

BEFORE & AFTER

Better, Not Bigger

Adjusting the layout and updating the cabinets and appliances helped turn a tight, dark kitchen into an open cooking and entertaining space—without adding on.



BEFORE



Cramped and Closed Off

An inefficient layout made the old kitchen feel even smaller than it was. And the wall between the kitchen and dining room blocked light and prevented an easy flow between the two spaces.

“WHEN WE BOUGHT the house we figured we’d wait a year or two and then redo the kitchen, which was really small,” says Alex Register of the Minneapolis home he shares with his wife, Charissa, their foster child, and their dog, Oliver. “But after about six months, we cracked.”

A cramped layout was just one of the flaws that pushed the couple to remodel. The space was also closed

PHOTOS, AFTER: ANDREA RUGG



off from the first-floor living areas, which made entertaining difficult, and there was little storage, no dishwasher, and no prep space to speak of. “There was maybe 1 square foot of counter space,” says Alex, a problem for a couple that likes to cook together.

Coming Up With a Plan

Although they had a fairly good idea of what they wanted from the update—a

more open floor plan, a peninsula, and subway tiles, for starters—the couple turned to the designer Kate Roos to help them make the most of their limited space. “There wasn’t a good way to add on to the kitchen without losing another room we liked or bumping out in an awkward way. We never would have been able to make everything fit on our own,” says Alex. “Kate somehow managed to

Pint-Sized Appliances

Scaled-down designs can help make the most of every inch



Side-by-side fridges have a shallow door swing, and this model is only 33 inches wide. GE GSS23HSHSS, \$1,523. ge.com



Only 18 inches wide, this model fits 10 place settings thanks to its tall tub design. Bosch SPX68U55UC, \$999. bosch-home.com



This 7-cup food processor is small but not mighty: It only scored Good in our tests. KitchenAid KFP0711, \$80. kitchenaid.com

magically transform the layout within the same footprint.”

The designer’s “magic” relied on several smart tweaks. First, removing part of the wall between the kitchen and dining room created a wide opening that allows a better flow for living and entertaining. Next, replacing an existing double window—which extended below counter level—with a single standard-height window made room for a tall, narrow refrigerator and a full-sized dishwasher and sink.

“We’re so happy to have a dishwasher,” says Alex. “And though we lost a window, the whole first floor feels brighter because removing that wall opened up sight lines and let light into the dining room.” Finally, designing a peninsula that extends into the dining area by about 10 inches helped link the two spaces and created an efficient work zone in the kitchen.

Maximizing Style and Storage

When it came to the look of the new kitchen, “the big challenge was adding modern touches without making it stand out in the house, which has a super-classic, 1920s look,” Alex says.

Roos specified custom cabinets in a simple Shaker style, adding a slight beveled detail based on the home’s existing woodwork. Extending the cabinets to the ceiling helped maximize storage, as did installing a shallow floor-to-ceiling pantry, wall hooks for pots and pans, and pull-out shelves inside the peninsula.

A pale gray paint on the cabinets provides a hint of contrast with the white walls, subway tile, and quartz countertops. Black accents and flashes of stainless steel lend just a little modern edge, while antique bronze hardware offers a touch of warmth and age.

The result is a space that’s fresh and up to date yet still in keeping with the architecture that drew the couple to the house in the first place. And now they can enjoy the kitchen together—and with friends. “It’s inviting and communal,” Alex says. “Just what we wanted.”



Clever Clutter Busters

Accessories like these can help prevent kitchen pileups

When cabinets and countertops are limited, follow the advice of professional organizers to avoid a cluttered mess. Make the most of walls, backsplashes, and other vertical spaces; think “double-duty” whenever possible; and don’t let a single square inch go to waste. Here, some space-expanding helpers to keep your small kitchen neat.

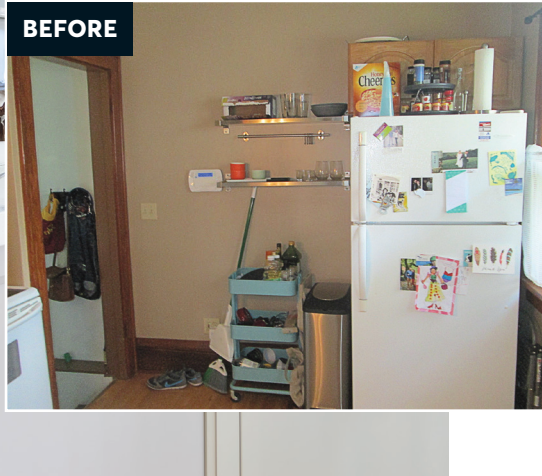


Wall-mounted rail and hook systems offer customizable, add-on storage where you need it. Ikea Fintorp Series, \$3 to \$17. ikea.com



Bright and Efficient

Redesigning the window and shopping for a narrow refrigerator made it possible to fit a dishwasher and a full-sized sink on a previously unusable wall, freeing up more space for a pantry.



BEFORE



Tiered racks and accessories like a cutting board can make the kitchen sink work even harder. Kohler Prolific Sink, \$900. kohler.com



Take a tip from Julia Child: A wall-mounted pegboard is ideal for hanging kitchen essentials. Rebrilliant Kitchen Organizer, \$78. wayfair.com



Keep the cabinets you have tidy with DIY organizers. Lower Cabinet Organization Starter Kit, \$204. containerstore.com



Hidden storage under the cutting board plus hooks and a shelf add versatility to a small island. Scott Living Kitchen Island, \$295. amazon.com