



Outdoor Kitchen Design Recommendations



Principles for Designing and Building Functional Outdoor Kitchens

The outdoor kitchen experts at Kalamazoo have had the rare opportunity to learn from hundreds of outdoor kitchen projects. We have assembled this outdoor kitchen design guide to help homeowner's and professionals avoid the most common mistakes that often inhibit the usability and enjoyment of completed outdoor kitchen projects.

While not a complete guide to designing outdoor kitchens, this handful of recommendations can help design professionals deliver more useful outdoor kitchens for their clients.

Outdoor Kitchen Usability Guidelines

- Work Areas and Functional Zones of the Outdoor Kitchen
- Overall Counter Space Recommendations
- Specific Landing Area Recommendations
- Storage Space Recommendations
- Seating Space Recommendations

Many aspects of these outdoor kitchen usability recommendations have been based on the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) *Kitchen Planning Guidelines* for indoor kitchens. While leveraging the substantial knowledge of the NKBA, Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet has adapted all recommendations to the unique needs of outdoor kitchen design and use. Kalamazoo outdoor kitchen experts have taught for-credit courses on outdoor kitchen design to NKBA members at their national conference.

Work Areas and Functional Zones of the Outdoor Kitchen

Outdoor kitchens use the same functional zones as an indoor kitchen, and the usability requirements for these zones are quite similar between indoors and out.

Functional zones of the outdoor kitchen include:

Hot zones

Grills, cooktops, pizza ovens, etc.

Cold zones

Refrigerators, freezers, wine chillers, etc.

Wet zones

Sinks and ice reservoirs/beverage tubs

Dry zones

Prep areas/counters and cabinets/storage

While smaller outdoor kitchens may eliminate cold zones or wet zones, one of the most important considerations for a useable outdoor kitchen is adequate space allocated for dry zones.

Dedicate adequate space for each functional zone and consider the relationships among them for a variety of cooking and serving activities (workflows).

Do not allow major foot traffic lanes to intersect the primary areas for these functional zones, and do not place obstructions between them.

When functional zones are separated by a work aisle into parallel runs (as in a U-shaped kitchen), the work aisle should be a *minimum* of **48"** wide for one cook or **54"** wide for two cooks.

Overall Counter Space Recommendations

One of the most common outdoor kitchen design mistakes is planning too little counter space or prep areas for the size of the kitchen. Outdoor kitchens can be broken down into four basic size categories:

Small outdoor kitchen

A grill plus a cooktop, sink and storage, totaling roughly 10 linear feet

At least **36 inches** of useable countertop frontage is recommended, no less than 24" deep

Essentials outdoor kitchen

Includes a grill and cooktop plus sink, storage and a refrigerator, totaling roughly 13 linear feet

At least **48 inches** of useable countertop frontage is recommended, no less than 24" deep

Medium outdoor kitchen

Adds additional storage and counter space and sometimes more refrigeration to an essential outdoor kitchen, totaling roughly 16 linear feet

At least **72 inches** of useable countertop frontage is recommended, no less than 24" deep

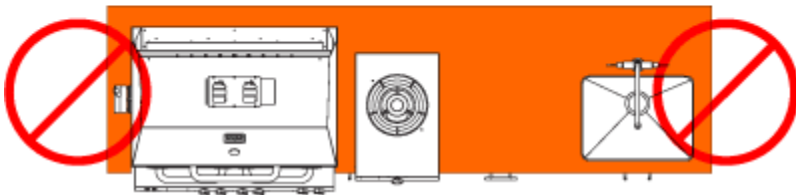
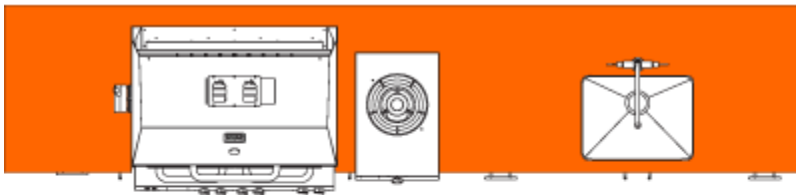
Large outdoor kitchen

