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# Kitchen Cabinets

.....for Convenience and Appearance.....

by Mary Pickett

**W**HAT KIND of cabinets do you want for your kitchen? If you're building or remodeling a kitchen, you'll have a wide selection in choosing storage cabinets. Today you can find many choices in materials, colors, finishes, sizes and special features.

The outside appearance is what you notice first when you look at kitchen cabinets in stores, catalogs or homes you visit. But convenience and suitability to your needs are every bit as important as appearance. Here's one rule of thumb you can apply to check function and convenience: Can articles used frequently be kept where they're first used and where they're easy to see, reach and grasp? As you can see, the various features found on different

cabinets will pretty much determine whether this rule holds true.

## Where, How Many?

Where do you want to locate the cabinets and counter space in your kitchen? A closer look at the activities performed in the kitchen should help you arrive at an answer. Also, you'll need to consider the space available for locating cabinets. Having storage space in each area where equipment and supplies are to be used and stored will help make your kitchen a more enjoyable place to work.

To get the most value from the cabinets you buy, they should fit the utensils and other items that will be kept in them. Buying cabinets without regard to the amount of food you keep on hand and the number of pots and pans that you own will lead either to

wasted space or to clutter—usually clutter. It's important to fit the space to the stored articles!

There's no such thing as the ideal amount of kitchen storage for a family of a given size. When planning houses to be sold on the general market, architects often allow 12 square feet of shelves plus an additional 6 square feet for each person in the hypothetical family for whom the house is designed. How would this requirement meet your needs? Obviously, this is an approximate rule of thumb useful only when the kitchen can't be related to the needs of a particular family.

Many young couples start out with a relatively small and miscellaneous collection of dishes and cooking utensils. As the years go by, the numbers of both dishes and utensils increase considerably as new ones are bought, and

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The "mid-way" cabinet is a new type of cabinet designed to make use of space that might otherwise be wasted. This cabinet usually is located mid-way between the regular base and wall storage units. See page 22 for more details.



It's important to fit your storage space to the articles you have to store. These simple home-made compartments add to cabinet convenience.

few old ones are discarded. On the other hand, some brides are literally showered with things and start with complete sets of dishes, utensils and other items.

### Meet Needs?

There's certainly no advantage in buying or having made more kitchen storage than you need. The idea that the walls should be lined with cabinets has long been discarded. Many families in the early years may find that they can get along very well with only three or four cabinets clustered around the sink and refrigerator. But if your family has a 10- to 20-year accumulation of goods you'll need quite a bit more kitchen storage.

When shopping for specific cabinets to meet your needs, determine the total amount of space available in each unit. The amount and arrangement of space will determine how many items you can put in a single cabinet. Aim for a space arrangement which will allow you to store articles only one row deep on a shelf so what you want is always in the front row — with only like articles stacked so you can always take items directly from the top of the stack. Tumblers or other glassware that isn't stacked may be

placed on a shelf several items deep because, as you reach for them, you're always taking from the front row. It may be easier to make such convenient arrangements when there's stripping on the wall which permits the adjusting of shelf heights.

Features that "make" space for you in manufactured cabinets include: sliding trays in deep drawers, narrow hanging shelves for small items, stepped shelves, dividers or partitions in drawers and provisions for hanging utensils on sides of drawers on hooks.

These features should be given high priority because they will determine how many and what types of items you can store in a certain cabinet. And this, in turn, will help you decide how many cabinets to install.

### Convenient to Use?

Features which make a cabinet easy to use will be worth their weight in gold. There are many cabinets with these features available, and you'll want to choose those that offer the most for the price you have to pay. But remember that each added feature increases the cost of the cabinet. Features which may be considered for their convenience value include:

1. Sliding shelves, drawers or trays in base cabinets which permit you to pull them out instead of having to stoop to reach for the articles at the back. Those on nylon rollers operate quietly.

