

If you live along the Front Range, you know kitchens and baths work hard. Denver homes juggle mountain gear, dinner parties that run long, and winter mornings that arrive before the sun. When a kitchen feels cramped or a bath leaks again, most homeowners don't need convincing to renovate. The hard part is translating a vision into a buildable plan, then executing it without losing weeks or blowing the budget. That is where a thoughtful process and the right Denver general contractor earn their keep.

I have managed projects from 1920s bungalows in West Wash Park to LoDo loft conversions and new builds on the west side. The same principles apply across these neighborhoods, but the details, especially in our climate and code environment, can sneak up on you. Here is how I advise clients to plan a kitchen and bath renovation in Denver so the work moves quickly, inspections pass, and the finished rooms age well.

Start with intent, not countertops

Trends come and go. The way you live, the bones of your house, and your budget should steer early decisions. Before you pin another backsplash, sit with the practical stuff. A short exercise with your household can save weeks of redesign later and flush out differences between must-haves and nice-to-haves.

- What pain points do you want solved within the first year of use, and which can wait until a future phase?
- How many cooks move in the kitchen at once, and how do you prefer to work, by task zones or a traditional triangle?
- For the bath, what matters more, a larger shower, a soaking tub, or accessibility features like a curb-less entry and grab bars?
- What parts of the house will you live in during construction, and what level of disruption can you tolerate?
- What is your true budget range, including a 10 to 20 percent contingency for surprises inside the walls?

Put your notes next to floor plan sketches. Even a rough plan with tape on the floor helps you feel clearances and traffic. That tactile sense keeps you from accepting a drawing that looks fine but feels tight around the island, or a toilet that crowds a vanity when the door swings open.

The budget realities in Denver

Costs vary with finish level and scope, but the market in Denver has settled into ranges that hold up across dozens of projects:

- A midrange kitchen that keeps the layout mostly intact typically lands between 450 and 650 dollars per square foot, or 55,000 to 95,000 dollars for many homes. New cabinets, quartz counters, a tile backsplash, LED lighting, and midline appliances fit here.
- An upscale kitchen with layout changes, structural work, custom cabinets, professional appliances, and high-spec surfaces often runs 800 to 1,200 dollars per square foot, with 120,000 dollars as a realistic floor if you move walls and rework mechanicals.
- Hall or guest baths land between 25,000 and 45,000 dollars depending on tile coverage and fixture choices. Primary suites with larger showers, heated floors, and custom vanities often track 45,000 to 85,000 dollars.

These figures usually include a general contractor and licensed trades, permits, design coordination, and standard inspections. They do not include high-end appliance packages that can add 20,000 to 40,000 dollars on their own, or full window and door replacements if you expand openings.

Build a contingency. In older Denver housing stock, I rarely finish a gut renovation without spending 10 to 15 percent of the budget on hidden issues like galvanized piping, out-of-plumb framing, undersized exhaust vents, or asbestos abatement. On 1970s and 1980s houses, structural surprises are less frequent, but the mechanical systems often need right-sizing. A 15 percent contingency reduces the stress when something ugly appears during demo.

Permits, codes, and calling inspections in Denver

Denver's Community Planning and Development department governs permits inside city limits. If you are just swapping appliances in place, you may not need a building permit. The moment you move plumbing, electrical, or walls, you will. Plan reviews are required for most kitchen and bath overhauls, and you should budget 2 to 6 weeks for review depending on workload and whether structural changes are involved.

Expect separate trade permits for mechanical, electrical, and plumbing. Your general contractor should coordinate these with licensed subs. Good Denver General Contractors track inspection sequences precisely: rough plumbing and electrical before insulation and drywall, tile substrate and pan inspections in showers when applicable, then finals across all permits. I have seen schedules slip because a busy homeowner tried to call in their own inspection while their plumber was on another job. Avoid that by assigning inspection scheduling to your builder.

