

A Kitchen That Goes All Out

An outdoor kitchen in Vermont keeps everything within arm's reach—and the elements out

BY LISA WADDLE

Outdoor kitchens may be popular in California and Florida, but you don't have to live in a sunny climate to enjoy cooking in your back yard. Just take a look at Deborah Krasner's outdoor kitchen in Vermont, a state more known for snowfall than cookouts.

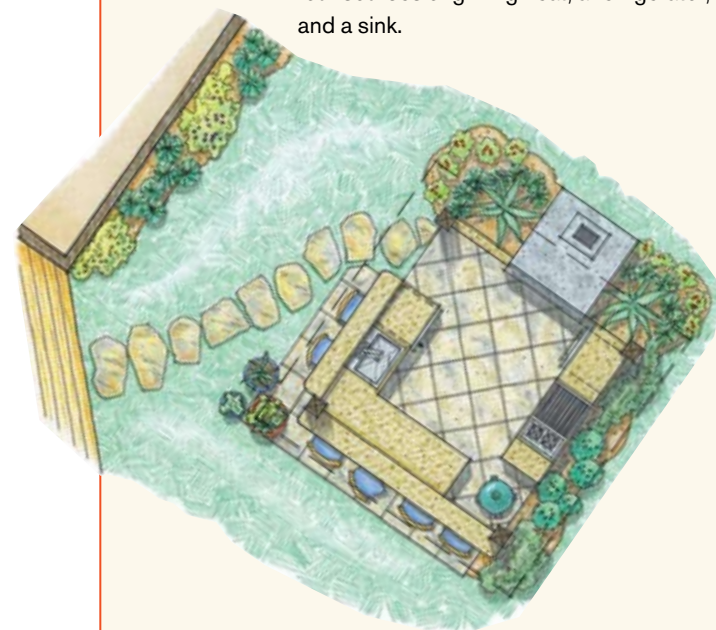
Krasner, author of *The New Outdoor Kitchen*, just published by The Taunton Press, was inspired to start building out back after finding herself wheeling the Weber kettle grill onto her snow-covered patio every January to indulge her love of grilling.

Naturally, in designing her all-weather kitchen, Krasner started with the idea of a covered space. Her kitchen's cedar-shake roof provides shelter from the elements, and a louvered, copper-roofed cupola acts as a vent for smoke and grease.

Although a second, exterior kitchen might seem a luxury, Krasner's compact design demonstrates that you don't need a lot of space to feed your craving for food cooked al fresco. At only 10 feet by 10 feet, Krasner's kitchen is compact yet complete enough to include four sources of grilling heat—a wood-fired masonry oven, a gas grill

Bird's-eye view

Located conveniently close to the house, Deborah Krasner's 10x10-foot outdoor kitchen (shown without roof) is small but has everything she needs, including four sources of grilling heat, a refrigerator, and a sink.



Cooking al fresco. Deborah Krasner extends the outdoor cooking season in Vermont with her all-weather kitchen. Patio dining as well as counter seating make entertaining a crowd easy.

Inspired?

Next steps to take

To get started planning your own outdoor kitchen, Deborah Krasner suggests:

Start an idea file. Clip magazine and catalog photos of layouts, equipment, lighting, and outdoor furniture. Collect manufacturer brochures of equipment you're considering, price lists, and names of landscape designers and contractors.

Create a budget. How long you plan to stay at your current location will determine whether you spend the bulk of your money in the setting (patio, water lines) or equipment (which can move with you).

Audition a spot. Use a portable grill, table, and chairs to create a temporary outdoor space. Figure out where guests will sit so the grill doesn't smoke them out and experience how close your site is to neighbors' lights or noise.

Design a layout. Photograph your outdoor space at different hours of the day to see sun and shade patterns. Then draw a site map and sketch in appliances, utilities, storage, and seating.

Consider building in stages. Budget constraints might make building over several years a good option. Year one could involve burying electrical, natural gas, and/or water lines and laying stone or decking, while you use a portable grill. Year two could feature installation of a sink and counters. Year three could involve upgrading equipment and constructing a roof or adding landscaping.

