



For years, this drab, cramped kitchen barely had space for a table for one. Then, down came a wall, and in came a whole new look along with a spot for the family of four to gather.

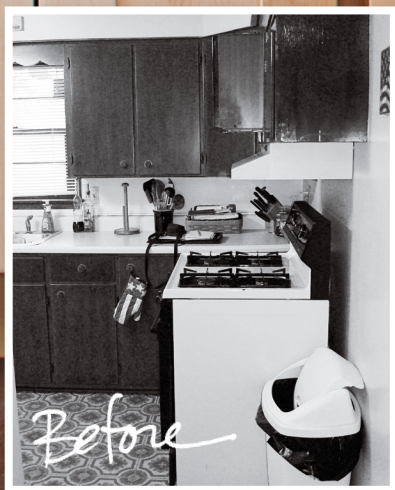
Writer: Rachel Haugo
 Photographer: Scott Little
 Project Coordinator: Cathy Kramer

RIGHT: The kitchen's new dining peninsula gives this family a spot to enjoy casual meals.





style



THIS PHOTO: Custom touches in the Brase kitchen include a stone backsplash, open storage, and eye-catching hardware.



Chris and Jessica Brase, like many homeowners, just didn't know where to start when they decided to remodel their 1950s kitchen in Des Moines. "It was overwhelming," Jessica says. Instead of making design choices on their own, the Brases enlisted the help of designer Cathy Kramer.

"Jessica knew she liked color, but other than that, she didn't know where to start in the process," Kramer says. "After we evaluated the space and figured out the real problems, we got to work on a solution." The main problem was the kitchen's small size; there wasn't enough space for four chairs around the table, and it lacked storage for the family of four. "They had a little table, and one child could eat breakfast or a snack there, but in order for them to eat as a family, they had to carry the food downstairs to the basement," Kramer says.

After living in the home for nine years, Chris and Jessica decided to make the space more family-friendly. "It was one thing when we didn't have kids, but after Drew and Reece were born, everything seemed cramped," she says.

Kramer's plan would end their days of carrying food and dishes up and down the stairs. "My main goals were to open up the space and make it seem larger, create an eating area, maximize storage, create an efficient work triangle, and update the



ABOVE: Cathy Kramer designed this kitchen to pack in every inch of storage possible. Even the toe-kicks pull out to store table linens.

TOP: A tambour door provides a spot to store cereal that the Brase children can reach.



THIS PHOTO: A stainless-steel backsplash makes cleanup a breeze and creates the illusion that the stove and microwave oven are one unit. The chocolate laminate countertop and rugged stone backsplash add color and texture to the cozy kitchen.



LEFT: A gas range with continuous grates let's Jessica slide pots easily.

BELOW: The oven racks glide smoothly. The interior is a cobalt blue enamel that is a snap to clean.



style,” Kramer says. The green-and-yellow linoleum floor, dark cabinets, and old appliances had to go.

Before opening up the kitchen, Kramer had to make sure the wall that divided the living room and kitchen could be removed. “We wanted to make the kitchen bigger, but didn’t want to have the house collapse in the process,” she says. After the contractor approved Kramer’s design proposal, the ideas and light began to flow into the kitchen. “Knocking out the wall between the kitchen and living room allowed us to put a countertop there for eating,” Kramer says. “We kept it very open and airy so it didn’t close in the kitchen again.” She avoided base cabinets to make the dining peninsula more like a table.

Since the wall of old cabinets by the sink were one piece and couldn’t be rearranged, Kramer tore them out and started from scratch. “It was an added expense, but made for a more efficient kitchen,” she says. Designing the new sink wall allowed Kramer to accommodate a better work triangle. Rearranging the kitchen, she moved the range to the formerly blank wall where the table and portable dishwasher used to be. Then she added cabinetry to frame the range. A built-in dishwasher was installed adjacent to the sink.

“By moving the range from the west wall to the north wall, it created a small work triangle with easy access to the appliances,” Kramer says. The stove now has landing space on both sides, a design guideline of the National Kitchen & Bath Association. The adjacent countertop space is an

Now it’s a cook’s kitchen

Jessica Brase likes to cook and is known for her tasty tortellini. Working with designer Cathy Kramer, she now has plenty of room to pursue her hobby.

A powerful range anchors the cooking and baking zone. The range top has hefty knobs, and the oven has state-of-the-art controls that respond to the touch of a finger. To be space-smart in the small kitchen, a combination microwave oven and exhaust fan was installed above the range.

