

When embarking on a kitchen renovation in London, one of the most frequent questions homeowners ask is: *"How much of my budget should I allocate to cabinetry?"* Navigating this can be tricky, given the boroughs' infamous premiums and the maze of design, build, and regulatory considerations at play. With 2026's cost landscape evolving, it's crucial to understand how cabinetry fits into the overall budget, especially if you're dealing with Victorian terraces, mansion blocks, or 1930s semis.

From my 11 years of experience coordinating kitchen refits in London, I've learned that cabinetry typically accounts for between 35% and 45% of the total installed kitchen budget. For a typical mid-range £30,000 London kitchen renovation, that translates to roughly **£10,500 to £13,500** spent on cabinetry alone. But it's not just about numbers; it's about where to spend smartly, where to save, and how London's particular challenges push costs higher.

Understanding the London Kitchen Cost Range in 2026

In 2026, kitchen renovation costs continue to rise, with London's premium positioning pushing prices beyond the national average. Most mid-range full kitchen renovations, including demolition, electrical and plumbing work, finishes, and appliances, now hover around **£25,000 to £40,000**. Where you land on that depends heavily on specification, property type, and access constraints.

- **£25,000 to £30,000:** Smaller kitchens, mostly flat-pack or semi-bespoke cabinetry, fewer structural works.
- **£30,000 to £40,000:** Full bespoke cabinetry, solid joinery work, high-end appliances, multiple upgrades including electrics and plumbing.

London Post, a popular renovation firm specialising in these urban builds, highlights the significant mark-up induced by labour costs and logistics. Meanwhile, Beams (see beamsrenovation.com) stresses that joinery quality and cabinetry choices are pivotal when estimating final prices.

Installed Price Vs Showroom Price: The Common Trap

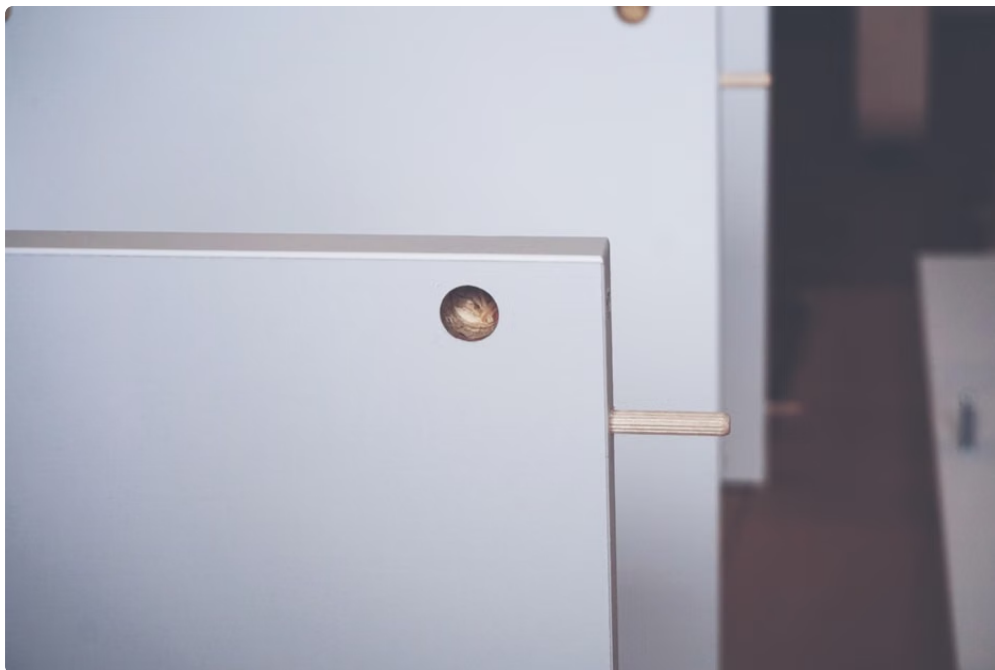
A frequent pitfall for homeowners is comparing cabinetry showroom prices or unit-only packages with the installed kitchen cost. This is a classic "apples vs pears" issue. A £7,000 pricing on units alone may balloon to £12,000 or more once labour, delivery, electrical modifications, and VAT at 20% are included.

- **Showroom Price:** Just cabinetry units and hardware, often excluding sinks, handles, and essential finishes.
- **Installed Price:** Complete supply and fit, including joinery work, plumbing adjustments, building control compliance (including Building Regulations Part P for electrical work), and VAT on domestic kitchen installations.

This trap leads many to erroneously label cabinetry "too expensive" when, in fact, the issue is a misunderstanding of what the price incorporates. Always insist on a fully detailed quote, preferably breaking down cabinetry costs separately, both unit price and installation labour.

