

Dinner Is A Crock: The Kitchen Renovation



Thank you for following my kitchen renovation, week by week! If you started following from the beginning, you might remember my boring almond and oak colored kitchen. Actually, you probably don't. I hid most of it from pictures and only showed you the edges of my [Pfaltzgraff dishes](#). So we gutted it. Like, down to the subfloor. And now we've spent

the last three months rebuilding it into this beautiful, functional, spacious kitchen. Don't be fooled... it's the same square footage it was before, but the landscape is so much more welcoming and the storage is accessible and workable.

In [WEEK ONE](#), we did demolition. It was like free therapy, we took our aggressions out on every wall. While it was intimidating to start, it was actually pretty easily and required a minimal amount of tools.

In [WEEK TWO](#), we celebrated Thanksgiving by installing our hardwood floors. This was a fun challenge that required a little booze, a lot of manpower, and no guests for the holiday! And yes... I crock potted our Thanksgiving dinner.



WEEKS THREE AND FOUR were exciting because our cabinets arrived early. I was naive enough to think that meant that the kitchen would be done three weeks early. NOPE. That's not how it really works.

I was also reminded how thankful I am that my boys are good eaters. This whole process included meticulous meal planning and a balance between crock pot cooking, fresh produce, and easy microwave foods. Not everything was healthy, but not every decision is life-changing... sometimes a meal just has to be filling and easy. Ramen noodles are still food, just ask any college student!

I would be happy to forget about WEEK FIVE. I shared with you my meals each night in hopes that we could all forget about that horrible incident with that undesirable creature. Pretty sure I'm going to have nightmares again now, thanks to myself.



A lot of progress happened quickly in WEEKS SIX THROUGH EIGHT, but then it came to a halt. Cabinets were installed, electric was run, plumbing was prepped and then countertops were measured. And then because the quartz needed cut, we had to update and wait.

I tried to be patient, I really did. But caffeine sometimes prevents that virtue from shining! I was anxiously waiting for the install, and every day of waiting seemed like a thorn, but ultimately it really wasn't an extended time at all.

[WEEK NINE](#) was the culmination of everything. Except for one day of snow that slowed our progress, this week was crazy! Electric. Plumbing. Tile. Countertops. HVAC. Paint. [Amazon Prime delivery!](#) Oh my! My dream kitchen became a reality. Like, legit reality. I can cook and clean and start creating again— new recipes, new posts, new video, and even new cooking classes (*locally only, but please reach out if you are interested in having me as a guest speaker!*).



Thanks so much for your support in this new adventure! Let me help you save time and cook slower.

Renovation, Week 9: The Finale

I am pleased to present the new Dinner Is A Crock kitchen! It's been months of hard work, intense labor, and intricate planning, but I am thrilled to welcome you to my home and get back to creating new and exciting recipes to share.

Week NINE— let's break it down and see how the transition unfolded...

Tuesday: [Carolina Custom Surfaces](#) did a beautiful job installing my new countertops on a very cold day. The guys were courteous and skilled. I love it when people show up to work but take a minute to just step back and admire the progress before they begin. This isn't just an office, this is my home, too. I appreciated that the guys asked me my opinion, like on faucet preferences, and even had great recommendations for counter cleaners (they totally recommended [THIS](#) and [THIS](#) to keep my quartz clean and pretty.)



Even the sun wanted to catch a glimpse of

my new countertops
from Carolina Custom
Surfaces!

My counters were installed perfectly, my house was kept clean, and my kitchen is one step closer to complete. They did such a good job that I'm starting to think about using [Carolina Custom Surfaces](#) to update the bathrooms and get a few custom cutting boards! (*TACOS FOR DINNER USING MY LAST BATCH OF FROZEN COOKED TACO MEAT*)

Wednesday: My cabinet installer came by this morning to finish up some last little details. Any man that wants to bring me a crown is fine by me... even if it's just the molding to go up against the ceiling. ☐

This afternoon, the tile backsplash was installed under cabinets behind where the hood will go. The subway has never looked this good.

What a difference in the dimensions of the room with the refraction of sunlight from the tile and countertop! I feel shiny and pretty. (*BOLOGNA SANDWICHES AND [CROCK POT TOMATO SOUP](#) FOR DINNER.*)



Such a dreamy sight!

