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## Get Inspired By These Outdoor Kitchen Trends

Sure, we're homeowners, but we also love to take it all outdoors. Outdoor kitchens are the perfect example of our desire to create a backyard oasis for all the same reasons we gather around an indoor kitchen. Here are some design trends to get you inspired.

**Design your perfect space:** Keep in mind the space you have available to work with. This will determine what sort of features and appliances will include. What types of materials will best weather your local elements? Stone countertops or stainless steel?

**Appliances:** Your outdoor kitchen appliances are an important start for creating a comfortable space. Gas grills are most popular offering convenience and temp control, making them a perfect option cooking a lot of food quickly and uniformly. Sometimes gas (or charcoal) are not an option - there are many electric ranges available, in a host of beautiful styles.

**Pizza ovens:** This is a trend with great momentum, and there are several types of ovens from which to choose. Depending on the space you have available and your preferences, you have plenty of options. Brick or aluminum construction, gas or wood

fueled, built-in or countertop - to name but a few. Outdoor pizza ovens are popular for so many obvious reasons. They cook pizzas - and fast. Enough said.

**Natural and organic appearance:** Outdoor kitchen trends are favoring natural elements, with a preference for earth tones and natural material. The idea is to create a harmonious appearance that blends in with your home's surroundings.

**Multi-purpose kitchen islands:** These islands are no longer just for food preparation. Kitchen islands can be designed as a valuable storage area, and also serve as a gathering spot to dine on appetizers - and depending on its size - full meals as well. This is a flexible and practical addition to any outdoor kitchen set-up.

**Built-ins:** Storage is going to be an essential addition to your outdoor kitchen, so don't hold back. You will need cabinets to keep things organized and out of sight. Opt for storage products made from weatherproof material that withstand moisture, wind, and sun.

**Smart kitchens:** Consider adding smart tech into your initial design. Smart tech is outdoor kitchen's newest trend, and will make it simple for you to control your appliance settings, cooking times, outdoor lighting, and music remotely - and with the touch of a button.

## September Calendar

September 2 - Labor Day

September 8 - Grandparent's Day

September 11 - Patriot Day

September 22 - Fall begins

## Homeowner Tips



### Paint interior molding or trim

When it's not gathering dust or getting kicked around by chairs or shoes, your interior molding or trim is the little accent in nearly every room that ties your space together. Give your trim the fresh coat of paint it deserves. You might be surprised how much of an impact a sharp white trim will have against the richly painted walls that demand most of our aesthetic attention.

## Get Your Windows Ready for Cooler Temps

Your window insulation is the perfect place to begin to get your windows ready for cooler temps.

### How do your windows look and feel?

Check for cracked or damaged window frames, which can contribute to poor insulation. On a cool day, run your hand around the edges of the window to feel for cool air entering your house.

**Check for drafts:** Hold a candle or lighter near the edges of your window and check to see whether the flame moves. This means air is coming in.

**Look for condensation:** Excessive condensation on the inside of your windows might indicate that warm air is coming in contact with a cold surface, which in turn means poor insulation.

**Check the weatherstripping:** The condition of the weatherstripping around the window can greatly affect your window's performance. Replace cracked or worn weatherstripping.

**A thermal imaging camera:** If you own one or have access to one, a thermal imaging camera is a great tool to identify areas of heat loss around your windows.



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## Pumpkin Chipotle Soup

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 4 cups vegetable stock
- 1 (29 ounce) can pumpkin puree
- 2 chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, minced
- 1 ½ cups half-and-half cream
- 2 tablespoons sofrito
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon paprika

### Directions

Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat.

Stir in the flour and cook until the flour has turned golden brown, about 3 minutes. Whisk in the vegetable stock and bring to a boil over high heat.

Whisk in the pumpkin puree until no lumps remain, then add the chipotle peppers, half-and-half cream, sofrito, Worcestershire sauce, salt, and paprika.

Return to a simmer, then reduce heat to medium-low, and cook for 8 minutes until thickened and hot.



*Recipe courtesy of: allrecipes.com*