

EVERYDAY FENG SHUI
Feng Shui by Maria
December Column for Benicia Herald

Holiday Kitchens: Food for the Soul

“The kitchen really is the castle itself. This is where we spend our happiest moments and where we find the joy of being a family.” Mario Batali

It is said that food and a warm kitchen is what makes a house a home. In Feng Shui food symbolizes health and wealth. When money is flowing we can afford to buy the best food to sustain good health. When we are in good health, we are best able to make a good living. Because food bridges the two treasures of wealth and health special attention is given to the place where food is prepared – the kitchen.

The kitchen, or “nourishments birthplace,” is especially important over the holidays where families gather to bake an abundance of sweets, and cook meals to be shared with loved ones. Notice how your friends and family love to congregate in the kitchen. When we entertain that’s where I display the appetizers, serve wine, cook and serve while my friends chat with me. It is the heart and soul of our home.

It is interesting to note that, like people, things also tend to congregate in kitchens – from, toys, shoes, homework, tools and gadgets. Kitchens easily become cluttered. To keep the Chi flowing and to support your desire to cook, kitchens should be returned to a clean state after each use.

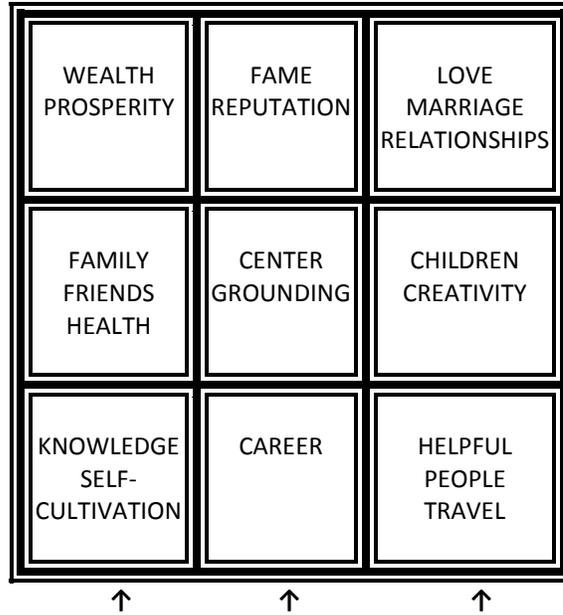
Recommendations for keeping a kitchen’s energy flowing:

- The stove, the center of food preparation, needs to be kept very clean. Use all burners regularly, symbolizing the full circulation of prosperity.
- If the stove is located right next to the sink, place a healthy plant, flowers or bowl of fruit or vegetables between them to represent the wood element, thus balancing the elemental relationship between the sink (water) and stove (fire). I have a ceramic vase holding a number of wooden spoons in this location.
- Remember that in Feng Shui you do not want your back to the door, creating a disempowering position. Therefore if your stove is against the wall put a reflective surface behind or beside it, such as a mirror or shiny tray. The reflection not only doubles the prosperity coming from the burners, but gives the cooks a view of what’s behind them.
- Declutter kitchen countertops at all times. Place whatever you don’t use regularly away from this prime real estate and place your trash and recycling containers out of sight.
- Many people have their back doors in the kitchen. Using this entrance on a regular basis can promote an eternal appetite. As stated in a previous column, your front entrance is the most important for creating the flow of positive energy, therefore it is important to use your front entrance most of the time.
- Keep your knives out of sight. Avoid using counter butcher blocks, but rather place knives in a drawer butcher block to keep the energy less active.
- Replace or minimize the use of fluorescent lighting, which cast too white and cold of a light, with incandescent or halogen lighting.

Check the location of your kitchen on the Bagua Map, and if it’s an area you want to energize, be creative. The most auspicious location for kitchens is the center of the home. This is the centering, grounding area – a perfect place for the “hearth” or heart of the home, but all other sectors can be enhanced and energized.

Kitchens and the Bagua

The Feng Shui Bagua (Ba-gua) Map, is represented as a grid of nine sectors. The Bagua comes from the Chinese philosophy, “The I Ching,” and literally means “eight trigrams.”



ENTRANCE QUADRANT

Kitchens should take on the qualities of the Bagua area they reside in. Here are some examples of using the Bagua enhancements for Dining Rooms:

Kitchens in Career Area

- * Items in items in black or very dark colors, glass/crystal items, items reflecting your work
- * Art depicting water scenes (the sink in itself acts as a water feature)

Kitchens in Knowledge and Self Cultivation Area

- * Items in wood, the colors of blues, greens, or black and in the shape of columns or stripes
- * Healthy plants with rounded soft leaves and art depicting nature scenes

Kitchens in Friends/Family/Health Area

- * Healthy floral arrangements, art depicting vibrant flowers, Items in wood, colors of blues, greens
- * Photos of family, friends or representing perfect health

Kitchens in Wealth Area

- * Opulent items in the purple color spectrum, art representing wealth.
- * Healthy, round leaf plants