If you live in a historic district, external changes trigger specific reviews. Kitchens and baths are usually interior, but moving or enlarging windows may need landmark approval. HOAs in newer developments can also add a layer, particularly if you are working in a condo or townhome. In condos, you will likely need proof of insurance from your Denver General Construction Contractors and sometimes stamped engineering if you are touching structural elements.

A safety note that matters locally: homes built before 1980 often contain asbestos in floor tiles, mastics, popcorn ceilings, and some drywall compounds. Colorado requires a test before disturbing suspect materials beyond certain thresholds. Budget 300 to 700 dollars for testing, and more for abatement if it turns up. Lead paint is common in pre-1978 homes too, and your contractor should carry the EPA RRP certification if paint disturbance is part of the scope.

Electrical work must meet current code. That means GFCI protection at kitchen counters and within 6 feet of bathroom sinks, and typically AFCI in many branch circuits. Kitchens now require dedicated small appliance circuits at counters with spacing that avoids those cord drapes across sinks. Lighting must meet energy code, so assume high-efficiency lamps and controls; that part actually helps comfort and utility bills.

Mechanical ventilation is an area where I see frequent misses. The International Residential Code requires makeup air for high capacity range hoods. In practice, anything 400 CFM or higher may require a makeup air solution. At altitude, gas appliances also need tuning and proper combustion air. A good General Contractor Denver team will verify vent sizes and routing, not simply reuse undersized or flex duct that barely moves air. In baths, quiet fans that actually achieve their rated flow keep paint from peeling and mirrors from spotting.

The quirks of building in a dry, high-altitude climate

Denver looks easy for construction because we are not fighting coastal humidity or driving rain. The dry climate creates a different set of issues that show up a year later if you ignore them.

Wood shrinks here. Cabinet doors, mitered casing, and wide-plank floors can gap if they arrive wet and are installed immediately. Ask your contractor to acclimate cabinetry and wood flooring, and plan for a stable indoor humidity range. I recommend 35 to 45 percent relative humidity to protect wood movement without pushing

moisture into wall cavities during winter. In baths, use sealed or epoxy grout in heavy splash zones and slope shower floors carefully. Soap shelves and niches should drain, not hold a teaspoon of water after every shower.

Radon is common along the Front Range. If you are opening floors or reworking slabs in garden-level baths, this is the time to stub in a passive radon line or connect to an existing system. The cost to rough a line while the floor is open is minor compared with finishing a bath, then cutting it apart a year later.

Water is cold here in winter, and runs of PEX or copper that snake through exterior walls will underperform. Keep plumbing inside conditioned space when possible. On kitchens along outside walls, insulate well behind the sink and leave clearance at the back of cabinets so the supply lines do not press into the coldest cavity.

Tile loves stiff floors. Large-format porcelain in a bath or kitchen needs floor framing with minimal deflection. In older bungalows, I often sister joists or add a layer of plywood to quiet a floor before the tile underlayment goes down. That extra day prevents cracked grout lines six months later.

Layout that works on a Tuesday night

Design magazines shoot kitchens empty. You live in yours at 6:30 with bags of groceries and two kids asking for a snack. Good layouts anticipate how you move, where you drop bags, and how you clean up.

For kitchens, I focus on task zones rather than the classic triangle alone. Prep benefits from a stretch of counter between sink and cooktop, with the trash pullout and knives right there. Place dish drawers or cabinets near the dishwasher so unloading is a sideways dance, not a lap around the island. If you bake, a cool counter zone away from the oven keeps dough happier. In compact Denver kitchens, span 42 inches for aisles when you can, 36 inches at a minimum, wider if two cooks truly work side by side.

Islands are great, but they can become a landing strip for clutter. If the space is tight, consider a peninsula. You get seating and storage, and sometimes a better circulation path. If you do commit to an island, ensure outlets meet code and think through where purse hooks and bag cubbies live. Those details limit the day-to-day pileup.

