

MANSION



SPREAD SHEET | SANETTE TANAKA

STICKER SHOCK IN THE KITCHEN

Homeowners in the Northeast spend top dollar remodeling what can be the most expensive room in the house; Southerners pay least

HOW MUCH TO REMODEL a kitchen in Springfield? The answer greatly depends on whether the Springfield is in Arkansas, New York, Minnesota—or any of the many Springfield in the U.S.

A recent survey commissioned by Houzz, a home-remodeling and design website, shows how spending on high-end home projects can vary substantially by region. Northeasters shell out the most on complete home

and kitchen remodels; constructing a custom home is priciest in the West; and Midwesterners pay top dollar for swimming pools.

“You can have the same house, same remodel, but two different areas in the U.S. can have very different costs,” says Adi Tatarko, co-founder and CEO at Houzz.

The findings are based on a survey taken by 106,383 registered users of Houzz’s website in mid-January to

mid-February 2013. Users were asked how much they spent on materials and labor for each completed project. Edge Research, an Arlington, Va.-based market-research firm that conducted the survey, released the findings in March.

Labor costs tend to be higher in California compared with other areas because of the state’s higher cost of living, says Doug Burdge of Burdge & Associates Architects based in Mal-

ibu, Calif. “A project here could easily cost \$400 per square foot while another one outside of the state could be \$200,” Mr. Burdge says.

In the Midwest, Jon Kogan, founder and owner of Highgate Builders in Glencoe, Ill., says pool prices tend to be higher because there are fewer pool companies and less competition. “There are only four months when you can use it, so there are obviously less swimming pools being

built,” says Mr. Kogan, adding that his company installs three or four pools a year.

The Northeast tops Houzz’s survey with the most-expensive home remodels. Homes in the area tend to be older and lack the open floor plans that are popular—but expensive to create, says John DaSilva, design principal at Polhemus Savery DaSilva Architects Builders in Chatham, Mass. “Virtually all of the major renovations that we do have the same issues. The living spaces are closed off to the light and views. The rooms are closed off from one another. They don’t reflect the way people like to live today,” he says.

Big-ticket items include installing ductwork for air-conditioning, insulation, plumbing and electrical changes, and permit costs, says Daniel Steinkoler, founder and president of Superior Home Services Inc. in Washington, D.C. “When you renovate older homes that are 80 to 100 years old, you definitely need to budget more money on the unknowns because you’ll find them,” he says.



BEFORE A 10,000-square-foot Malibu, Calif., house before an extensive renovation by Doug Burdge of Burdge & Associates Architects.



AFTER The facade was overhauled, while the footprint remained much the same. The project also added a guest-house and outdoor living spaces.

Big-Ticket Renovations

In a survey by home-design website Houzz, participants were asked how much they spent on recent home projects. Their answers, broken out by regions:

	Northeast	South	Midwest	West
Custom home construction	\$661,515	\$584,111	\$516,993	\$728,938
Complete home remodel/redesign	\$250,657	\$179,874	\$152,708	\$222,184
Pool addition/replacement	\$36,939	\$38,304	\$45,460	\$44,262
Kitchen remodel	\$35,550	\$23,779	\$26,103	\$29,956

Source: Survey of 106,383 Houzz users conducted by Edge Research

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