

## 9 Small Kitchen Design Questions, Answered By The Experts

Planning a kitchen is as much about problem-solving as it is about aesthetics and if you have limited space, everything has to work harder – from the placement of the appliances to the storage. That's why it's important to identify the potential pitfalls and find the solutions that will make your kitchen both functional and stylish. Here, we put some of the key points to Ed O'Donnell, co-founder and creative director of interiors studio Angel O'Donnell and Philippa Bloom, the We Are Twinset co-founder and first-time renovator.

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### What's the first thing you consider when designing the layout of a compact kitchen?

"I knew from the start that an island just wouldn't fit in our space but it was really important to me to have enough of a worksurface to make the whole design more practical. That's why the compact U-shaped layout works so well – it gives me plenty of room to cook and prepare food, while keeping everything within easy reach." – *Philippa Bloom*

### Does the classic 'kitchen work triangle' still apply in small spaces?

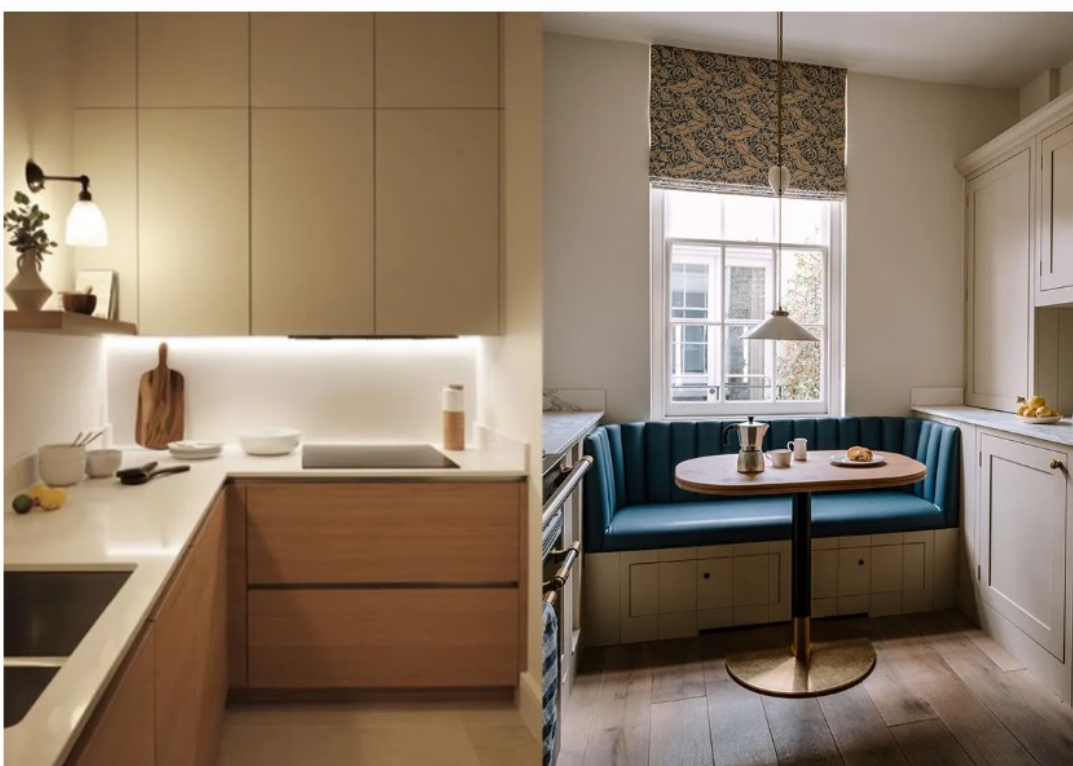
"Not all kitchens can support the classic 'work triangle' because not all kitchens are horseshoe or L-shaped. Whatever arrangement you have, it's important to optimise the distance between appliances. For instance, having the sink, dishwasher and bin in easy reach of each other for disposing, rinsing and loading seems logical. Similarly, try to place the sink near the hob as water is often an essential component of cooking. Ultimately, it's about adapting the principles of good flow – like those in the work triangle – to fit the unique shape and needs of your kitchen." – *Ed O'Donnell*

### Are there specific finishes or colour palettes that can visually expand a compact space?

"Neutral colours, luxurious finishes and elegant brassware help elevate a small kitchen, and for me, the materials were such a big part of getting the look and feel right. I chose *Caesarstone 5171 Arabetto* for the worktops because it has this luxurious, marble-like finish but it's also really durable. The stone-coloured shaker cabinetry keeps the whole kitchen looking bright and open, and I love how the brass handles add a little warmth and elegance." – *Philippa*



Studio DB



Studio Squire; Margot Tsim



## How do you balance open shelving versus closed cabinetry?

“Open shelves are great, especially in a compact kitchen, because they provide storage without visually blocking the space. Shelves also draw the eye lengthways, creating an illusion of distance. They’re fun to dress, too, with recipes, earthenware, pots and pans and the paraphernalia of cooking.” – *Ed*

## What are your favourite clever storage solutions for small kitchens?

“One of my favourite details is fluted glass cabinets. They let the light pass through and stop the space from feeling heavy, while still giving me the clean-looking storage I need. The design feels luxurious, practical and perfectly suited to how I use the kitchen every day.” – *Philippa*

## Are there any common mistakes people make with storage?

“The biggest mistake you can make with a small kitchen is trying to cram too much into it. Don’t have space for every mod con? Then prioritise the essentials. If you have a fridge, do you need a wine cooler? If you have an oven, is a microwave really necessary? Be ruthless and whittle everything down to the essentials – it’ll make for a cleaner, freer, happier space to move about in.” – *Ed*

## What role does lighting play?

“Warm LED strips under shelves and cupboards are a must. They create warmth while providing shadow-free task lighting for food prep. So much better than the glare you get from spotlights.” – *Ed*

## What’s the best way to incorporate a dining or breakfast nook into a small kitchen?

“Banquettes are brilliantly space-saving – especially if you go bespoke. While made-to-measure may sound lavish, it’s a smart way to maximise every square inch and seat friends and family comfortably. At [The OWO Residences](#), we designed a banquette with big cushions, alongside a sculptural table, upcycled vintage chairs and three decorative wall plates for added visual interest. Small in scale, big on impact.” – *Ed*

## What trends or innovations excite you most about small-space kitchen design?

“Much like powder rooms, compact kitchens are becoming spaces for creative expression, experimentation and design. Their small dimensions will encourage people to think carefully about how they feel, function and look. They’re on the cusp of having a renaissance – the new hubs for cosy, comfortable and considered design.” – *Ed*