Thursday: Today was all about regaining functionality. After nine weeks, I think I am most excited to have running water in the kitchen again! Yes, I realize that I had it in other places in the house, but I am so done with washing dishes in the basement bathroom! (SHOUT OUT TO MY HUBBY SINCE HE DID MOST OF THE DISHWASHING!!) My sink and dishwasher are up and running. And— so are my electrical outlets! I can plug it to a gazillion different places now, so you can anticipate seeing crockpots lining the kitchen at some point in the near future. Haha! (*GRILLED CHICKEN AND KALE BURGERS AND FRESH ZUCCHINI TONIGHT...AND A FEW OTHER THINGS IN PREPARATION FOR THE SNOW TOMORROW!*)

Friday: Oh snow, you ruined my perfect finale. But we made it so close! Kudos to Piedmont Natural Gas for braving the roads and still coming to install my range today. I'm super impressed with your commitment to deliver and follow-through for your patient (and slightly crazy) customers. It's in! I'm good! Just one more thing to go. ([CROCK POT POTATO SOUP](#) FOR DINNER AND A GARDEN SALAD. NOTHING TOO EXCITING.)



Shout out to Primo Water— love that my family drinks and cooks with this clean and refreshing bottled water.

I also want to give a shout out to [Primo Water](#)— I actually designed the cabinets around my refrigerator to house the [bottom-loading water cooler](#). I love it for easy access to clean water! I use it for hot tea at least once a day. My boys go to it all day for cold water (or room temperature, depending what your teeth prefer!). I also feel good cooking with it. With all the crazy stories on the news right now about tainted water, I feel really good about getting big jugs of Primo for my family instead of tap water. (The bottles are easy to exchange at places like Harris Teeter, Kroger, Lowe's Home Improvements, etc.)

Monday: (I'm playing *Pomp and Circumstance* music as I type this...) The hood has been installed and it's like fireworks going off in here. Not like electric short-circuiting or anything like that, but like we've reached the culmination of this project and the applause is going wild. Unicorns are seen jumping in the backyard and leprechauns are scurrying around

stocking my fridge. Ok... maybe not quite. But when my LG oven reaches full temperature, it does actually play a cute little ditty, so that will have to do for now. (*DINNER TONIGHT: ROASTED CHICKEN AND ROASTED BRUSSEL SPROUTS! ROASTED, PEOPLE! LIKE, IN AN OVEN!!*)

There are some small details to still finish (like painting the bay window), but overall, I could not be more thrilled with THIS:



Check out this beautiful panoramic of the new kitchen with all of the upgrades.

Thank you for staying with me on this adventure! I hope it's helped provide some guidance and guilty pleasure of commiserating with me through these 10 weeks. I can't wait to share new recipes with you very soon! #nokitchennoproblem... it's time to save time and cook slower. Welcome to the new and improved Dinner Is A Crock!

Renovation, Week Two: THX and Floors



Here's an easy way to free up space in your oven when you are making Thanksgiving dinner.

While most of you are probably brining your turkeys, whipping your cream, or stuffing that bird, we're being a little non-traditional with our family time this holiday season. Yes— we will still eat a full Thanksgiving dinner, but no... the renovation is not complete. No kitchen? No problem!

The goal this holiday weekend is to install about 600 square feet of hardwood floors in the kitchen (and throughout the family room). Last week, in [Week One](#), we stripped everything down to the subfloors. We received great news about our cabinets being ready ahead of schedule, but we need to get the wood down first!

At this point, most people think I'm crazy for doing so much

of the work ourselves, but it's been really therapeutic. Haven't you ever wanted to take a crow bar to some part of your own house?! The floors though– this was legit remodeling work. Lucky for me, my husband has a masters degree in pure awesomeness and together, with a little help from friends and family, we were able to get the job done.

But let's focus on what is important– what we are eating! Again– I have NO KITCHEN. I've got a workable sink in the basement, a stack of paper/plastic everything from Costco, and some prepped foods in the freezer.

Here's how Week Two panned out in our bellies. Thanksgiving dinner was the big challenge. I was all set to do [Crock Pot Turkey Legs](#)– it's a family favorite. But after checking three grocery stores for turkey legs with no success, I gave in and just bought cooked turkey meat. I did manage to make [Crock Pot Green Bean Casserole](#) and reheated some mashed potatoes. My boys wouldn't call it Thanksgiving dinner though if I didn't have the “secret” cranberry sauce. You know, the one that has the ridges on the sides from the shape of the can. I did find organic cranberry sauce this year that didn't have high fructose corn syrup in it, so that seemed like a win-win to me.



It's easy to keep all of

these ingredients on hand
for a delicious dinner
anytime!

On Friday and Saturday, we worked on THX dinner leftovers. I also made [Crock Pot Chili](#)– it's the easiest recipe ever. You might have also seen my [Crock Pot Tortellini Soup](#) on social media, that was a huge hit. I used [this recipe](#), but also added a can of white beans to add more protein. It's so easy and there was no prep work and no clean up. The ingredients for both of these meals are easy to keep on hand in the pantry and freezer and I recommend adding them to your next shopping trip.

You might not be remodeling this holiday season, but I'm guessing you too will have crazy days, impromptu gatherings and festive celebrations. You don't need a demolition to save yourself time and energy in the kitchen. Save time, cook slower. Savor the flavors and the moments.