

From website: www.tropicalstyledesign.com

Tropical Kitchen Cabinet Maker Checklist

For Humid & Warm Climate Homes

1. Pre-Build Planning (Before Fabrication)

- ☐ Review kitchen plan for **cross-ventilation paths**
- ☐ Identify **external walls, window locations, and moisture zones**
- ☐ Confirm stove position relative to windows or vents
- ☐ Confirm whether kitchen is **open-plan or enclosed**
- ☐ Confirm island or peninsula size does **not block airflow**
- ☐ Verify ceiling height and overhead clearance for ventilation

Critical Note:

Cabinet layout must support airflow first — storage is secondary in tropical climates.

2. Cabinet Materials & Construction

Cabinet Carcass (Interior Box)

- ☐ Marine plywood (**preferred**)
- ☐ PVC board (acceptable alternative)
- ☐ Solid hardwood framing (where possible)

✗ Avoid:

- MDF (unless moisture-rated and well-ventilated)
 - Particle board
 - Fully sealed backs
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Cabinet Doors & Panels

- ☐ Solid wood or wood veneer
- ☐ Moisture-resistant laminate
- ☐ Slatted or framed doors encouraged

✗ Avoid:

- High-gloss lacquer
 - Heavy vinyl wraps
 - Dark finishes that trap heat
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3. Ventilation & Moisture Control (Non-Negotiable)

- ☐ Leave **air gap behind cabinets** against masonry walls
- ☐ Use perforated or partially open cabinet backs
- ☐ Avoid full-height cabinets on external walls without vents
- ☐ Do not box-in plumbing or gas lines without airflow

Recommended clearance:

10–20mm air gap behind cabinet backs

4. Base Cabinet Strategy

- ☐ Raise base cabinets **75–100mm** off finished floor
- ☐ Use legs or recessed plinths
- ☐ Seal exposed edges against moisture
- ☐ Avoid floor-sealed cabinet boxes

Why:

Prevents moisture wicking, swelling, and mold growth.

5. Upper Cabinets & Open Shelving

- ☐ Limit continuous runs of upper cabinets
- ☐ Mix closed cabinets with **open shelving**
- ☐ Avoid cabinets directly above sink where possible
- ☐ Use shorter upper cabinets near windows

Best locations for open shelving:

- Near sink
- Near dining side
- Corner returns

6. Stove & Heat Zone Rules

- ☐ Stove positioned near window or external wall
- ☐ Slim or vented range hood installed
- ☐ No full-height cabinets above stove
- ☐ Heat-resistant finishes around cooktop

Clearance check:

Confirm safe distance between stove and cabinetry per appliance specs.

7. Island / Peninsula (If Applicable)

- ☐ Island base **not fully sealed**
- ☐ Toe-kick or open base allows airflow
- ☐ Maintain minimum **1100–1200mm circulation clearance**
- ☐ Avoid oversized islands in small kitchens

Rule:

Islands must breathe — never build them as sealed boxes.

8. Storage Systems (Tropical-Smart)

- ☐ Use pull-out baskets instead of deep drawers
 - ☐ Provide ventilated pantry shelving
 - ☐ Use wall-mounted racks where possible
 - ☐ Avoid deep, dark cabinet corners without airflow
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9. Hardware & Fixings

- ☐ Stainless steel or corrosion-resistant hinges
 - ☐ Soft-close hardware rated for humidity
 - ☐ Avoid untreated steel screws
 - ☐ Use moisture-resistant adhesives
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10. Finishes & Colors

- ☐ Light or natural finishes specified
- ☐ Matte or satin finishes preferred
- ☐ Seal all cut edges properly

Best color families:

- Soft whites
 - Sand / beige
 - Light wood tones
 - Muted greens or blues
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11. Installation Checks (On Site)

- ☐ Confirm cabinets are level and plumb
 - ☐ Confirm airflow gaps remain open after install
 - ☐ Confirm no cabinet blocks windows or vents
 - ☐ Confirm appliances have adequate clearance
 - ☐ Confirm toe-kicks and vents are not sealed post-install
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12. Final Sign-Off

- ☐ Cabinets open and close smoothly
- ☐ No moisture-trap zones created
- ☐ Ventilation strategy intact
- ☐ Materials match tropical specification
- ☐ Client educated on ventilation & maintenance