Lots of storage keeps cooking and baking supplies handy. Behind the cabinetry doors are a series of built-in units to maximize storage. Open storage in one of the upper cabinets adds interest, showcases cookbooks and linens, and keeps oils handy.

Details Personalize the Kitchen

1. A deep drawer stores pots and pans.
2. Countertops in chocolate brown laminate add a rich look.
3. Surfaces add interest with stone, stainless steel, and laminate.
4. Cabinets with handy built-ins maximize storage space.
5. An organizer hides keys, magnetic board, and extra stuff.



Project Sponsors

Designer Cathy Kramer turned to Lowe's for convenient planning and product selection. These manufacturers participated in transforming the Brases' kitchen.

Amerock	Cabinet hardware
Daltile	Tile backsplash
Diamond Cabinetry	Built-in storage, cabinets, and kitchen design
Electrolux	Dishwasher, French-door refrigerator, microwave oven with vent, and range
Kohler	Drop-in sink and faucet
Levolor	Blinds
Lowe's	Project supplier
Natural Cork Floors	Cork flooring
Pella	Window over sink
Valspar	Paint
Wilsonart	Laminate countertops



“To make the kitchen work as **efficiently** as possible, cabinets with great **storage** options were a priority.”

[designer Cathy Kramer]

ideal spot for pots and pans and gives Jessica more prep space while she's cooking.

Moving the sink would have been a costly change, so it stayed put on the south side of the kitchen. Kramer maximized storage by selecting handy built-in options available from the cabinetry company. “Sink bases are always difficult to work with because of the plumbing and electrical work, so having built-in storage on the doors is a smart way to go,” she says.

Because Chris and Jessica are a young couple with two young children, Kramer chose a clean, simple design that would fit their needs. Even though dark cabinets are popular, Kramer chose light maple cabinets to give them a dramatic change. And because they had lived with white walls for so long, Chris and Jessica were ready for the bold color changes Kramer had in store for them.

“I put color on the walls and added texture in flooring and the backsplash,” Kramer says. The

warm pumpkin color is balanced with light maple cabinets. Since the smooth cabinets take up most of the visual space, she added warmth and texture with the rugged stone backsplash. “The textures wouldn't have even come to my mind without Cathy's help,” Jessica says.

Stainless-steel appliances add an upscale look to the room. The previous appliances were old, mismatched, and energy-inefficient. The new appliances are loaded with tech-savvy features that suit this young family. “I didn't want to lose space, so I chose a standard-depth refrigerator,” Jessica says. “I wanted as much space inside as I could get.”

Storage had been lacking in their kitchen, but now Jessica can store all her food-related items in the kitchen. Before, the tiny space lacked room for dry food storage. “We had no storage before and a lot of what we did have wasn't accessible,” Jessica says. “Now there's so much more.”



THIS PHOTO: Once a wall divided the kitchen and living room; now an open plan makes the small rooms feel spacious.

One of Jessica's favorite storage pieces in her new kitchen is the pullout spice cabinet. "Before they were in an awkward little door, but now I can just reach over and grab them," she says. "I'm a messy cook and I have a lot of things going on at once, so it's nice have what I need be so handy when I'm cooking."

Of Italian heritage, Jessica loves to make pasta sauces and homemade tortellini. "Before I had to invent ways to hook the pasta machine to the countertop, but now I use the peninsula dining area," she says. Before the remodel, Jessica and her mother joked that she would have to redo her kitchen to have a spot for the pasta machine. Now she has room for that and so much more. 

RESOURCES begin on page 108.

To find more information on starting your kitchen project, go to:
KitchenBathIdeas.com/wheretostart/kitchen/organizekitstorage_1.html

BUDGET Breakdown

 Here's how designer Cathy Kramer was able to stretch the budget for the Brases' dramatic makeover.

CABINETS

■ Cabinetry	9,800
■ Knobs	360
■ Bin pulls	60

APPLIANCES

■ Dishwasher	550
■ Range	1,500
■ Refrigerator	1,100
■ Hood/microwave oven	550

FAUCETS, FIXTURES

■ Sink	600
■ Faucet	360
■ Light fixtures	260

SURFACES

■ Countertops	2,285
■ Flooring	795
■ Backsplash tile	60

MISCELLANEOUS

■ Labor (included demolition, installation of insulation, drywall, cabinetry, upgraded electrical, plumbing, tile, and floor)	8,428
---	-------

TOTAL \$26,708

"It's the **ultimate** kitchen we could possibly have."

[homeowner Jessica Brase]

