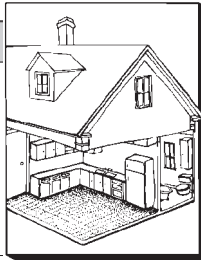


# Out on a Peninsula

by Patrick J. Galvin



From a design viewpoint, kitchen peninsulas are similar to islands. (See my column in the June issue for a discussion of kitchen islands). The difference, as the name implies, is that rather than floating free, they extend out into the room from one of the walls. Peninsulas serve to form an "L" shape or provide one of the legs of a "U"-shaped kitchen.

Like islands, peninsulas should be thought of in functional terms. Their purpose is to help create a suitable work triangle. (A triangle of between 12 and 23 feet is most efficient). The fact that peninsulas might also provide aesthetic value and added function, such as a brunch counter or additional counter workspace, is a bonus.

### Cabinet Considerations

Unlike other cabinets, which are installed against a wall, peninsula cabinets are exposed to view. As a result, they must be finished on two sides, and the end cabinet on three. They can be ordered with access from both sides, making them more useful. In the case where a dining area is placed on the other side of the peninsula, two-way access cabinets can provide handy storage space for table linens and dishes. This adds considerably to the cost of the cabinets, however, since it doubles the number of cabinet doors. Depending on type, one door can account for half the cost of a cabinet.

It is also quite common to install wall cabinets above a peninsula. If this is in the plan, it is important to order peninsula wall cabinets specially reinforced for this kind of installation. Regular wall cabinets are made to be screwed to a wall, and should not be suspended

from the ceiling.

### Sizing it Right

The wall from which a peninsula protrudes must be at least eight feet long. If the peninsula will include an eating area on the "out" side, but still in the same room, that wall will have to be at least 14 feet long. This would include two feet for the depth of the base cabinets along one wall, another two feet minimum space for the base cabinets in the peninsula, four feet of walking and working space between the two cabinet runs, and six feet for the eating counter and seating.

It often happens, however, that the peninsula forms a separator between the kitchen and another living area. In such cases the "out" side of the peninsula is actually in another room.

There must be at least a 42-inch clearance between the end of the peninsula and the opposite wall. As with islands, the corners of the countertop should be radiused to avoid bruising of hands and hips.

### What to Put in It

The next question is what to put in the peninsula. It is usually a poor place for the refrigerator because that puts a monstrous design and weight element out in the middle of the room and exposes its unattractive backside to the living area. A refrigerator at the wall end of the peninsula would cancel out three feet of valuable cabinet space along each axis.

It is a popular place to put a sink and dishwasher, although this can add to plumbing cost, especially for builders who use plumbing tree layouts that serve two floors through one wall.

Water supply, and drainage and vent lines, would have to be extended out into the middle of the floor to serve a sink and dishwasher. That isn't a big deal, but it does require a more customized and more expensive product.

That leaves the range, or cooktop, which is the most common choice because it requires nothing extra for peninsular installation except wiring and venting. Overhead vent hoods are made by cabinet manufacturers to match cabinets, and they can be ducted to the outside. Downdraft cooktops can

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also be used that duct heat, odors, and humidity directly through the wall or down through the floor and then to the outside.

A peninsula (or island) cooktop, however, requires a much more powerful air mover than a wall range because of room air movement and cross-currents. And more fan means more noise. The best solution to the noise problem is to locate a squirrel-cage blower at the other end of the ductwork, outside the house, where it can pull rather than push the air out from the living area.

The Home Ventilating Institute (HVI) rates vent fans according to power (cfm) and noise levels (sones). Both HVI and FHA specify a minimum of 40 cfm per foot of hood length. On this basis, a 42-inch hood would require at least 140 cfm. But for a peninsula, and to overcome resistance of duct length and elbows, 300 cfm is much more desirable.

And, in this era of ultra-tight houses, there must be some source of make-up air or the vent hood can't do its job. Homeowners might have to open a window slightly to help it.

What you place in the peninsula, how large you make it, and how it relates to its surroundings all determine just how well a peninsula will fulfill its function. Obviously, the better the plan, the more useful the peninsula, and the happier the homeowner. ■

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