



LIVING IN A BOX

If your kitchen is on the compact side, there is a host of planning and design solutions to help you make the most of it

Report: **Ruth Bell**

Opening page (p45): In this In-toto Aura kitchen, a hanging rail fitted to the splashback ensures condiments, kitchen roll and utensils are all to hand while freeing up the worktop. Shown in anthracite grey, it is priced from £10,000.

Right: Second Nature's Avant Almond kitchen is shown here in a galley layout. Shallow wall cupboards enhance the sense of space and, even in a relatively narrow room, there's scope to include curves to soften the design. Kitchens from £10,000.

Below right: This L-shaped kitchen utilises all available space and creates a compact working area with everything to hand. The Lastra Mali Wenge kitchen in Pergamon gloss from Mereway's Cucina Colore collection is priced from £10,000.

Opposite page, bottom: The Ikon kitchen by Key Cucine features this unit with sand-coloured matt lacquered polyester doors that slide to conceal appliances and clutter. Furniture as shown is priced around £8000 and available from Lauren Nicholas.



Light bulb moment

Getting the lighting right is particularly important in a small kitchen, as Michael Linsky of Sensio explains.

"Kitchen lighting should always be considered in the initial stages of the design process, whether you are working with a room where there's an abundance of space available, or a compact, corner kitchen with no windows.

"The key to creating a successful lighting scheme in a smaller kitchen is to incorporate a balance of task and decorative lighting solutions so that neither functionality nor aesthetics are compromised. Under-cabinet strip lighting will illuminate worktops and aid with day-to-day jobs such as food preparation, cooking and cleaning, and in-drawer and in-cabinet lighting will light up these areas, making the space easier to use. Combine these functional lighting solutions with mood lighting positioned above cabinets or along plinths, depending on the area which is to be accentuated, and the room will not only work well, but will also have atmosphere and ambience."

Right: Sensio's DuoFlex flexible strip light provides warm white and cool white light within the same fitting so you can choose the light to suit the task or mood. It can be installed under or above cabinets, along plinths and (as shown) under worktops, priced from £42 for a 1000mm strip.



There are a lot of beautiful and palatial kitchens in the world – many of them showcased in magazines such as this. However, if you, like many of us, manage daily in a postage stamp-sized space, then it can be difficult to work out how to make the most of it. Fear not, *KBB* is here to help.

The perfect layout

If you have a small square room, a U-shape is the most logical configuration for cabinets. "They are ergonomic and allow for plenty of hidden storage and potentially a seating area too," says Graeme Smith of Second Nature. "However, the layout is often dictated by the shape of the room. For example, a long, narrow space best suits a galley design, but by being creative with the cabinetry, and adding details such as gently curved drawers or cupboards, it doesn't have to feel like a corridor."

The U-shape layout would typically feature the oven and hob in the middle of the 'U' and the sink and fridge are then placed towards the outer areas, meaning everything is to hand. If you don't have space for three sides, an L-shaped configuration will maximise on the length and width by adjoining two walls. If there's room, you can add a seating area at one end to make the space more flexible, either in the form of a table or a peninsula with stools.

The trend for open-plan rooms where the kitchen is incorporated into the living and dining areas doesn't necessarily mean more space for the kitchen. Very often, it will mean an L-shaped run of units in the corner or a single galley run against the wall. "In an open-

plan kitchen even a small island unit will immediately open up the space and provide a multifunctional area with a breakfast bar for eating at and a sleek cooking platform," says Andrew Hall of Woodstock Furniture.

Creative cabinetry

It can be tempting to cram the walls with as much cabinetry as possible, but to stop the space feeling too crowded try to include some open shelving or units of a different height to break up the run. "Use glass-fronted cupboards, as when these are lit from the inside it makes the kitchen look bigger by drawing the eye to the back of the wall unit rather than the front. And fit tall units at the end of the run, away from a window or on an opposite wall, to prevent them blocking the daylight," advises Jude Keenan from John Lewis.

"And if the ceiling height is too low for tall cabinets, consider a run of mid-height units to house eye-level appliances, flanked with clever storage solutions such as pull-out larders and pan drawers," adds Graeme Smith.

