



Go-anywhere upgrades that are great for kitchens and baths

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(BPT) - Some upgrades look laughable in the wrong room: plush carpeting in the bathroom or custom drapes in a kitchen. A handful of go-anywhere upgrades work especially well in kitchens and baths – and can raise those rooms from merely functional to inspiringly fashionable.

Of course, virtually any upgrade you make to a kitchen or bathroom will pay off in the long run. Those rooms continue to attract buyers to homes, and deliver high returns at the time of resale. A major kitchen remodel of \$53,000-plus yields nearly 69 percent return on investment, and a major bathroom remodel of more than \$61,000 tops a 70 percent return, according to Remodeling Magazine's Cost vs. Value Report (<http://www.remodeling.hw.net/2013/costvsvalue/national.aspx>).

The right upgrades, however, enhance both your home value and your enjoyment of two of the most important rooms in any house. If you're looking for an upgrade that will work equally well in your kitchen or bath, consider these improvements:

* Add a skylight (<http://www.veluxusa.com>). Few upgrades fit equally well in a bathroom or kitchen, but a skylight affords unique benefits to either room. In baths, fresh air skylights admit natural light and provide passive ventilation while providing more privacy than windows. In kitchens, they can reduce the need for artificial lighting and help carry moist air and cooking fumes out of the room. What's more, skylights can help enhance a home's overall energy efficiency. Energy Star-qualified solar powered fresh air skylights, like those made by Velux America reduce dependency on artificial lighting and mechanical ventilation. Paired with remote-controlled solar powered blinds, the skylights become even more efficient, stylish, and affordable, since both products, as well as installation costs, qualify for a 30 percent Federal tax credit. To learn more about skylights visit www.veluxusa.com (<http://www.veluxusa.com>).

* Upgrade fixtures. From faucets to shower heads, the fixtures in kitchens and baths are like jewelry that completes a fashionable ensemble. While you can easily spend thousands on high-end products, you don't have to in order to achieve a high end look. For a modest investment, you can upgrade faucets, shower heads and other fixtures to improve usability and add a luxurious look to a kitchen or bath. For example, in the kitchen touch-free faucets are both beautiful and practical, minimizing the spread of germs by never requiring you to touch a clean faucet with dirty hands. In the bathroom, a

luxurious showerhead can enhance your shower experience with a rainfall effect, music or even lights.

* **Improve flooring.** When you think about flooring for kitchens and baths, chances are you think of some common materials such as vinyl or tile. While carpeting or wood may be equally impractical in rooms where moisture and spills are routine, more durable materials work well in both rooms. When choosing flooring for baths and kitchens, remember the value of slip-resistant, moisture-proof, durable options. And if you find a flooring style you love enough to put in both rooms, you just might be able to find a volume discount!

* **Add warmth.** Kitchens and bathrooms cry out for a cozy atmosphere, but they can also be among the coolest, draftiest rooms in the house. Consider ways to add warmth to both rooms. You have many options: skylights create warmth by bringing sunlight into the room while they make it feel larger. Below-floor heating can make bathroom floors barefoot-friendly. And for the ultimate touch of luxury, warmth and ambiance, consider adding a gas fireplace in your kitchen or bath. Modern gas fireplaces can be installed virtually anywhere, even in rooms that have never had one before or that aren't accessible for a chimney.