2. Vertical partitions for storing shallow, flat utensils.

3. Dividers or partitions in drawers to keep items separated — especially valuable for knives.

4. Utensil drawers with low sides for ease in removing utensils.

5. Cut-back shelves for ease in grasping articles.

6. Toe space at the base of the cabinet.

7. Door handles placed within easy reach, rather than in the middle of the door edge.

8. Adjustable stripping on the inside sides of the cabinet so you can adjust the shelves to different heights.

### Easy to Care For?

Cabinets that are easy to clean will certainly make your kitchen a more enjoyable place in which to work. With removable shelves, dividers and partitions, you can clean large areas rather than



Sliding shelves in base cabinets make it easy to remove articles stored in the back. These wire racks also reveal articles stored below.

This corner arrangement shows several convenient features. The "lazy Susan" is attached directly to the corner door. The vertical partitions for storing flat utensils have a cut-out area so the utensils are easily grasped.





Here's a "lazy Susan" located in a corner wall cabinet. It's handy for storing spices and packaged foods.



These sliding trays in a base cabinet prevent stooping to "see what's in back." And they're easily cleaned.

small. Simple, unadorned hardware and minimum trim, as well as plain surfaced doors and drawer fronts, make for simpler cleaning. Base cabinets that extend to the floor (but have toe space for comfort) will keep dust from collecting beneath the cabinets.

### A Special Kind . . .

There's a new type of cabinet that has been designed to make use of space that might be wasted otherwise. One of this design is called the "mid-way" cabinet, usually located between the base and wall cabinets.

These mid-way cabinets have many advantages because they provide convenient storage where items may be stored separately and where each item is easy to see, reach and grasp. Also, items which otherwise take up space in the wall cabinets may be brought down to a more handy level. This could reduce the amount of wall cabinets needed in your kitchen. The space from the mid-way cabinets, for example, might be adequate to handle all of the items used in baking. Other kinds of items which may be stored appropriately in this unit include bottled goods, canned goods up to a No. 5 size can and packaged goods.

Mid-way cabinets may be found in lengths of from 2 to 4 feet. If greater lengths are desired, more than one unit may be used. The depth, front to back, ranges from 6 to 8 inches, and the height ranges from 9 to 16 inches. If you have a space of 18 inches between the base and wall cabinets, two 9-inch mid-way units might be combined to make full use of this space.

Space arrangements are provided by one to three shelves. Some units have a step-shelf arrangement for storing such items as spices. One manufacturer has a unit in which the shelves may be adjusted in height.

Installation of the mid-way cabinet is simple. It may be positioned in the space between the base and wall cabinets and attached to the bottom of the wall cabinet, set on the base cabinet, or two units may be stacked to occupy an 18-inch height between the wall and base cabinets and would be attached to both.

In considering your need for a mid-way unit, you might want to ask yourself these questions:

- Is the space adequate for frequently used items that may be stored within fingertip reach?
- How much counter space will be lost if the cabinet is located on the counter?
- If the cabinet doesn't rest on the counter, is there enough space below for food preparation activities?
- Is the storage within the unit adequate for what you'd like to store?

● Are there alternative possibilities of shelf arrangements?

Other design features to watch are the widths of the doors and handles, the type and materials of the tracks which are provided for the sliding doors, and the depth of the unit. The width of the doors will determine the amount of storage space accessible at any one time. The greater the area exposed at one time, the more effective the unit. The tracks on which the doors ride should be rigid, sturdy, designed to fit the door and easy to clean.

The depth of the cabinet will influence the ease with which you can see into the interior. If too deep, interior lighting would be useful. The height at which the cabinet is positioned also will influence the ease with which you can see inside. This may be a factor to consider when determining the height of the base cabinets and counters in your kitchen. For taller people, base cabinets should be higher than the customary 36 inches. When the heights of the base cabinets have been suited to you, you shouldn't have any trouble seeing inside the mid-way cabinet.

The handles or pulls on the doors should be easy to grasp. This one feature alone may help you determine the most desirable material for the doors. The glass doors which have shallow grooves cut into the glass may prove to be difficult. Try them out to see for yourself.

### In Brief . . .

Your needs for kitchen cabinets may be estimated by answering questions like these:

- How much food preparation is done in your kitchen?
- Do your meals include many food items?
- How many people do you prepare food for at any one time?
- Do you use many frozen, fresh or canned foods?
- What kind of equipment do you use in the kitchen?

Each answer will help you determine how you might get the most for the money you have decided to spend for this part of the kitchen.