

Little Kitchens Can Have Big Style

A kitchen is the gathering spot for the family. Loved ones can discuss their day and share happy memories while preparing meals. Compact kitchens present an opportunity to dream bigger. A few simple switches, such as installing brightly hued cabinets, wood floors, a backsplash and more, can save money.

Cabinets

All-white and neutral kitchens are timeless. However, in a compact space, color can make a statement. Blue cabinets infuse the heart of a home with tranquility and luxury. Navy selections are refined and lighter options bring a cool, airy vibe. Indigo and peacock are fun hues that deserve consideration. Yellow cabinets in any shade bring sunshine indoors. Raspberry or cranberry hues can stimulate the appetite without being overwhelming. Mint and sage cabinets add character. If your heart is set on white, use the classic hue for the upper cabinets and choose a color for the lower ones. Keep the walls cream or eggshell to allow the infusion of color to pop.

Flooring

Wood floors are perfect in any size kitchen. Lighter wood tones create a softer look. Dark floors can also work if a cooler tone is used for the walls, ceiling and trim. Oversized diamonds and chevrons create diagonal lines that draw the eyes to the sides of the room, making it appear wider. These types of lines create an optical illusion and can work with options that range from carpet to tiles. Always use the biggest tiles and widest planks possible.

Backsplash

A backsplash is a great addition to any kitchen. Decide on which material works best. Consider ceramic tile, glass, granite or stainless steel. Slim cut tiles play up the length of the room. Glass and stainless steel backsplashes will reflect light and create the illusion of expansion. Granite will add a luxurious vibe. Determine how much you will need, depending on whether you want to cover the entire wall space or just the small portion between countertops and cabinets. Explore colors, patterns and textures. A small kitchen can make installing a backsplash a DIY affair.

Walls

An all-white look is popular for small kitchens. It reflects light and makes the walls recede. If this is the route you choose to go, add variation with differing shades of white and textures. Don't be afraid of brights. Unexpectedly splash bold color on windowsills, molding (floor and/or crown) or shelves. This creates contrast and interest, making the kitchen appear spacious. Accent walls are a great option. Select a deep or statement hue. Darker colors will enlarge a space by giving appearance of the wall receding into the background. Trick the eye into seeing a higher ceiling by using the same wall and trim paint color. Colors should vary but not contrast in smaller kitchens. Stick to hues in the same family to avoid an abrupt shift in color that will create visual boundaries.

Light

The sun's rays expand any kitchen, making it feel more expansive and brighter. Even if a kitchen has only one window, the light can be optimized with the right window treatments. Sheer curtains are ideal to embrace the light, while opaque ones allow for privacy, and blinds can dress up a window. Kitchens that don't have windows can use a tube skylight. Installing lighting above, below and inside kitchen cabinets adds a bright and airy element. Highlight a focal point such as a nook by placing pendant lights above it. Consider a stunning chandelier to draw the eye upward.

Expand your kitchen's style with these tips from the April 1958 edition of *Better Homes & Gardens* magazine.