

# Get green and go eCO

**About the Author:** Based in Dublin, Nicola Elizabeth Jones BA is the owner of the largest online eco interior design resource [www.holistic-interior-designs.com](http://www.holistic-interior-designs.com). Here Nicola provides hundreds of eco based ideas and recommendations, making navigation through the eco world a breeze. Her professional design services focus on the holistic approach; where interior design, the natural environment and human health and wellbeing are one concept. Awareness is growing about how our human actions are negatively affecting the global climate, using our finite resources and damaging our ecosystems and health. And so, Nicola offers eco interior design expertise allowing you to make informed choices for your home.

**Eco Interior Design:** Being truly eco conscious it is not just buying eco products, especially in Ireland. Importing and shipping use a huge amount of non-renewable resources in transportation alone, that really is just the tip of the iceberg. Knowing where a product comes from helps you begin to evaluate its green potential. It's difficult as some things just aren't manufactured in Ireland yet. You can help reduce your ecological footprint by buying locally produced products and materials as much as possible. Even better is to reduce waste by limiting the amount you create and reusing old to refurbish as new for your home.

## Kitchen Focus

The kitchen's ecological footprint is the largest in the home. Think about the amount of water, electricity and gas you use in the kitchen. Or what happens to rubbish, waste products and packaging that cannot be recycled or composted. Even down to the energy to manufacture appliances, materials, products, furniture, diningware and cooking equipment. Everything has an environmental impact so for a true eco kitchen – 'reduce, reuse and recycle'. The key is to limit the amount you buy, spruce up what you have and recycle anything you can.

**Kitchen cupboards:** Check your kitchen units to see if they can be restored or repaired, so that you only replace what is necessary. If you must replace your kitchen units, go for second-hand that would end up as waste in landfill sites. There are a number of free recycling websites which help bring together recycling communities. Otherwise buy units made from sustainable timber/eco timber alternatives/recycled content. Complete recycled kitchen units/worktops <http://www.milestone.uk.net/eco/home.htm>

**Worktops:** Avoid plastics and conventional laminate worktops! Have a look around for worktops with recycled content e.g. paper, stone, glass, metal, ceramic tiles. Other choices are sustainable timber and bamboo for a more natural finish.

**Bamboo worktops**  
<http://www.ecoimpact.co.uk/worktops.htm>

**Recycled glass worktops**  
<http://www.glasseco.co.uk/>

**Flooring:** For comfort underfoot natural linoleum, recycled rubber and cork are ideal eco flooring choices. For the timber lovers out there engineered bamboo is sleek and modern whilst reclaimed timber flooring creates a warm rustic feel. <http://www.naturocorkflooring.ie/>

**Walls:** Use light colours (natural or zero VOC paints) on the large surfaces to reflect lots of light around the room – making the room appear larger and brighter. Recycled tiles, metal or glass make great backsplashes and upstands, which are easily cleaned and are great with moisture.

**Lighting:** Create and use the maximum amount of natural light as possible. If you do not have a window in your kitchen, consider a skylight or a solar tube. The aim is to flood your kitchen with as much natural light as possible to save on energy use. Heavy curtains and blinds will limit the amount of natural light so consider your furnishings carefully. For artificial light look for compact fluorescent bulbs which use a quarter of the energy and last up to ten times as long as conventional bulbs.

**Appliances:** EU regulations mean that new appliances must display energy efficiency labels, helping you make an informed choice when shopping. Rated from the most efficient 'A' to the least efficient 'G'. Generally, newer appliances are more energy efficient than those built before the year 2000. Make sure you properly dispose of your old appliances – use a local recycling facility or where possible the electrical take back scheme. Simple ideas like using the washing machine and dishwasher with full loads, drying your clothes naturally on a washing line and not filling the fridge to bursting all help to cut your kitchen energy use.

**AEG has an excellent range of A-rated kitchen appliances**

<http://www.aeg-electrolux.co.uk>

**Chores:** RECYCLING – one of the most important parts of your kitchen! Separate your compost, green bin waste and rubbish that cannot be recycled. Install a recycling station for great recycling management. Choose non toxic, chemical free and natural household cleaning products which are safer on your skin and don't have such a damaging effect on the natural environment. Cut down on the amount of waste you are responsible for in our landfill sites. Try composting any produce which is biodegradable; vegetable peelings, ground coffee, fruit peel etc.

**Great range of recycling bins for the kitchen**

[http://www.thebincompany.com/kitchen\\_bins.htm](http://www.thebincompany.com/kitchen_bins.htm)  
<http://www.recycaliser.com/catalogs.htm>