Keep it light

The standard advice when choosing colours for a small space is to keep to a limited palette of muted shades, as strong colours can make it feel smaller than it is. Light and reflective finishes are also a must, as Bernard Otulakowski of SieMatic says. "A glossy finish will help to reflect the available light, but don't just think about painted finishes, as mirrored surfaces will bounce light around and pale natural woods can also work really well, adding character to a neutral scheme." *KBB*



Right: This galley kitchen makes full use of the space with units almost up to the ceiling, but with a break for an open shelf above the sink to prevent it feeling closed in. Shown is Modulnova's Fly kitchen in Bianco Snow satin lacquer, Silestone worktop and glass splashback. Kitchens from £25,000 at DesignSpaceLondon.

Case study



Designer: Esther Taylor of Esther Taylor Design.

The clients: A professional couple who often have the grandchildren to stay.

Location: Northwest London.

The brief: To create a smaller kitchen, as the owner no longer cooks as much now her children have left home.

Cost: Around £35,000.

“**T**he kitchen was originally double the size and the client was looking to reduce it to a much more compact space,” says Esther. “She wanted a concealed kitchen but with a link through to the dining area.” So by leaving the opening underneath the cupboards and the area above the island open, Esther ensured that both areas were linked. She also positioned the bar so that visiting grandchildren could pop in and chat while her client was in the ‘cooking’ part of the kitchen.

“By creating this ‘divide’, there is now one room with a dual function,” Esther explains. It also met another important part of the brief – that the kitchen shouldn’t be completely on display, so that when there are dishes in the sink, they cannot be seen by guests sitting at the table. Finally, to ensure the small space doesn’t appear crowded, Esther chose a monochrome palette including matt cupboard doors with a wood grain and metallic silver splashback, plus vinyl wallpaper in the eating area to create some warmth.



Case study



Designer: Nico Yiannikou of Y2DC.

The client: A single man furnishing a pied à terre in the capital.

Location: Central London.

The brief: To develop a scheme for a long-standing client's newly acquired penthouse apartment.

Cost: Around £38,000.



“We started with the understanding of how the client would use the space,” explains Nico. “It was purchased as a pied à terre for his short trips to the capital. During these trips he wanted a space that would house his creature comforts and work logistically as a hotel room.

“Having addressed all living areas we were left with the kitchen. Cooking was never a factor as the client always dined out. With this in mind, we developed a kitchen space that was more an oversized mini bar. All the essential items were at his disposal in the form of a coffee machine, dishwasher, fridge and, should it ever be required, a small hob. All of this was finished with a worktop of Carrara marble. Once the interior was designed, we chose to have the unit concealed behind four sets of electronically operated ebony macassar doors.”

Bottom left: At Home Interiors introduced a wall of mirror and reflective finishes to give an illusion of space in this tiny galley kitchen that faces a brick wall. The furniture only is priced around £34,000.

Bottom right: A variety of different types of units in the John Lewis Rimini range means that you can still create interest even within a compact galley kitchen layout. Shown in Natural Oak, kitchens start from £10,000.



Left: This glamorous little dark oak kitchen from Neil Lerner has been designed to occupy a small space but with a maximum amount of storage, worktop space and even a breakfast counter. Kitchens start from £25,000.

Bottom left: The Islington Cotton White kitchen from Laura Ashley works perfectly as a simple single galley layout. Glossy white doors help reflect light around and wipe-clean finishes make cleaning easy. Kitchens start at £5900.

Bottom right: Elmar's Slim kitchen features the ingenious Wing table, a 600mm-deep table that folds down flush to the furniture. Available in lengths between 1200 and 2400mm and in a choice of veneered wood, stainless steel and Corian, kitchens are priced from £20,000 at Laurence Pidgeon.



Take three... Storage solutions

Keeping your compact kitchen clutter-free will make it feel as big as possible while keeping everything conveniently to hand.



Above: This tall corner unit in the Lucrezia kitchen from Cesar features pull-out Le Mans shelves to ensure nothing is lost at the back. It is priced around £2500 and available from Espresso Design.



Above: The doors of this bespoke walnut Chamber Furniture kitchen will fully retract to reveal a cooking station, which is left open when in use and hidden away when not. Kitchens from £40,000.



Above: SieMatic's MultiMatic interior storage system offers several layers of drawers with each providing specialist storage for items such as cutlery, chopping boards and pans. Kitchens from £18,000.



Left: This striking white kitchen has been designed by Woodstock Furniture to fit neatly into a cosy living space in a basement. It features light-reflecting high-gloss cabinets, a mirrored plinth and a flush ceiling extractor to keep the sight lines clear. Kitchens from £30,000.

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