Six details that make this kitchen work



Small in scope, Deborah Krasner's outdoor kitchen is packed with efficient design details.

1 An outdoor masonry oven was the impetus for building the outdoor kitchen, so it naturally became the focal point for the design.

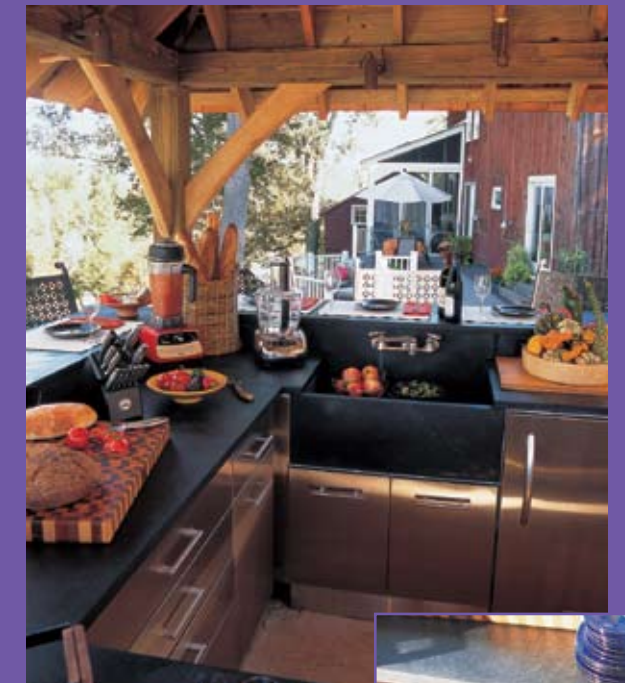
2 Side burners on the gas grill are great for finishing sauces, boiling water for corn on the cob or lobsters, or even just heating up a kettle for tea when grilling in colder weather.

3 A cool zone away from the stove is vital so that there is counter space for food before and after cooking.

4 An undercounter refrigerator may seem a luxury until you keep running back inside for sauces, condiments, and vegetables. This one has to be disconnected in the winter, as does the sink.

5 Storage space for glasses, dishes, and table linens saves trips back to the house. Besides open shelves, Krasner included closed, all-weather drawers and cabinets for year-round storage.

6 More than one entrance. The one thing Krasner would change if she were doing this again would be to build another entrance to the kitchen. She says people are constantly coming in to poke at what's on the grill or grab themselves a soda. With only one entrance, there's often a bottleneck, and guests get trapped inside.



Looking back toward the patio dining space from inside the kitchen, above, shows the proximity of the outdoor cooking space to the main house.

Weather-resistant stainless-steel drawers, right, are large enough to hold serving bowls and table linens, so there's no need for overhead storage cabinets that would block the view.



with two side burners, an electric smoker, and a charcoal smoker.

"Part of our motivation for building an outdoor kitchen was that we've become more ambitious in our cooking over time and wanted to explore more outdoor cooking methods," Krasner says. "Our initial design requirements were a place for a permanent masonry oven, a roof overhead, and a location not far from the house."

Thanks to the availability of all-weather equipment and smart design, Krasner packed much more than that into her out-

side space. Among her favorite features are a large apron-front sink ("for washing vegetables straight from the garden or rinsing big birds for the wood-fired oven") and an eating bar with stools ringing the outside of the kitchen to accommodate guests.

Of course, building outside, especially in a backyard that experiences all four seasons, means special consideration in selecting materials. Krasner chose soapstone counters and stainless-steel cabinets because they can withstand the forces of nature and are easy to maintain. The kitchen's floor is made

of concrete paving stones, which look natural and don't hold heat in the summer.

Taking the time to make your outdoor kitchen as efficient, comfortable, and complete as possible will entice you outside to cook and entertain more often, Krasner says.

"It has changed our outdoor life as well as what we cook and eat," she adds. "We grill or smoke on the coldest of winter days, thanks to the roof."

For more ideas

The New Outdoor Kitchen: Cooking Up a Kitchen for the Way You Live and Play by Deborah Krasner showcases more than a dozen outdoor kitchens that vary in size, price, ambition, and creativity. You can order it from The Taunton Press at www.taunton.com.



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