

## The Sixties Kitchen

Many houses built between the wars had a kitchen and a 'back kitchen' or scullery. The scullery would be used for dirty jobs such as preparing vegetables, cleaning shoes or washing up. Washing up was invariably done by hand.

The main kitchen was warmed by a stove, often with a back boiler for heating water. Cooking and baking were done here and the table was mainly used for breakfast.



Houses built in the sixties were slightly bigger than pre-war but tended to lose the 'back-kitchen'.



Storage cabinets such as these were popular throughout the fifties and sixties. The drop down shelf could be used for making pastry.

The fitted kitchen became a must-have status symbol in the 60s. The material that transformed the fitted kitchen and made it something ordinary people could consider was Formica. Formica panels were easy to clean and maintain and the surfaces were hygienic. It was a revolution in the home.



In the early sixties, kitchens were either made from wooden units that had to be painted or from metal. A free-standing cooker was usually inserted between two of the floor-level units. These could be gas or electric and were purchased after a visit to the gas or electricity showroom which was usually on the high street of the nearest big town. A new cooker was a major purchase, to be carefully considered. Did you want one with an 'eye level grille', immortalised in the Flanders and Swann song 'Design for Living':

'I'm delirious about our new cooker fitment with the eye-level grille  
This means that without my having to bend down  
the hot fat can squirt straight into my eyes!'

In 1965 North Sea gas was discovered off Grimsby and in 1967 the Gas Council announced the move from town (manufactured) to natural gas. The project to refit 40 million appliances cost over £500m and took 10 years to complete.

In the early sixties colours were muted, with blues and creams being the most popular. However, as the decade progressed the decor became more flamboyant, with vibrant patterns and vivid colours. Psychedelic patterned tiles, wallpaper, and vinyl flooring came into fashion, and by the early seventies mustard yellows, oranges, reds, and greens were extensively used, creating some truly garish colour schemes.

People had fewer gadgets than nowadays. Most people acquired a fridge during the sixties - prior to that food was kept in a larder or the cellar-head. Shopping was done several times a week so

food was stored for shorter time periods. The fridge had a small ice-making compartment with just enough room for a packet of Birds Eye fish fingers or frozen peas.

Some people had a hand operated mincer that turned the leftover Sunday roast into mince for Shepherds Pie. The lucky few had a 'Kenwood Chef ' or other food mixer, but most used a rotary beater or a wooden spoon and a lot of elbow grease! Food was sieved to make purees. Utensils were made of wood or metal. A popular range was Prestige 'Skyline' - many kitchens would have a metal ladle, spatula, large draining spoon and masher hanging in a row on the wall. There were no non-stick pans to worry about! The sound of the potato masher hitting the base of the aluminium pan or a knife chopping the cooked carrot and turnip meant that tea was nearly ready!

Pyrex jugs, bowls and casserole dishes were popular throughout the Sixties.



Stainless steel became popular and cutlery manufacturers started to employ young designers like Gerald Benney and David (Viners), Robert Welch (Old Hall)

Mellor

Robert Welch won an award for 'Alveston' 1964



David Mellor produced the instantly popular 'Shape in 1969



Tableware manufacturers moved away from the flowing lines of the fifties and produced more robust designs such as Spanish Garden, designed by Jessie Tait for Midwinter in 1966



and Chevron, designed for Denby Pottery by Gill Pemberton in 1962

