

# LOG HOME LIVING

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## *Island Living*

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Like the microwave oven, islands show up in most kitchens today with good reason: The average island adds counter surface and storage and helps define the kitchen space in an open floor plan. But don't settle for an average island in your dream home: You can spice things up with an island that's fully loaded with these kitchen island design ideas.



**Apply appliances.** Installing a microwave or beverage refrigerator in your island can give you easy access to these two important appliances from the main dining area. A warming drawer in the island makes it easy to put piping hot meals on the table.

**Double your storage.** Use stock base cabinets set back-to-back to create your kitchen island. You'll have cabinets that open to both sides and expand your storage capacity. Or, create display space on one side of your island with lighted shelves set behind glass doors.

**That's entertaining.** A well-placed and designed island can be the life of the party. Use it as a buffet or wet bar to serve guests who always seem to end up in the kitchen anyway.

**Take it to another level.** Add variety with a multi-level island. Drop one section of the island for table-height dining or raise the back of the island to block guests' view into your kitchen.

**Make a style statement.** No laws state that your island must match your cabinetry. Explore your options: Items from file cabinets to butcher blocks can be repurposed as kitchen islands. Walk through local architectural salvage yards in person or online. You may discover an unusual focal point for your kitchen if you keep your eyes and mind open.

**Do an end run.** Take advantage of the unused space at the end of your island. Shallow, built-in shelves can accommodate spices. Deeper shelves make room for cookbooks or your teapot collection. Or transform one end of your island into an eat-at counter. Putting stools on either side of the island makes a cozy spot that feels more natural than lining up to eat along one side of an island or bar.

**Throw a curve.** If your new kitchen will feature mostly straight lines and right angles, consider an island with a rounded or curved top to soften the overall look.

**Make it easy to be green.** Today, kitchens have taken on another job description: Recycling center. Make sorting those cast-offs more convenient with an island that accommodates built-in bins.

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