

'We used every

INCH OF SPACE'



STYLE CHOICE
I chose black ovens for their sleek appearance

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COME ON IN!



ABOUT ME I'm Athina Bluff, 28, an interior designer and founder of Topology Interiors (Topology Interiors). I live with my partner, Theo McInnes, 26, a photojournalist, in a one-bedroom basement flat in southwest London. We moved here in April 2018.

MY CHALLENGE The kitchen wasn't to my taste, but the main problem was the lack of work surface and storage. The layout needed replanning and we wanted to improve the light.

MY WISH LIST Improving functionality was top of our list. We wanted a design that blended with the open-plan living room.

MONOCHROME SCHEME

'I've created harmony between the two rooms by sticking with the same colour palette'

IDEA TO STEAL

'Brighten and dim Ikea's Tradfri smart lighting below the worktop and cupboards with a remote'

Athina turned her nondescript London basement kitchen into a bright, fully-functioning open-plan space

Theo and I had both been house-sharing in southwest London and when we decided to move in together, we wanted to stay in the same area. We viewed this basement flat and were delighted,' says Athina.

'Flats in London are expensive and often have poky rooms, so we were really pleased with the open-plan living space.'

Choosing the scheme

Although we loved the open-plan concept, the living room needed smartening up and I wanted the kitchen to blend in so it felt like one room. I'm not a huge fan of colour, so we painted the living room walls dark grey and brought in dark wood and black accents in the furniture. I had my sights set on black or charcoal grey kitchen cupboards and was really pleased when I discovered Ikea sold affordable matt black cupboards. I was tempted to have a black worktop, too, but I decided the room would feel too enclosed. I went lighter on surfaces, setting on Ikea's pale grey gloss cupboards for the walls, a white worktop and white tiles. The white makes a great contrast - I love the monochrome look.

Planning the layout

We're both keen cooks and as the kitchen area is a snug 2.6x2.3m, we felt really frustrated with the lack of storage and worktop space. We'd often get in each other's way or I'd open one of the cupboards and a bag of rice would fall on my head! I had a play around with a smaller undercounter fridge-freezer and when I took my ideas to Ikea, they tweaked the layout. It's a free service and a kitchen planner came to our ▶▶

TOTAL
£9,961

TURN OVER FOR MY SHOPPING LIST

Do it! BRASS SWITCHES AND SOCKETS

★ Focus on the details and inject life into mundane sockets and light switches with a brass finish to reflect the latest trend for metallic colour accents.

★ Warm metallics, such as gold and brass, glow against dark tones of charcoal and black – in Athina's kitchen they match the accents in the open-plan living room.

★ It's easy to find brass switches and sockets in DIY shops. They come in a range of finishes, including antique, brushed brass, polished brass and satin brass, with black or white plug holes.

★ Choose either a flat or bevelled edged plate in a contemporary, Victorian, Georgian or Art Deco style – or go screwless.



MODERN TOUCHES

I chose a matt black tap to tie in with the handles and lighting for a smart, coordinated finish.



FUSS-FREE DESIGN

Arranging plain white tiles in a herringbone pattern adds interest without enclosing the kitchen or clashing with the living room.

Where to buy Athina's style

Ringhult **cabinetry** in High-Gloss Grey and Kungsholms **cabinetry** in Anthracite, £2,000; Tutemo ash **open cabinet**, £25; Enebyda **cup handles**, £9 for two; Baggarna **knobs**, £5 for two; Havsan **inkat sink**, £18; Boston **mixer tap**, £100; Ljvsåga **gas hob**, £150; Finnmarkare **microwave combi**, £600; Finnmarkare **forced air oven** with zero steam function, £900; Malarskåne **extractor**, £165; Omlopp **lighting strips**, £25 each; Heklar **ceiling track**, £25; Vaxmyra **LED spotlights**, £9 for two; Tradin **dinner kit**, £10; Skarung **marble-effect quartz worktop**, £450sq m, all Ikea. Artisan **gloss white tiles**, £71.20m, Topps Tiles. Fintorp **knife rack**, £7. Småttå **chopping board**, £10, both Ikea. Industrial **potholer** with hanging **baskets**, £15, Maison du Monde.

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INSTALL LIGHTING BENEATH THE COUNTER AND CABINETS TO REALLY BRIGHTEN UP A WINDOW-LESS KITCHEN!

flat to measure-up and double-check everything would fit. I'm glad we did that because there were a few issues with the plumbing and gas outlets, which meant they had to adjust the position of the hob and the sink. We were given an itemised list to mull over before we placed our order and decided to take out some lights in the drawers because we didn't really need them.

Fitting the kitchen

Ikea organised the kitchen fittings and it went very smoothly; they fitted all the cupboards in a week. By then we'd decided to splash out on a quartz worktop instead of laminate. They can't template until the cupboards are fitted so it took another ten days before the

kitchen was finished. We had a bit of a tense moment with the tiler who started the splashback, but didn't do the herringbone pattern I wanted, so he had to start over. On a positive note, our fitters said they could build a wine rack in a gap we had at the end of the worktop. They used the cut-offs and it's a nice bespoke touch.

Finishing touches

I'm particularly pleased with the black fixtures. A part of me was nervous a black kitchen would look too dark and cramped, but I was right to trust my instincts as I love it. It's a dream to have lots of storage, nice appliances and plenty of worktop space – I still get a little buzz when I come in here.

HEIGHT AND LIGHT

A glossy finish to wall cupboards, tiles and the worktop bounces light and draws height into this basement room!



MAX-OUT

I made use of dead wall space by fitting a hanging rail with storage baskets and place for the tea towel!



Find more tips on creating an industrial-look bathroom at IdealHome.co.uk