

Thinking about giving your London kitchen a fresh look without tearing it all apart? A cosmetic kitchen refresh is a brilliant way to breathe new life into your cooking space without the disruption or cost of a full overhaul. If you're wondering **how much to budget for a cosmetic kitchen refresh in London**, you're in the right place.

In 2026, London homeowners <https://london-post.co.uk/how-much-does-a-kitchen-renovation-cost-in-london/> typically spend between **£8,000 to £15,000** for a cosmetic kitchen refresh that involves new doors, worktops, and a facelift—crucially, with *no changes to the kitchen layout*. But what exactly affects the cost? And how can you plan your budget intelligently, avoiding the traps and surprises common in London's renovation scene?



This guide covers:

- What a cosmetic kitchen refresh usually includes
- Why installed price matters far more than showroom price
- How to break down your budget—where to spend and where to save
- London-specific factors that add a premium to costs
- Important legal and financial considerations, including Building Regulations Part P and VAT
- Useful local companies and resources

What Does a Cosmetic Kitchen Refresh Typically Include?

For the uninitiated, a “cosmetic refresh” usually means giving your existing kitchen a stunning makeover without ripping out walls or moving plumbing. In London, this typically involves:

- Replacing cabinet doors and drawer fronts
- Installing new worktops (quartz, laminate, granite, or solid wood)
- Minor improvements like new handles, splashbacks, and lighting
- Repainting walls and possibly ceiling
- Keeping all appliances and kitchen layout exactly the same

These updates can transform your kitchen's style and functionality at a fraction of the cost of a full renovation. However, be aware that even cosmetic work is a proper project requiring planning, trusted contractors, and a clear budget.

Installed Price vs. Showroom Price: What's the Real Cost?

One of my pet peeves from 11 years in the kitchen refurbishment sector is clients being dazzled by "units only" prices from showrooms or online retailers, forgetting the substantial installation costs. It's a classic trap. London kitchen firms, including well-regarded names like Beams Renovation, often emphasized the *installed price*, which covers:

- Removal and disposal of old doors and worktops
- Fitting new cabinetry doors
- Worktop installation with plumbing or appliance adjustments if needed
- About 2-5 days of labour depending on kitchen size
- Waste removal and post-installation cleaning

For example, replacing kitchen doors can range from £150 to £350 per linear metre installed, while new quartz worktops typically run from £250 to £400 per linear metre, installed. Adding VAT at 20% (which almost always applies to domestic kitchen work) and accounting for labour and waste charges means the sticker shock can catch you unprepared if you only focus on showroom prices.

Sanity Check: Cost Per Linear Metre

I always urge homeowners to convert large lump-sum quotes into a "cost per linear metre" figure. It's a simple way to compare prices across suppliers and see if an installer's quote is in the right ballpark. If your supplier's quote for doors and worktops comes in at £2,500 for a 5-metre run, that means £500 per linear metre, probably on the higher side, prompting a review of scope and details.

How to Break Down Your Budget for a Cosmetic Kitchen Refresh

Assuming a total budget of **£8,000 to £15,000** in London for a modest kitchen refresh, here's a sensible budget breakdown:

Category	Typical % of Budget	£ Range on £10,000 Budget	Notes
New Doors and Drawer Fronts	30-40%	£3,000 - £4,000	Material quality (MDF, solid wood, veneer) impacts price
Worktops	25-35%	£2,500 - £3,500	Laminate is cheaper, quartz and granite pricier
Labour and Installation	20-30%	£2,000 - £3,000	Includes fitting, adjustments, and waste removal
Finishing Touches (handles, splashbacks, paint)	5-10%	£500 - £1,000	Consider splashback style and paint quality
VAT (20%)	On most of the above	Variable	Usually included in quotes but always confirm

Where to Spend More

- **Doors:** High-quality doors with durable finishes and elegant aesthetics create the wow factor.
- **Worktops:** A well-chosen worktop can anchor your kitchen style for years.
- **Labour:** Never skimp on qualified installers—poor fitting is a false economy.

Where to Save

- **Handles and accessories:** Handles can always be upgraded later.

- **Splashbacks:** Simple, tiled splashbacks or paint can be inexpensive and effective.
- **Paint:** If the walls are in good condition, a quality repaint might suffice rather than full tiling.

London Premiums: What Drives Up Your Kitchen Refresh Budget?

London is not your average place to renovate. Some key factors add a premium to kitchen work here:

- **Labour Costs:** Local tradespeople charge higher rates due to living costs and high demand.
- **Access Constraints:** Victorian terraces and mansion blocks often have narrow staircases and no parking—meaning more manual labour and time.
- **Waste Disposal:** Council restrictions and limited skip space increase disposal costs.
- **Older Housing Requirements:** Older properties may need additional checking to comply with Building Regulations Part P, especially for electrical work like new under-cabinet lighting or socket replacements.

For example, if your refresh involves replacing or adding lighting, remember that Building Regulations Part P requires that electrical work by non-competent persons must be notified to Building Control or completed by a certified electrician. This adds cost but ensures safety and compliance.

VAT and Legal Notes

Most domestic kitchen refurbishment work in London is subject to **20% VAT**. Sometimes this isn't immediately obvious in quotes, so check that your suppliers include VAT in their pricing. Some companies, like London Post, provide clear breakdowns showing VAT inclusive numbers, which helps avoid surprises at invoice time.

Also, always request written warranty terms from contractors. It's frustrating how often people rely on verbal promises, only to have headaches post-completion.

Local Expert Companies to Consider

London has an abundance of kitchen fitters and renovators, but a few companies consistently stand out for transparency, delivery, and quality on cosmetic refreshes:

- **Beams (beamsrenovation.com)** — Specialising in end-to-end renovations from design to fitting, with strong customer service and clear pricing.
- **Genesis London** — Known for bespoke cabinetry and a great track record in Victorian and older properties.
- **London Post** — Offers comprehensive material sourcing and installation with transparent VAT-inclusive quotes.

Summary: Budgeting For Your London Cosmetic Kitchen Refresh

To recap:

1. **Expect to budget £8,000 to £15,000** for a refresh with new doors and worktops but no layout changes.
2. **Focus on installed prices, not showroom prices.** Always check if VAT is included.
3. **Divide your budget wisely**—doors, worktops, and labour deserve most of your spend.
4. **London's unique challenges** mean access, labour, and older property codes can add costs.
5. **Ensure your electrical work complies** with Building Regulations Part P.
6. **Choose reputable, local experts** like Beams, Genesis London, or London Post.

Here's a story that illustrates this perfectly: was shocked by the final bill.. With some savvy planning and smart budgeting, your London kitchen can get a stunning makeover this year without the stress or excessive spend of a full rip-out. Happy refurbishing!

