship

The beauty in a more sustainable kitchen should go far beyond the exterior. Open the doors of our cabinets and you'll find precise mortise-and-tenon joints; pull out a drawer and you'll see that it's secured with classic dovetails. Everything we do is rooted in traditional cabinet-making principles that have proven their strength and endurance over centuries – and look beautiful, too.

Nº 6

Material matters

Choosing to use solid timber over MDF and chipboard is increasingly rare in kitchen design, but non-negotiable for us. Our philosophy is about using the right material for the right purpose. For kitchen cabinetry frames, we select solid tulipwood for its natural sturdiness and silky-smooth finish that takes paint so well (or we use solid oak, as in the case of the Henley collection), while turning to super strong cross-bonded plywood for the door panels where structural stability is required. With our kitchens built to last a lifetime, the painted cabinetry can also be touched up over the years, giving it a new lease of life.

Nº 7

Planting for our planet

As British designers who appreciate the beauty of solid timber, we proudly support woodland creation through our partnership with Stump Up For Trees. For every tree we've used to make our furniture, we'll plant another one. To get involved, customers can opt to add a £3 donation to their order, which we will then match. This not only funds the planting of a tree, but also ensures the tree is nurtured through to maturity.

Nº 8

The flexibility of freestanding

The most sustainable kitchen designs should evolve to reflect your needs. Each Neptune cabinet is crafted as an individual piece of solid wood furniture, meaning the footprint of your kitchen can be completely reimagined as your family changes and living spaces adapt. Cabinets can be moved from room to room (or even to a different house altogether), just as our co-founder John Sims-Hilditch has done with his original, twenty-five-year-old Chichester kitchen.



Step into a world of kitchens

Our stores are welcoming spaces, thoughtfully curated to showcase our approach to kitchens and the home, and featuring fully working, creative interpretations of our kitchen collections, designed to inspire you.



So, while we hope you enjoy looking through this volume of Kitchen Stories, we look forward to meeting you in person, too.

Find your nearest store [neptune.com/our-stores](https://www.neptune.com/our-stores)



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Please note that, while the colours shown in this volume are as accurate as possible, they will not always precisely match our paint shades.