Features all the amenities, and able to accommodate multiple cooks, totaling more than 20 linear feet

At least **156 inches** of useable countertop frontage is recommended, no less than 24" deep

Specific Landing Area Recommendations

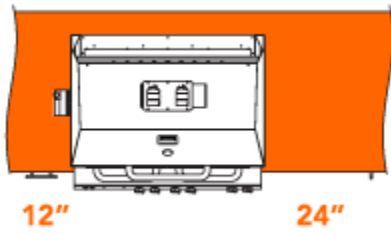
In addition to the general principle of allowing enough counter space overall, it is very important to provide proper landing areas around each major piece of equipment in the outdoor kitchen. Planning useful landing areas allows the cook to rest plates, pots, utensils and supplies next to each major workstation.



The single most common outdoor kitchen design mistake is omitting landing areas to one side or both sides of key equipment, such as the grill or sink. Neither a grill nor a sink should ever be placed at the end of a counter run. There should always be landing areas to the left and right sides of a grill and a sink.

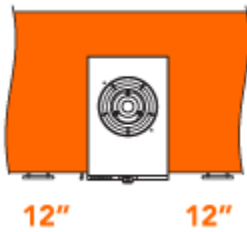
Landing Area Minimums for Left and Right of a Grill

24" of open counter on one side and 12" on the other the grill.

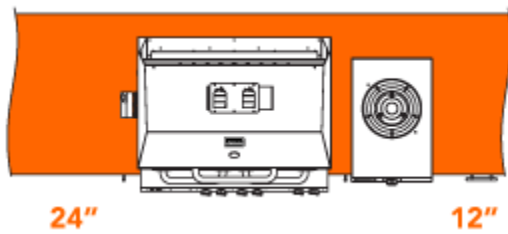


Landing Area Minimums for Left and Right of a Cooktop

12" of open counter on each side of a cooktop.

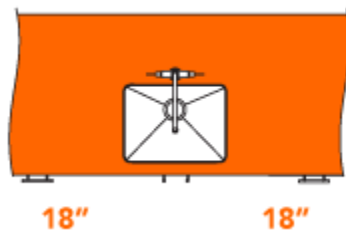


A grill and cooktop can be combined as a single piece of equipment, using the landing area recommendations for a grill (24" on one side and 12" on the other).



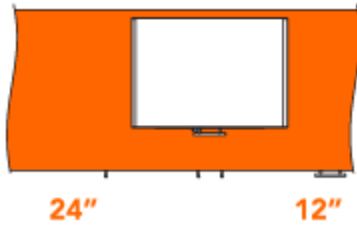
Landing Area Minimums for Left and Right of a Sink

18" of open counter on each side of a sink.



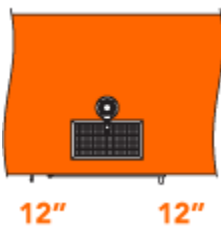
Landing Area Minimums for Left and Right of a Pizza Oven

24" of open counter on one side and 12" on the other the pizza oven.



Landing Area Minimums for Left and Right of a Beer Tap

12" of open counter on each side of a beer tap tower.



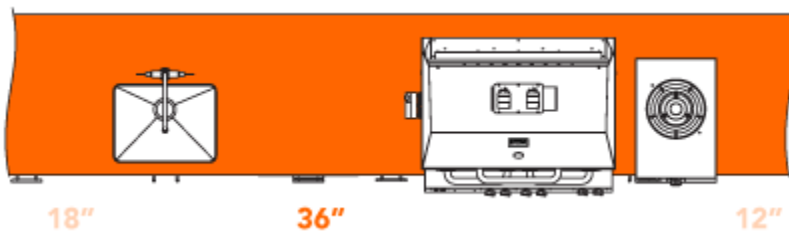
Landing Area Minimums above an Undercounter Refrigerator

15" of open counter above or adjacent to an undercounter refrigerator, ice maker or other similar appliance.