In baths, curb-less showers are a smart investment if structure allows. They ease aging in place and clean easily. Use a linear drain when you want large format floor tile to continue through the shower. A bench placed under the shower head is less useful than one near the valve but out of the main spray. For shared baths, pocket or barn-style doors save swing space, but remember to thicken the wall for a proper pocket and choose solid hardware. Skipping a 200 dollar upgrade there can haunt you.

Lighting makes both rooms function. In kitchens, layer it: ambient lighting for the room, task lighting under cabinets, accents for shelves or art, and pendants for islands. Keep color temperature consistent, usually 2700K to 3000K for a warm, residential feel. In baths, avoid downlights directly over a mirror where they cast shadows on faces. Vertical fixtures at eye level on either side of the mirror light faces cleanly.

Materials that stand up in Colorado

Quartz counters remain the workhorse in busy kitchens because they resist staining and do not ask you to seal them twice a year. Natural stone still has a place, especially if you love veining and accept patina. Honed finishes hide etching better than polished. Butcher block can work for a baking zone or a separate table, not as a main prep surface unless you like to sand and oil regularly in a dry climate.

Cabinetry matters more than people think. Dovetail drawers and plywood boxes are worth the upgrade when you plan to stay. On finishes, painted doors show expansion at joints during winter. A high-quality conversion varnish

helps, and your Denver General Contractor can specify door styles that move gracefully. In baths, solid-wood doors with plywood cores handle humidity better than particleboard boxes.

Porcelain tile is a safe bet for floors and showers. It is dense, low absorption, and available in textured finishes that help with slip resistance. Large-format tile delivers a clean look but demands flat substrates. If you are drawn to natural stone in a shower, plan your maintenance rituals honestly. I have clients who love their marble and accept sealing it and living with soft etches. If that will make you twitch every morning, choose a marble-look porcelain and sleep easier.

Fixtures and faucets with WaterSense ratings keep Denver Water happy and lower bills. Pressure-balancing shower valves are standard, but thermostatic valves offer a better experience and fine-tuned control. At altitude, choose gas ranges with burners that perform well at 5,000 feet or consider induction, which avoids combustion air and vents less heat into the room. Good ventilation still matters with induction because cooking generates moisture and odors regardless of fuel.

Sequencing and lead times

Scheduling is choreography. A midrange kitchen that keeps walls in place might run 6 to 10 weeks of active construction, not including design and procurement. A bath takes 3 to 6 weeks. Structural changes, custom cabinets, engineered beams, or complex tile work can add weeks.

Appliances, cabinets, and plumbing fixtures often carry the longest lead times. Order them as soon as you lock design, then time demo to land the rough-ins right as parts arrive. For stone counters, templates cannot happen until cabinets are installed and level. Fabrication then takes 1 to 2 weeks before install. That gap is normal. Plan a temporary counter or accept a short pause.

To keep the job moving, track a few milestones closely:

- Appliances, cabinets, and plumbing fixtures released for production before demo starts.
- Rough mechanical, electrical, and plumbing completed and inspected before insulation and drywall.
- Cabinets installed level and secure prior to countertop templating.
- Waterproofing verified with a flood test on showers where required.
- Final paint and trims scheduled after hard surfaces to avoid touch-up cycles.

A simple calendar pinned in the house with these dates keeps everyone honest. If a supplier slips, you see it early enough to resequence rather than stall on site with a half-built room.

Choosing and working with a contractor in Denver

Good outcomes depend on the team more than the tile brand. In a city with many options, you will meet Builders and General Contractors who range from one-truck owner-operators to larger General Contracting Firms Denver that run multiple crews. Neither model is right or wrong. What matters is fit for your scope and communication style.

Ask candidates about licensing and insurance first. Contractors in Denver should hold a valid license category appropriate to the work and carry general liability and workers' comp. Verify references with projects similar to yours, ideally within the last 12 to 24 months. If a homeowner lights up when they describe how a foreman handled a bad surprise, that tells you a lot.

