

HOW DO I MAKE THE MOST OF A SMALL KITCHEN?

The kitchen is becoming more than just a food preparation area in today's society. Yet, on average, the kitchen still remains one of the smaller rooms in the house. The National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA) considers any kitchen 150 square feet or smaller to be a small kitchen, but that doesn't mean you can't make it look more spacious with some big ideas.

- Use unique storage solutions. Install high pantry cabinets to eliminate extra small cabinets. Add pullout shelves, rotating inserts and tilt-out bins to increase accessibility and storage within the cabinets. Light colored cabinets, open shelves, wire organizers and glass-front doors will help to lighten the space. Also, by adding more open display shelves/cabinets, the room will look greatly expanded. Too many cabinets, especially made of dark materials, will give the illusion that the room is much smaller.
- Choose appliances wisely. There are numerous high efficiency, sleek appliances that will allow individuals with small kitchens to have the same luxuries as those with large kitchens. Try to keep your cooktop and oven in the same area. This saves valuable counter space. Have microwaves built into the cabinetry to increase counter space. Keep all small appliances stored in either an appliance garage or pantry to maintain a clutter-free workspace.
- Maintain a mix of natural and ambient lighting. A skylight will open the ceiling to more light and raise a portion of the ceiling, visually expanding the space. Bay or greenhouse windows create an open feel. Natural light should be complemented by ambient and task lighting to provide the same feeling during the night.
- Add personalized touch. Display small, simple items that add a personal touch without creating a feel of clutter. Too many displays will cause the kitchen to look much smaller, but the right amount can add to the warmth and provide an illusion of a larger space.

All of these ideas can give your small kitchen that large kitchen feel. Working with a professional kitchen designer is the best way to ensure all options are explored for your new dream kitchen, no matter what the size.

(From Consumer "Articles" section on the National Kitchen and Bath website, www.nkba.org)