Kitchens in Fame Area

- * Items in the colors red and inspirational sayings
- * Art representing the fire element such as suns, sunsets (the stove and lighting also bring in the fire element)

Kitchens in Love and Marriage Area

- * Pairs of items (candles, love birds, vases)
- * Art or photos depicting romance, colors of reds, pinks and white

Kitchens in Children and Creativity Area

- * Photos of children or items made by children (great place for children's art on refrigerator)
- * Items in metal and the colors of white and pastels, whimsical art

Kitchens in Helpful People and Travel Area

- * Art pertaining to spiritual guides, mentors, helpful people or desired travel locations
- * Items in metal and colors of white, black or grey (most kitchens have metal appliances)

Kitchens in Center Area

- * This is an auspicious location for kitchens because food preparation is associated with the hearth
- * Items and art in ceramics, the colors yellow, earth tones, and rectangle shapes

Kitchens and the Elements

Kitchens are related to the wood element but quickly become 5 element displays; combining with fire, water, earth and metal. During the holiday season this area becomes even more energized;

Wood (cabinets, food, greens) representing family growth, Fire (stove, reds, lighting) representing action, Water (sink, black) representing a flow of prosperity, Metal (appliances, white, grey) representing the holding of our connections, and Earth (ceramics, rectangles, yellow) our grounding with ourselves and families.

Learn more about elemental balance in my September 2011 column on

<http://www.fengshuibymaria.com/newspaper-columns.html>

Feng Shui at Work

My daughter's last home had her kitchen in the center. The earth tones and ceramic tiles complemented the heart of her home, and it became one of her favorite places to be in. The flow of prosperity has allowed her to buy her third property. This time the kitchen is in the Knowledge and Self Cultivation area, and she quickly had it painted sage green, much more soothing and reflective; a calm place to make her morning coffee.

Our kitchen, and the deck immediately outside of the kitchen window, is in our Love and Marriage area. The window ledge above the sink had numerous small pictures of my husband and I in red frames, a set of love birds, a few shells we collected on trips and a pair of budvases where I always keep fresh pink/red flowers. Looking out onto the deck I can see a wicker table with red cushions, a red flower arrangement on the table, and a mobile of two red lovebirds. When not in use, I keep the drains closed with red rubber stoppers and put trash out of sight. As I cook, I can feel the warmth of our relationship. The energy nourishes us.

A friend has a wonderful tradition of calling his family and friends together every holiday season to his kitchen to bake hundreds of cookies in all shapes and sizes. The active chaos, laughter and sharing of experiences creates a special joy.

Affirmations and Inner Work:

Remember that in Feng Shui, intent plays a significant role in enhancing any area of your home or business. Intent is the inner work that leads you to a more harmonious life. To maintain an abundant flow of inner health and prosperity, it is vital to nourish your spirit on a daily basis. Make a list of the experiences that nourish your soul, and feast upon one or more each day.

Feng Shui on a Shoestring:

Feng Shui enhancements do not have to cost a great deal. The act of turning on your stove for at least ten minutes every day is thought to generate prosperity in Feng Shui, because this is where we prepare meals and nourish ourselves and our loved ones. To take advantage of the stove's wealth producing potential, you must use it, even if you only light a burner to make a cup of tea.

You can review any of the areas of the Bagua in greater detail in past columns on my website:

<http://www.fengshuibymaria.com/newspaper-columns.html>

"To me the kitchen is the most special room in the house. It's a place for adventure, discovery, sharing and to come together to create something with family and friends." Ted Allen

HAPPY HOLIDAYS and Bon Appetit!!!

For questions or home consultations email at mtmccull@aol.com and put "Feng Shui" on the subject line, or visit my website at www.fengshuibymaria.com, (where you can read past columns), or Facebook "Feng Shui by Maria", where I post pictures as examples to enhancements.

* **Check out my BLOG** – Just go to the website and click on "Blog": You can view many pictures and, I will respond to your questions quickly.

LEARN MORE IN MY NEXT CLASSES- and Receive \$40 Off a Home Consultation

I will be teaching more 3 hour classes through the Benicia Parks and Recreation this winter and spring:

Saturday Jan. 26 - 9:00 am

Saturday April 20 - 9:00 am

The Parks and Recreation Guide is now available, if you'd like to register. (Participants will receive \$40 off a home consultation.) - Mark your calendars and invite friends.

Until then...Blessings!

Maria McCullough - Bio

Maria McCullough, a Benicia resident, is the owner / founder of *Feng Shui by Maria* (www.fengshuibymaria.com) and is a speaker and educator with over 15 years of experience. She specializes in residential, landscape and business consultations. She is a graduate of the Western School of Feng Shui and has personally trained with Terah Kathryn Collins, founder of the Western School of Feng Shui, specializing in Essential Feng Shui® and author of numerous books including "The Western Guide to Feng Shui."