Contract types shape behavior. Fixed-price contracts put risk on the contractor and tend to suit well-defined scopes where finishes and quantities are locked. Cost-plus with a fee percentage works for custom projects that evolve, but you need transparency, prompt weekly reports, and a clear allowance and change order process. Clarify what falls under General Contract Services Denver CO and what is an upgrade. A vague allowance for tile or lighting is where budgets go sideways.

Communication should be structured, not ad hoc. A weekly site meeting with your Denver General Contractor and lead carpenter keeps questions tight. Use a shared selection sheet with model numbers, finish codes, and order dates. A shared photo album showing progress helps if you travel.

The Denver market includes established names and newer entrants. You will hear about Denver Contractor Services that specialize in kitchens and baths, and others with broader portfolios. Some homeowners prefer a firm with in-house design, others bring an independent designer, then hire Building Contractors Denver to execute. I have collaborated with Colorado Contractors that only touch framing and drywall, and others that run full-service projects. The key is clarity.

You may also come across RKG Contracting General Contractors Denver in your search, along with other Denver General Contractors. Treat each proposal on its merits. Look past the headline number to how they plan to manage inspections, protect your home during demo, and handle punch lists. An extra 5 percent on a bid is usually worth it if the schedule and site management are stronger.

Procurement strategy and avoiding supply chain headaches

The last few years taught everyone the pain of backorders. The supply chain has stabilized, but long lead times still appear for specific appliances, custom hoods, and specialty tile. Lock materials early and stick to them. Swapping to a new tile at the last minute can unravel a schedule [Contractors Denver rkgcontracting.com](https://www.rkgcontracting.com) if the layout assumed a particular size or if the alternate requires a different substrate.

If you want a custom color on appliances, get a firm ship date in writing before you set demo day. For plumbing, order the rough-in valves and trim at the same time. I have walked into too many baths where the tile is up, the valve is buried, and the trim kit does not match because a finish code changed midstream.

For cabinets, confirm the field measurements, finish samples, and plan drawings. Denver's dry climate means we want a reputable finish system from the maker, not a shop that sprays lacquer in a garage. A good Denver General Construction Contractors partner will have showroom relationships and can shepherd these details.

Structural and MEP surprises you can predict

This sounds odd, but many surprises are predictable if you look for patterns in Denver's housing stock.

In brick bungalows, original clay or cast iron drains may be at the end of their life. If you move a kitchen sink, camera the line. A 300 dollar video check can save a flooded basement next spring. In 1960s ranches, I often find undersized electrical panels when clients want induction ranges and two ovens. Upgrading a 100-amp service to 200 amps is cleaner before new finishes go in.

In loft conversions downtown, chase space for venting and plumbing can be tight, and HOA rules can limit noise or wet area relocation. Condensation lines from new HVAC equipment can create conflicts if the nearest drain is far. Answers exist, but you need a contractor with condo experience.

Combustion safety matters at altitude. If you keep a gas range and install a 600 CFM hood, makeup air and combustion air planning prevents back-drafting a water heater or furnace. An experienced Denver General

Contractor will check appliance manuals, local amendments, and specify a makeup air kit controlled with the hood.

Healthy, efficient choices that feel good to live with

Denver and the state have sharpened energy codes in recent cycles. Many Contractors in Colorado now guide clients through decisions like induction cooktops, heat pump water heaters, and tighter building envelopes. Kitchens and baths touch that world through ventilation and lighting too.

Induction cooking has earned converts because it boils water fast, responds quickly, and does not dump as much heat into the room. It also reduces indoor combustion byproducts. If you stay with gas, choose a range with sealed burners that perform well at elevation.

In baths, quiet fans rated for continuous operation with humidity sensors keep moisture down. Duct to the exterior, not into an attic, and size the duct properly. LEDs with dimmable drivers make early mornings gentle and late-night trips safer.

Water efficiency does not have to feel stingy. A good 1.75 gpm shower head can feel luxurious if the valve is sized right and runs are short. Insulate hot water lines to cut wait times.

