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Cabinets

Proprietary kitchen cabinets abound in many guises to suit different tastes and budgets.

The advantage for the client is that they can see the product either illustrated in glossy catalogues or displayed in showrooms. Another advantage of using proprietary cabinets is that although the ordering time may be lengthy, the fitting on site can be done reasonably quickly providing the demolition of any previous fittings has been undertaken along with the preparation of water, waste, heating and electrical services.

However, the cost of most ready-made fitted kitchens is generally exorbitant and often a 'rip-off'.

What the client pays for is the door and drawer fronts which, at the cheapest, will be melamine faced chipboard (MFC) and at the most expensive will be solid oak panels/stainless steel/solid gloss acrylic/satin aluminium roller shutters.

Most often, carcasses are made of standard 15 or 18 mm MFC. These can be bought separately and bespoke door and drawer fronts fitted separately.

Door fronts can be as cheap as 18 mm MDF hung and painted by the contractor on site.

Cabinets made of steel are also available and are particularly suitable where good hygiene is essential as they are impervious to water and insect damage. They are also fire resistant and can be a durable choice for domestic kitchens.

They are made of stainless steel or zinc coated steel finished in various polyester powder colours.

Kitchen manufacturers will often include a design service within their price, but where an architect is employed, this service will be redundant which results in the client paying more than is necessary.

Where the client desires purpose-made specially designed cabinets, the cost will inevitably be considerably higher than factory made units.

Cabinet sizes

The *British Standard range of kitchen cabinets* is based upon multiples of 100 mm.

Most proprietary European manufacturers conform to these dimensions, given here in millimetres:

Lengths of units:

base units	300, 400, 500, 600, 1000 and 1200
sink units	1000, 1200, 1500 and 1800
wall units	300, 400, 500, 600, 1000 and 1200
tall units	500 and 600

Heights* above finished floor level:

top of highest unit	1950–2250
highest shelf for general use	1800
underside of wall unit	1350
top of worktop	850, 870 and 920
underside of worktop	820, 870 and 920
top of plinth	100 (80 min)

* In practice the height dimensions are more typically as shown in section on p. 147.

Depths (front to back):

worktops	600
base units	600
sink units	600
tall units	600
wall units	300
toe recess	50 min (from front edge of worktop)