

Modern with a Side of History

Farm-style fixtures and contemporary appliances create a cozy kitchen that stands up to the demands of today.

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A

beautiful modern kitchen is often sleek, sophisticated and clean, yet often leaves the sense that something is missing. Adding farmhouse-inspired details can bring a warm, rustic touch that perfectly complements modern conveniences.

That's exactly what homeowner Carly Robertson set out to do when she redesigned the kitchen in her historic home. "I wanted to recreate what it would have looked like 100 years ago but with a more modern twist, because we have appliances and modern technology now," Carly says.

This meant adding just a touch of country charm. "I love that rustic, country look, but on a very clean, more modern scale," Carly says. While the renovation involved tearing up floors and stripping walls, she learned that small tweaks can take your kitchen from modern to tastefully provincial.

DRAW INSPIRATION FROM AUTHENTIC DESIGNS

The furniture in a 1900s farmhouse wouldn't have been stationary, so choose movable pieces where possible.

For example, Carly went with an unfixed kitchen island, which she uses as a prep station and eat-in area for her twin daughters. Extra space under the counter allows her to keep dishware organized.

Selecting a butcher-block counter top also helped to generate "that warm, country kind of feel," Carly says. Add other wood furniture to balance stainless-steel appliances.

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TIP

A butcher-block counter top is cheaper than stone. If opting for stone, Carly suggests adding a few strategically-placed butcher block cutting boards to get a casual feel.



Tips for Organizing a Small Kitchen

Finding a place for all your kitchenware can be a challenge. Here are Carly's tips for keeping a tiny kitchen clutter-free:

- 1. HAVE A PLAN—OR A SOLID FLOOR PLAN.** "I always try to step back, look at the floor plan, and think about how I'm going to use the space, and the things our family needs to make it functional, practical and usable for everybody," Carly says.
- 2. STORE FOOD ITEMS IN CLEAR GLASS CONTAINERS.** To create a clean, fresh look, use clear glass containers to store dry goods. They make it easy to see what's inside, gauge quantities and keep ingredients sorted.
- 3. OPT FOR WHITE DISHWARE.** "Even if it's a little bit messy in your cabinet, when it's all white you can't tell. It just looks nice and bright, and it all matches," Carly says.
- 4. DE-CLUTTER YOUR COUNTERS.** Often, countertops fill up quickly, making your kitchen look messy. To keep things tidy, place only those items you use every day on the counter, and tuck everything else away.

MAXIMIZE SPACE FOR MODERN DEMANDS

Ditch cabinets in favor of open shelving to further expand a space, while adding farmhouse style. "They wouldn't have had uppers 100 years ago," Carly says.

If eliminating your cabinetry altogether isn't an option, simply remove the cabinet doors to create instant shelving units.

A wall pantry, like the one in Carly's kitchen, is a great place to tuck away food items, dishes, stemware and anything else that needs a home. Make use of under-counter space for storage, keeping pots and pans hidden behind a country-style curtain or beadboard divider.

Make your kitchen look a little less modern by hiding some of your appliances. Install outlets in your pantry so you can keep things plugged in, yet out of sight. "You still have access to them, but when you close the door, you don't see them," Carly says.

FINISH WITH OLD COUNTRY CHARM

Accessorize with fun pieces like the "General Store" sign, or the mom-and-pop chalkboard hanging in Carly's kitchen.

Wicker baskets and wooden crates are also a great way to corral items, while offsetting modern appliances. Carly uses the baskets to organize items in the pantry, while an antique crate next to the refrigerator works perfectly for holding her cookbooks.

Trade your current light fixtures for weathered iron ones to add rustic appeal. Carly loves vintage schoolhouse lights, which bring a sense of small-town charm to her space.

Finally, nothing says "farmhouse style" like a deep, cast-iron sink. For an avid baker and cook like Carly, it's practical, too. With the island, stove and dishwasher in close proximity, she can easily move around without leaving the L-shaped nook.