



# How To Paint Kitchen Cabinets

## The Ultimate How-To Guide

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## Preparation Is Key

The outcome of your project will depend entirely on how well you prep your surfaces.

The best way to clean kitchen cabinets is by thoroughly degreasing them using a heavy-duty degreaser. You can use liquid dish soap such as Dawn, Simple Green, M1 liquid deglosser, TSP, or you can use a product called Krud Kutter. A green Scotch-Brite pad works great to scrub all surfaces.



You need to pay close attention and make sure you remove any grease and grime before painting your kitchen cabinets. Or else your paint will not adhere. To **clean grease off kitchen cabinets** before you paint them we like to spray down all surfaces with **Krud Kutter** then scrub them really well.

To make it a bit easier we use brushes that you can attach to a drill or impact driver.

These brushes have **soft, medium, and coarse bristles**.

Depending on the condition of the cabinets we usually stick to the **medium** and **coarse** bristles.

After scrubbing all surfaces really well we wipe them down with a clean and wet rag.

Just to make sure there are no Suds or cleaner residue left on the surface.

[Check Out This How-To Video](#) to see how we clean cabinets at 518 Painters

## How Do You Clean Grease Off Kitchen Cabinets Before Painting?

To **clean grease off kitchen cabinets** before you paint them we like to spray down all surfaces with **Krud Kutter** then scrub them really well.



[Get the best offer for a 2 pack online here.](#) **No mixing needed!**

**After you thoroughly clean your kitchen cabinets and they are dried you can begin prepping.**

**To prep them correctly you will have to scuff up the surfaces to create a tooth for your primer to bond to.**

## **How To Scuff Kitchen Cabinets**

You can use a 150-220 grit sanding sponge and lightly scuff your surfaces.

If you have laminate cabinets then a 150 grit sanding sponge works better to scuff the surface.

**You can get the right variety pack of [sanding sponges here.](#)**

These will last you 1-2 complete kitchens.

Scuffing the surface will give your primer something to grab on to.

The sandpaper will cut into the finish causing it to create tiny little craters.

These little scuffs on the surface will enable the primer to stick to the surface that was glossy and slick before.

There is also a way to paint your kitchen cabinets without having to sand them. You can do this with a product called Krud Kutter-Gloss Off.



[Get it cheaper here](#)

We like to pour about 16 ounces or more into a bucket and use a fine brillo pad or a Scotch-Brite Pad to clean the surfaces.



[You can get the same ones we use here](#)

The Krud Kutter Gloss Off will de-gloss your surface using a chemical reaction.

It is suggested you wear proper personal protection for your safety.

Read the label so that you are aware of what you will need. Your surfaces will be de-glossed without having to sand them.

Wipe off the surfaces immediately with a damp rag.

You can start priming once everything dries and you have a work window of 14 days after you apply your Krud Kutter Gloss Off.

The first time we tried the product we had our concerns but it definitely works and you can paint your kitchen cabinets without sanding them.

## What's The Best Primer For Kitchen Cabinets?

Your next step is to prime the surfaces with the right primer.

Depending on the type of cabinets your painting you have several options when it comes to priming the kitchen cabinets.

### Oak Cabinets

If you are painting **Oak kitchen cabinets** I suggest you use an oil-based primer. [Zinsser Coverstain](#) is our go-to in that case.



It is a fast-drying and stain-blocking primer that will fill in the grain of the oak.

I suggest you do 2 coats and sand in between with a 220 grit or a fine sanding sponge.

[Buy it online here](#)

## **Hickory Cabinets**

If you are painting **Hickory kitchen cabinets** I would suggest using a shellac primer such as [Zinsser B-I-N](#)



[Get it online here](#)

It dries within 30 minutes and bonds extremely well. It has a strong odor and is similar to work with as an oil-based product.

**Attention!!**

**Always use a suitable respirator, gloves, and eye protection when using oil or alcohol-based primers and paint!**

## **Laminate Cabinets**

if you have laminate cabinets to paint I suggest you use a primer coat of [“INSL-X Stix”](#) which is a urethane acrylic.



[Get it online here](#)



[Check out this video](#) to see if this is the right primer for your project.