Budget Breakdown: Where to Spend vs Save on Your London Kitchen

Here's a typical breakdown of a £30,000 London kitchen renovation budget and how cabinetry fits in:



Budget Item	Percent of Budget	Approx. Cost (£)
Cabinetry (units + installation)	35% - 45%	10,500 - 13,500
Worktops	10% - 15%	3,000 - 4,500
Appliances	15% - 20%	4,500 - 6,000
Labour (plumbing, electrics, installation)	15% - 20%	4,500 - 6,000
Other (lighting, flooring, decoration)	10%	3,000

Note: VAT at 20% applies on most domestic kitchen work, including cabinetry supply and installation, plumbing, and electrical.

Where to spend: Joinery cabinetry is usually worth the extra upfront cost if you care about longevity, aesthetics, and seamless installation. Genesis London, renowned for their bespoke joinery, often points out that flat-pack systems can [london-post.co.uk](https://www.london-post.co.uk) reduce initial cabinetry costs but may lead to higher replacement or repair expenses over time.

Where to save: Consider semi-bespoke or high-quality flat-pack options on less-visible cabinetry, such as under-sink units or inside pantry areas. Prioritise durable, engineered worktops but explore quartz or composite alternatives instead of premium granite or marble if budget is tight.

London Premium Drivers: Labour, Access, Waste, and Older Housing

Several factors uniquely drive up kitchen cabinetry costs in London:

- 1. Labour Premiums:** London trades are typically priced at a higher rate compared to other UK areas. Skilled joiners, electricians (subject to Part P regulations for notifiable electrical work), and plumbers command a premium — and rightly so given the city's cost of living.
- 2. Access Constraints:** Narrow streets, no-loading zones, absence of lifts in mansion blocks, and tight staircases increase handling times and costs. Builders may require parking bay suspensions, which are often overlooked but necessary expenses.
- 3. Waste Disposal:** Older properties shed a surprising amount of rubble and old cabinetry. Skip hire and specialist waste disposal contribute to overall costs and are frequently forgotten in initial quotes.
- 4. Older Housing Nuances:** Victorian or 1930s properties often require bespoke joinery to cope with uneven walls, floors, and older electrical or plumbing setups that need rewiring or re-piping, all falling under Building Regulations.

London Post's teams regularly confirm that these factors can add 10-15% on top of cabinetry costs alone, meaning budgeting £13,500 on cabinetry for a mid-range job may actually lean towards the conservative side.

Joinery vs Flat-Pack: Weighing Your Cabinetry Options

Choosing between bespoke joinery and flat-pack cabinetry is one of the most significant decisions influencing cabinetry cost percentages:

- **Joinery (Bespoke Cabinetry):** Custom-made cabinets built by skilled craftsmen. Higher quality materials and finishes, perfect fit to room's idiosyncrasies, and longer lifespan. *Typical cost range:* 40-45% of total kitchen budget
- **Flat-Pack:** Ready-made, mass-produced units. More affordable upfront but often require more adjustments and may lack longevity. *Typical cost range:* 30-35% of total kitchen budget

If you want a flawless kitchen installation that plays well with London's challenging older properties, bespoke cabinetry from companies like Genesis London can be a worthy investment. However, Beams recommends evaluating how much of the cabinetry will be visible and whether the budget can be balanced by mixing bespoke units with flat-pack for less critical areas.

Essential Reminders for London Kitchen Renovations

- Always clarify whether VAT is included in cabinetry quotes. The standard 20% VAT applies to most domestic kitchen installations.
- Request day rates alongside lump-sum labour quotes to gauge transparency; beware of flat labour fees with no day count.
- Factor in costs for notifiable electrical work compliant with Building Regulations Part P. This can affect overall cabinetry installation if alterations to wiring or sockets are needed.
- Don't forget miscellaneous fees like parking bay suspension permits—very common in London and easily overlooked.

Summary

In 2026 London kitchen renovations, cabinetry will typically command **35% to 45%** of your total budget, equating to approximately **£10,500 to £13,500** on a £30k job. The real cost depends on your choice between bespoke joinery and flat-pack cabinets, alongside London-specific factors like labour premiums, access difficulties, and compliance with Building Regulations Part P for electrical work.

Understanding these nuances and working with reputable companies such as London Post, Beams, or Genesis London can help you avoid common traps and achieve a stunning kitchen that fits your budget and lifestyle.

Remember: always demand detailed, VAT-inclusive quotes breaking down cabinetry costs and installation labour. This approach scrubs away surprises and lets you compare like-for-like proposals effectively.

