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HOMEOWNER'S UPDATE

Peppering Your Kitchen With Soul

Food is often described as having soul. Distinct flavors, vibrant colors and varying textures give life to even the simplest of meals. But what about the space where those delicious dishes are created? Kitchen decor can be as fresh and distinctive as the food. Adding colorful, decorative ingredients will most certainly give your kitchen the personality it deserves.

Warm It Up

Hang a collection of cutting boards on a feature wall, and replace your island countertop with an earthy natural stone. Use woven baskets and ceramic pots to hold kitchen essentials.

Sprinkle Details Generously

Swap out plain hardware with vintage knobs and pulls and set live or faux greenery on a windowsill. Display mismatched pieces of beloved dinnerware on open shelving.

Don't Forget the Bones

Restore ceiling beams and wood floors to expose their beauty. Paint lower cabinetry a fun, bold color. Replace old tile with handmade mosaic pieces.

No matter what you do to liven up your space, pouring a little soul into your kitchen will surely make it look just right. And it might even bring out your inner chef.

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Annual Plumbing Inspection and Maintenance

Damage due to faulty plumbing can lead to extensive, costly repairs. But you can protect yourself from an avoidable disaster with a little preventive maintenance. In fact, regular plumbing inspections can be one of a homeowner's smartest investments. Schedule an annual inspection with a licensed plumber to address these costly mishaps.

Mold Growth

Unidentified leaks, even small ones, can lead to mold growth over time. Plumbers can spot early

signs of mold and remedy the problem before it becomes dangerous.

Clogged Drains

Neglecting clogged drains or sewer lines can lead to difficult, expensive repairs. Regular plumbing inspections can help prevent extensive damage.

Flooding

Have both new and old pipes inspected regularly for signs of rotting or leaking to keep your home and belongings safe from a flooding catastrophe.

Water Heater Damage

Ensure your water heater is operating efficiently by hiring a professional to inspect the unit for leaks and sediment buildup.

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Apps for Home Renovation

With the right apps and a little imagination, you can decide how to renovate your house without leaving your couch. Many home design apps will let you scan a room with your phone, then upload it to an app to create a 3D rendering. Most free versions of these apps offer basic design features, and many paid counterparts have surprisingly advanced capabilities.

Find unique inspiration for your perfect room and connect with professionals via apps like **Houzz — Home Design & Remodel** and **Homify — Home Design**. Both of these tools are free on iOS and Android, which enables users to virtually try different looks for dream rooms before committing to a renovation.

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The Pros and Cons of Building a House

Building a new home precisely to your specifications can be a dream come true. If you're thinking about building, there are important details to consider and decisions to make before you commit. Consider these pros and cons to help you decide if new construction is right for you or if buying an existing home is a better option.

Pros

- **You have the opportunity to build the custom home of your dreams.** Building a house allows you to choose every detail, from floor plans to landscape design.
- **Location options are endless.** When you build, you can choose land that suits your needs, whether that means living next to a secluded lake or in a family-friendly neighborhood.
- **Maintenance costs are less of a concern for new homes.** New HVAC, plumbing and appliances should help you save on repair costs typically associated with an older home.

Cons

- **New construction takes a long time.** According to *BobVila.com*, it takes about seven months to build a house, and today's supply chain issues and labor shortages may cause additional delays. New construction may not be the best option for home buyers looking to move quickly.
- **Unknown costs may add to the price of new construction.** Building a home is typically more expensive than buying an existing home, and fluctuating costs of supplies such as lumber can add unexpected expenditures.
- **The home-building process can be stressful.** On top of the many decisions within your control, you'll also have plenty of unplanned issues. For example, weather woes and supply problems can slow your construction timeline.



Pasta Fagioli Soup

Ingredients

1 lb. lean ground beef, browned and drained
1 cup chopped onion
1 cup chopped carrots
½ cup chopped celery
1 can (14.5 oz.) diced tomatoes, with juice
1 can (15.5 oz.) kidney beans, drained and rinsed
1 can (15.5 oz.) navy beans, drained and rinsed
4 cups beef broth
1 jar (24 oz.) marinara sauce
1½ tsp. oregano
½ tsp. pepper sauce
½ tsp. salt
½ tsp. black pepper
1¼ cups dry ditalini pasta
¼ cup chopped fresh parsley



Directions

Add all ingredients except pasta and parsley to a 6-qt. or 7-qt. slow cooker. Cover and cook on low for 5–7 hours or until vegetables are tender. Just before serving, cook pasta according to package directions. Stir pasta into soup. Garnish with parsley.

Serves 8–10



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