Two stories from the field

In a West Highlands bath, the client wanted marble from floor to ceiling. The joists under the bath ran long and shallow. A simple load calc showed deflection beyond what the stone could tolerate. We sistered joists and added a layer of plywood underlayment. It ate two days and a few thousand dollars. That choice saved a 20,000 dollar tile package and years of hairline cracks.

In a Wash Park kitchen, the plan called for an island with seating on two sides, but the existing supply lines for a radiator ran through the exact path of the new ducted hood vent. Because we had the appliance specs early and an experienced mechanical sub, we swapped the vent route to a shorter exterior wall and added radiant floor heat to replace the radiator. The island stayed, the hood met code, and comfort improved.

These pivots feel surgical when the team spots them at design, not during drywall.

How to live through the work

Most Denver families stay in the house during a kitchen or bath renovation. Dust control and daily routines matter. Ask how your Denver Contractors will protect floors, isolate the work zone with zipper walls, and filter air. A temporary sink in a laundry or a utility table in the dining room turns chaos into something manageable. If the renovation touches only one bath in a one-bath home, plan a short stay elsewhere during demo and the first week of tile work.

Set quiet hours and communicate about pets. Crews appreciate consistency, and you will appreciate not hearing a saw at 6:45 a.m. On a Saturday. Clear one point of contact on your side who can make a decision when the tile pattern needs a tweak at noon.

When to DIY, and when to hire it out

Plenty of homeowners in Colorado are handy. Painting, hardware swaps, and even setting simple backsplash tile can be satisfying. The line I draw is behind the walls and above the ceiling. Electrical, plumbing, and mechanical

work carry permit and safety implications, and a misstep can void insurance or fail inspection. Structural work too. Pull a permit and hire licensed trades through General Contracting Services Denver for anything that touches life safety.

Professional help pays off in coordination. An experienced Contractor Denver CO can sequence subs, argue with a supplier on your behalf, and navigate permit corrections without drama. That is often what you are buying when you sign with Contractors Denver rather than piecing out tasks.

Wrapping the plan into a contract

By the time you collect bids, you should have a scope document with drawings, finish schedules, and notes on constraints and HOA or condo rules. Invite two or three Denver General Contractors to propose on the same scope. If one points out a code issue or constructability risk the others missed, ask the group to reconcile their numbers based on the corrected scope. It keeps the playing field level.

Look for a payment schedule tied to milestones. Deposits should cover mobilization and long-lead items, not a big lump before work starts. Progress payments tied to demo complete, rough-ins and inspections passed, cabinets set, counters in, tile complete, and substantial completion keep both parties accountable. A 5 to 10 percent retainage that releases at final punch is healthy.

Read the change order clause. It should define how changes are priced, approved, and scheduled. Surprises are inevitable. The machinery to handle them makes the difference between a small pivot and a slow-motion argument.

Final checks before demo day

Walk the site with your contractor a week before demo. Confirm the lockbox, dumpster placement, and where materials will stage. Talk about parking and neighbor notices. Label walls that are staying and discuss any sentimental elements like a window you want to save. Have appliances and fixtures either on site or with documented ship dates. Verify permits are issued, not just applied for.

If you hired Denver Contractors Services that include design-build, make sure the designer and field lead have shared notes and that shop drawings are approved. Loose ends at this stage create friction as soon as the first wall opens.



The payoff

A kitchen or bath that fits your routines, warms up on a cold morning, and cleans easily is worth the months of planning. Denver's market has the talent to deliver that if you choose your team carefully and plan with local realities in mind. Work with Colorado General Contractors who know the permitting path, the quirks of altitude and dryness, and the right sequence for clean inspections. Set a budget with a real contingency. Order early, decide once, and protect the schedule.

Whether you hire a small shop known among Contractors in Denver for meticulous tile, a larger firm from the roster of General Contracting Firms Denver, or a team like Denver Contractors RKG Contracting with a broad service offering, judge them on process and fit. A clear plan and a steady crew turn a renovation from a grind into a craft. And on the first night you cook in your new kitchen, or the first morning you step onto a warmed bathroom floor, the months of coordination fade into the background where they belong.

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