

The Small Kitchen Solution

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You'd be surprised what you can accomplish in a small kitchen. With even just a few of these suggestions you'll be outperforming folks with big kitchens in no time!

Your oven is also a shelf

Put those racks to use and store some of your larger or less used baking trays in there. Just avoid storing anything that isn't oven safe *in* the oven, because someone *will* eventually preheat the oven without checking to see what is inside first.

Counterspace is gold!

If you don't use something at least once a week,
it doesn't belong on the counter

Keep your recipe off the counter with magnets! Pick up some [adhesive metal plates](#) and a magnet or two to stick your recipe up where you can see it and not take up your counter space.

Make *more* counter space!

Oven covers (also called "burner covers") and sink covers/cutting boards can add a significant amount of work space to your kitchen. Plus, it makes the space look cleaner when you're not cooking

You can make an oven cover by taking 2 cutting boards, each about half the size of your stovetop, and attaching little legs on the bottom to make them tall enough to sit above your burners. [Directions here](#)

This [over the sink drying rack](#) saves counter space and can be tucked away when you don't need it.

[Tiered/stackable cooling racks](#) can be used for more than just cooling cookies and cakes. Use the multiple tiers to stack your pre-measured ingredients or plated and ready meals so you aren't spreading out all over the counter.

Fold-down tables can easily be picked up at stores like Ikea and will give you more counter space when you need it, but still has the flexibility to go away when you don't.

Space above the cabinets is still space

Use a [storage divider](#) to store your pans above your cabinets and fridge. This frees up valuable cabinet space and removes the hassle of dealing with "nested" pans when you always need the one at the bottom

Some cabinets can even have the kick boards below them replaced with pull out shelves. While a "premium" option, this can be a huge space saver for small kitchens.

Use your walls and hang stuff!

Pegboards are great for more than just the garage. Get a cheap one from your local hardware store so you can use any brand of hooks and not just the proprietary ones the manufacturer makes (*cough* I'm looking at you, Ikea). Even Julia Child used a pegboard in her kitchen to keep things tidy and visible.

Bonus, once you have a layout you like you can outline each tool. This not only gives the peg board a finished look, but it also helps other family members know exactly where each tool should go when they return it (no more excuses like "I didn't know where to put it")

If you don't want to go full-on-peg-board, you can buy lots of 3M hooks, [under counter hooks](#), or [wall hooks](#) to hang things throughout your kitchen.

[Hanging pan racks](#) can also save you a ton of storage space. Previously reserved for luxury homes, the price of this space saving tool has decreased dramatically in recent years.

You can drill holes into the things you own...

If you have tools that you *want* to hang, but don't have holes for hanging, drill one yourself. It's your tool anyway. Examples are spatulas, wooden spoons, measuring cups and spoons.

Get a magnetic knife strip

Knives should never be kept in the drawer for both safety and maintenance concerns, but knife blocks take up far too much space on a counter. Buying a magnetic knife strip solves both of these problems.

This will not only free up counter and drawer space, but keeps your knives sharp longer since they aren't getting jostled around in a drawer with other utensils.

Matching vessels stack better

We tend to slowly accumulate random pans and dishes over time, but different brands don't tend to play well with others when it comes to stacking nicely. Keep your 2 favorites of each type of pan and ditch the rest.

Decorative pans *look* great, but tend to take up the most space. There are a million different ways to improve presentation without filling your cabinets with a pan that only gets used once a year. Gift it to a friend who will use it more regularly or has a kitchen with too much storage space (if that exists)

This also includes mismatched tupperware. Most kitchens have an entire drawer or cabinet dedicated to mismatched food storage vessels. Either buy more of the ones you already have and like, or ditch all of them and start fresh. [Plastic deli containers](#) work great, can handle the freezer or microwave, and they're cheap! Plus, they all stack together nicely and they all use the exact same lid!

Unitaskers – get rid of them!

Garlic slicers, strawberry stemmers, anything that was once or could ever be on an infomercial should be thrown away. There is only one thing in the kitchen that should have a single job, and that's the fire extinguisher.

Tools that can accomplish multiple tasks *fairly* well are better than tools that can accomplish a *few* things *really* well.

Example, an immersion blender. It can accomplish most of the tasks of a full size/countertop blender, but fits into a drawer and is easy to clean. They're also great for making homemade mayo, blending soup while it's still in the original pot, and even making a quick salsa.

Universal pan lids allow you to cut down on clutter without losing functionality.

Lids tend to be one of the biggest space wasters in a kitchen. Whether it's a pan lid with an awkward shape and handle, mismatched tupperware lids, or just something that blocks you from nicely nesting your pots, addressing your lid problem can save you *a lot* of space.

A pan can also be a lid... Just place one pan, cooking side down, on top of another to create a lid while you're cooking. This has the added benefit of a longer handle than you would typically have on a lid.

Pre-measure your ingredients

Measuring out your ingredients before you start cooking or baking means the various tubs, bags, and canisters are no longer taking up workspace while you are actively cooking and baking.

Clean as you go.

Done with a bowl? Stack it with the others in the sink and allow them to soak. The soaking also makes clean up easier when you are done.

Use a Bain Marie

A Bain Marie will keep your utensils clean while cooking. This allows you to use fewer utensils, which will then keep more counter space open and available

A Bain Marie is a vessel with warm water in it. I like tall, narrow, vessels because they hold things like spatulas without threat of tipping the whole thing over. Before you start cooking or baking, pour some warm water into your vessel then simply place your utensils in the Bain Marie when you aren't actively using them and pull each one back out when you need it.