## How To Find Out What Type Of Cabinets You Have

Not sure what type of cabinets you have?  
Check out this post below

<https://www.518painters.com/best-primer-kitchen-cabinets/>

## How To Fill Wood Grain

The best wood grain filler for oak cabinets is **Bondo** body filler or **Bondo Wood Filler** hands down.

The reason being is that it dries fast and you only need **1-2** coats.

There are other options but Bondo is just so easy to get because it is readily available, low cost, and easy to work with.



[Get the same Filler we suggest here.](#)

In order to turn **grainy oak cabinets** into a smooth surface before painting, you will first have to fill and hide the grain.

The most common procedure is cleaning the surface and removing any grease or grime.

Then you will have to **sand** the surface and prepare it for your **filler**.

**150-220 grit** sandpaper is ideal.

Next, you will have to fill the grain.

The most commonly used products are:

- **Aqua Coat Wood Grain Filler,**
- **Wood Filler,**
- **Plastic Wood Filler,**
- **and Bondo.**

In my personal opinion and experience, *Bondo* works the best.

Regardless of what method you use, be prepared to add on an **abundance** of hours to your products between **filling and sanding**.

Check out this [product review of Aqua Coat Wood Grain Filler](#) to see if it might be right for you.

## **Painting The Cabinets**

Using a [2-inch Nylon](#) paintbrush start cutting in around the hardware (if you did not remove the doors). **I would always suggest removing them.**

Cut in any places your [3/8 inch microfiber Whizz™](#) roller will not reach.

In addition, use your *Whizz™* roller to apply your *paint*.

Try to paint in the same direction as your grain (if your cabinet has a fake wood pattern).

Let it dry overnight and repeat.

You can hang your doors now but keep in mind that even though the enamel will dry overnight, it still takes 30 days to fully cure so be careful and try to avoid scrubbing them before those 30 days.

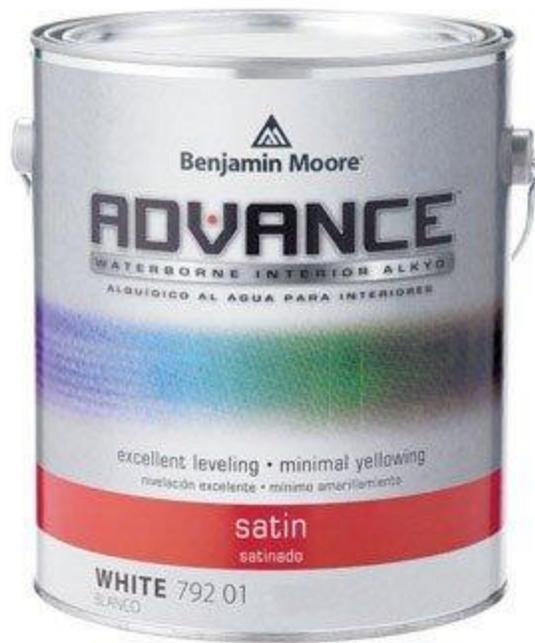
Check out this tutorial of [“How To Brush And Roll Kitchen Cabinets”](#)

## What’s The Best Paint For Cabinets?

**Personally**, I will not spray solvent-based paint that is specified to be applied in a shop setting.

Therefore, we use hybrid products or water-based products as much as we can!

If a quick turnaround is not needed I would suggest using [Benjamin Moore Advance Alkyd](#).



Note: BM Advance tends to level out better when drying horizontally.

Another durable option is **PPG Breakthrough 250 VOC**



Whether you use an HVLP sprayer or you brush and roll, both of these products level out really nice without having to thin them.

Check out this [How-To tutorial](#) to see how we do it at 518 Painters.

Other good options for DIYers are:

### INSL-X Cabinet Coat:



Click On Image To Check Price

## Rustoleum Cabinet Transformations:



[Click On Image To Check Price](#)

## Painting Cabinets That Have Been Painted Before

If you have previously painted kitchen cabinets that are not peeling and you want to repaint them you will not have to prime.

However, you will still have to thoroughly clean and scuff the surface enough to create a tooth for your new layers to bite into.

Feel free to shoot me an email if you have ANY questions and I'll be glad to help! [Juan@518Painters.com](mailto:Juan@518Painters.com)

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