

Beautiful ideas for... U-SHAPED KITCHENS

The versatility of this design means it will work no matter what the size or style of your kitchen



FLOOR-TO-CEILING STORAGE

Be creative when it comes to corners so you don't waste space. This impressively large larder optimises storage without impacting on the room's footprint. Frillen solid-oak cabinetry by Sola Kitchens, from £26,000, including appliances

FEATURE LISA BURN

The U-shape is one of the most space efficient layouts, as it uses almost the entire area around the edge of the room, ensuring easy access to the cabinetry.

It also provides an abundance of worksurfaces.

In smaller kitchens, try to avoid too many tall or wall-fixed cabinets, as they can make the room feel enclosed. Instead, go for base units, and fit tall cabinets across one wall only, or create an airy feel with open shelving.

Innovative storage solutions, such as racks and magic corners, can be used in awkward nooks and crannies; in addition, narrow-depth

cabinets can enhance manoeuvrability by providing that little bit of extra floor space, while handleless doors mean you're not always catching your clothes while cooking.

In larger kitchens, an island or dining table can provide more work areas and a social aspect to the scheme, while in open-plan rooms, you might consider using one side of the U as a divider between the kitchen and living zones.

When it comes to the decor, neutral colours and reflective surfaces enhance the feeling of space. Lighting, both task and mood, also helps create a sense of roominess.

Gallery Ideas



SPICE IT UP
Add shelves that serve several purposes for extra storage. The underside can easily be adapted to have more than one function. Install task lighting, a slim display shelf or dedicated cubbyholes with glass containers for dry herbs and spices.

■ Bespoke shelves from Sola Kitchen's Frillen range start from £550

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FEATURE RACHEL OGDEN PHOTOGRAPHY OLIVER BEAMISH, MARK BOLTON, DAVID BRITAIN/IDEAL HOME, DAN DUCHARS/LIVINGETC, DANIEL FARMER/LIVINGETC, BRIAN HARRISON, JOANNA HENDERSON/HOMES & GARDENS, JAMIE MASON/IDEAL HOME, PERNILLE PAHLE/COUNTRY HOMES & INTERIORS, RICHARD POWERS/LIVINGETC/IPC+ SYNDICATION



SLIM DOWN

Even narrow shelves can make a big difference in a small kitchen, especially if you have reduced-depth base cabinetry and want to avoid creating a 'corridor' effect. Reflective materials, such as hi-gloss, metal and glass, help to bounce light around a compact space.

■ Lack shelves, £10, Ikea. For similar wallpaper, try Brocante, £22 per roll, Tektura Wallcoverings. Avant Cappuccino at Second Nature has the look of these units. A kitchen costs from £8,000



DECORATE AND DESIGN

Painting or wallpapering behind open shelving will help to highlight the display and the shelves themselves. If you're using reclaimed materials, leaving brackets and fixtures on will give a sense of their industrial past.

■ Reclaimed timber shelves from Wessex Reclamation, prices vary

GO OLD SCHOOL

Antique shelving will add a sense of heritage to a country-style kitchen, so scour eBay and antiques fairs for unusual solutions. Mount near a tea point for easy storage of frequently used crockery – just make sure it's strong enough before loading it up.

■ Try antiques stores for similar pigeonhole shelves

FOR STOCKISTS, SEE PAGE 136



DISPLAY A COLLECTION

Create impact with a long continuous shelf if you don't need wall cabinets. Display similar items, such as a crockery collection. It also works in a dining area.

■ Kitchen by Harvey Jones, prices start from £17,000. Bo chairs by Philippe Starck, £111 each, Mac & Mac



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