Combining Landing Areas Between Workstations

The minimum landing area between two pieces of equipment may be determined by adding 50% to the the largest landing area width recommended for the two pieces of equipment. For example, the landing area between a grill and a sink should be at least 36" wide because the largest recommended landing area related to those two pieces of equipment is 24" next to the grill. $24" + 50\% = 36"$.



Overall Storage Cabinet Space Recommendations

Storage space in an outdoor kitchen is frequently less important than in an indoor kitchen. For example, the number of pots and pans stored outdoors is typically minimal, as is the number of dishes and plates. These items are normally stored indoors and brought out when needed. Other items, like wood chips, hot mitts, charcoal and grill brushes will normally remain outdoors at all times.

The four basic size categories described above for counter recommendations can also be used for storage recommendations. These recommendations assume smaller kitchens will need to store less items outdoors while larger kitchens are more likely to store their own pots, pans, serving pieces, etc.

Small outdoor kitchen

At least 21 inches of linear storage cabinet frontage

Essentials outdoor kitchen

At least 36 inches of linear storage cabinet frontage

Medium outdoor kitchen

At least 72 inches of linear storage cabinet frontage

Large outdoor kitchen

At least 96 inches of linear storage cabinet frontage

Seating Recommendations

Outdoor kitchen seating not only requires appropriate width for each seat, but also appropriate knee space below the table/ counter/ bar and appropriate traffic space behind the seats.

Seating Widths

For normal use, allow **24 inches** width for each seat.

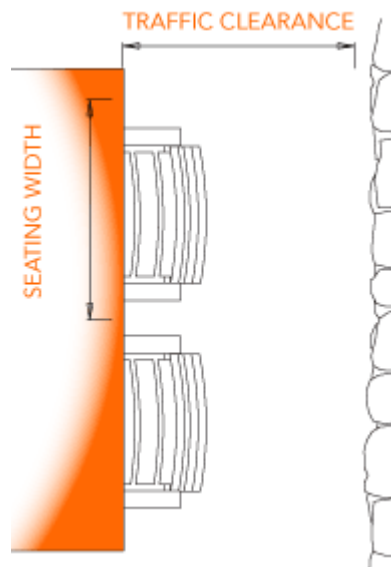
For more accessible seating, allow **30 to 36 inches** width for each seat.

Traffic Clearance

For no traffic at all behind the seats, allow **32 inches** between the table/ counter/ bar and the nearest obstruction.

For people to edge past behind the seats, allow **36 inches** minimum.

For people to walk past unobstructed, allow **48 inches** minimum.



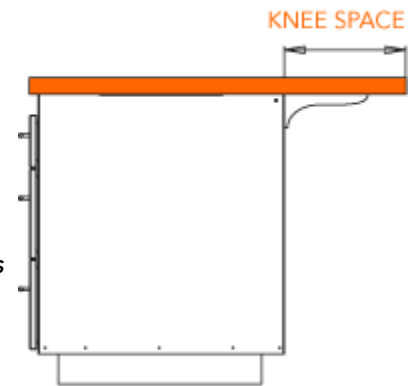
Knee Space for Counter and Bar Seating

Lowered counter (table-height) seating: 30 inches high with **18 inches** knee space

Counter-level seating: 36 inches high with **15 inches** knee space

Raised counter (bar-height) seating: 42 inches high with **12 inches** knee space

Accessible seating: 30 to 34 inches high with **19 inches** knee space



About Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet

Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet is the one-stop resource for creating the ultimate outdoor kitchen. From revolutionary hybrid grills that cook with charcoal, wood and gas, to the most powerful and energy efficient outdoor refrigeration available, Kalamazoo is the leading manufacturer in outdoor cooking and entertaining equipment. The complete line includes grills, refrigerators, freezers, wine chillers, keg tappers, weather-tight cabinets, wok cooktops, lobster boil pits, martini bars and a countertop pizza oven.

Please visit www.KalamazooGourmet.com for more information or call 1.800.868.1699 to speak with an outdoor kitchen design expert.