

# cozy, cute, colorful

A designer reveals her secrets to update and transform a tiny cottage kitchen.

Writer: Heather Shoning    Photographer: James Salomon    Field Editor: Susan Salomon



Open shelving and a plate rack help this cozy kitchen feel larger. A striped skirt on the sink base adds softness and establishes the rosy-accent color scheme.



**LEFT:** Open shelves display the decorative dishes that personalize this tiny kitchen and add pops of color.

## design tricks to make a small kitchen look (a bit) larger

- Install open shelving on one wall; it creates the illusion of more space.
- Paint the cabinets and walls the same neutral color to visually expand the space.
- Add bright accessories to personalize the kitchen and keep the eye moving from accent to accent.
- Punch up the look with black accents such as hardware and a pot rack that help define other colors in the room.

### Forget location—the key to tiny real estate is scale, scale, scale.

“Furniture, cabinets, and millwork have to fit the proportion of the space you’re working with,” designer Pauline Vastardis says. Designing a cottage south of Portland, Maine, she used tricks of the trade to get a large feel from a small kitchen.

Because the first thing guests see is the back wall of the kitchen, Vastardis wanted it to be dramatic. “Not everything needs to be white to make a space feel larger. Strong accent colors work well, too,” she says. “The bright colors are those you see in summer gardens in Maine.” In keeping with the scale of the room, cabinets from a home improvement store were cut shallow so their footprint would be smaller. “I thought about what items had to be stored in the cabinets and designed around them,” Vastardis says. To give the cabinets a Shaker-style look, she had the doors reversed.

The cottage style is cast above the sink with the open plate rack and hanging teacups. “By keeping the upper cabinet area open, it makes the kitchen feel a foot deeper,” Vastardis says. An open cabinet lined with garden-green wallpaper displays decorative plates. In traditional New England style, Vastardis used kitschy-but-cute lobster sconces in bright red and hid plumbing in the open area under the sink with a skirt.

The red-painted pine floor ties the room together. “The curvy harlequin pattern causes the eye to move out on a diagonal and makes the space seem bigger,” Vastardis says. A laminate countertop mirrors natural materials, but is budget-friendly. Black twig hardware ties in with the countertop, pot rack, and decorative baskets on the wall. “Black helps define the other colors in a room,” Vastardis says. “When you design a small space, every square inch is of value. Everything has to have a function.”