



# Kitchen staging tips for your Christmas dinner party

With the rise of open plan kitchens and space saving homes, the days of hosting an elegant dinner party in one room while your kitchen is in chaos behind a closed door are long gone.

These days, it's not unusual for the host to be interacting with their guests while simultaneously preparing a delicious meal, but you don't want your cooking time to feel as hectic as a commercial kitchen. From kitchen styling and design, to clever tricks to make everything flow perfectly, your Christmas dinner party will be such a success your friends will be begging for your secrets.

Follow these tips to make the most of your kitchen:

## Prep like a chef

If you're cutting and chopping all the ingredients as you need them, you're bound to accumulate lots of mess. Instead, prep all your ingredients well in advance. This ensures you're able to cook, dress and serve your meal with limited mess and bench space. Take it one step further and place all your prepped ingredients in containers that can be stacked in the fridge so you can get started on dinner well before it's time to preheat on the oven.

## Make the most of the space you've got

Whether you've got just one small cooktop or are working with a double oven, it's important to plan your menu to suit the kitchen you have. Plan out your recipes, their cooking times and temperatures to make the most of even the smallest kitchen. Remember, NEFF ovens with CircoTherm® can allow you to cook multiple courses simultaneously with no flavours mingling – simply pick recipes where the temperatures and cooking times align.

## Clear your counters

Style your kitchen to make it as uncluttered and practical as possible. Clear your counters of all appliances that you won't need to make your meal. Things like your toaster, kettle and food processor can be packed into the pantry (or even your bedroom) if they won't be required, which will immediately help you to make your kitchen counters feel more neat and spacious.

## Serve from the kitchen

Buffet style dinners work well with smaller spaces, as you can leave the dining table clear for enjoying the meal. With empty countertops you can place all the elements of your meal on the benches (or in their pans on the cooktop) and allow your guests to add to their plate in an orderly fashion.

Leave your sauces or gravy until the end or place on the table to be served when seated.

## **Bring the decorations into the kitchen**

Often our dinner party decorating is limited to the dining room and main entertaining areas. When your guests are going to make their way into the kitchen it helps to continue your decorating theme throughout so they don't feel as though they have snuck in behind the scenes. A scattering of baubles and ornaments, some green foliage underneath the serving plates or tinsel around your cupboard edges can help to continue your decorating theme.

## **Stage your kitchen like it has never been used**

It can be tricky, particularly for messy cooks, but you should clean up after yourself at every opportunity. Throw things directly into your dishwasher or clean as you go when preparing the bulk of your meal. This stops there from being an unsightly pile of dishes collecting in the sink as guests fill up their plates. Keep it simple and serve your meal straight from the dish it was cooked in and prepare everything that doesn't need to be served hot well before the guests arrive.

For the final touches, hang clean tea towels in colours that match your décor theme for the night and put all cleaning products away.