

Absolutely, you can have an attractive, sleek cooking space for a reasonable price. Just follow these fresh ideas and money-saving moves.



Brunch in her new kitchen is one of Donnajeane's favorite ways to entertain her friends.



Cool Looks, Smart Spending

Some kitchens are best made from scratch.

When Donnajeane Ward launched a remodeling crusade on her row house in Washington, D.C., she converted a bedroom off her living room into a dream-come-true cooking space. But there wasn't much wiggle room in the budget. Hooray for smart redesigns, because in the end, Donnajeane's decisions added up to a great new kitchen.

Parties? No Problem

Donnajeane loves having friends over for meals, but without a lot of space in her old kitchen, seating was a challenge. So she cooked up a solution with architect Chris Landis. A central island with a butcher-block top is big enough to allow five guests to pull up seats. The substantial island has several deep cupboards and drawers, which help "squeeze in as much storage as I can get," says Donnajeane.

No Budget Busters Allowed

All the cabinets and the island base come from IKEA, where kitchen elements are generally less expensive because they don't come assembled. You'll need to put them together or hire someone to do that for you. An insider tip: Do your research online at www.ikea.com before you go to the store. Once there, give yourself plenty of time, possibly an entire day, to fine-tune your design plan.

Follow a few basic rules as you're making decisions. Allow for a good amount of counterspace on either side of the stove and sink, where you do most of your prep work. You'll also want a clear, short path between the fridge and sink. Finally, get your dishwasher as close to your sink as possible for speedy cleanup. ▶



Mimosa Gelée

MAKES ABOUT 4 CUPS

PREP: 5 MIN., COOK: 3 MIN., CHILL: 3 HRS.

These may be made up to a day ahead. Keep tightly covered with plastic wrap, and garnish just before serving.

- 1½ cups chilled Champagne or sparkling wine
- 2 (¼-oz.) envelopes unflavored gelatin
- 2½ cups orange juice
- 1 (8-oz.) jar orange blossom honey
- Garnishes: orange segments, mint sprigs

- 1.** Pour Champagne into a large bowl. Sprinkle gelatin over Champagne. Set aside.
- 2.** Heat orange juice and honey in a small saucepan over medium-high heat 3 minutes or until well blended and thoroughly heated.
- 3.** Add hot juice mixture to Champagne mixture, and stir 5 minutes or until gelatin dissolves. Pour mixture evenly into 8 Champagne flutes, and chill 3 hours or until set. Garnish, if desired.

Orange Honey-Ade: Combine 2 cups orange juice, 1½ cups water, and ½ cup orange blossom honey in a large pitcher. Chill 2 hours. Serve over crushed ice. Prep: 5 min., Chill: 2 hrs.



A spare bedroom gets new life as Donnajeane's kitchen. This fresh start cleared the way for a fabulous island and new cabinets.



Baked Oatmeal

MAKES 8 TO 10 SERVINGS

PREP: 10 MIN., BAKE: 50 MIN.

Here, Donnajeane shares her recipe for Baked Oatmeal—delicious on a chilly winter morning. Round out the menu with fresh fruit, muffins and croissants, and flavored coffee.

- 2 cups frozen blueberries
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice, divided
- 1 (18-oz.) container regular oats
- 3 large eggs, beaten
- 1 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 1 Tbsp. ground cinnamon
- 4 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1¼ cups water
- 1 cup milk
- ¼ cup melted butter

1. Toss 2 cups blueberries in 1 Tbsp. lemon juice, and spread evenly on bottom of a lightly greased 13- x 9-inch baking dish.
 2. Combine oats, next 9 ingredients, and remaining 1 Tbsp. lemon juice in a large bowl, stirring until well blended. Pour oat mixture evenly over blueberries.
 3. Bake, covered, at 350° for 30 minutes; uncover and bake 20 more minutes or until golden brown and set.
- Apple-Pecan Baked Oatmeal:** Place ½ cup chopped pecans in a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake at 350° for 15 minutes or until toasted, stirring once. Omit blueberries and lemon juice. Peel and chop 5 Granny Smith apples. Spread on bottom of a lightly greased 13- x 9-inch baking dish. Sprinkle toasted pecans over apples. Prepare oat mixture as directed, and pour evenly over apples and pecans. Bake as directed.

New Complements Old

To capture a clean, contemporary style, Donnajeane opted for stainless steel appliances that look outstanding next to the original wood floors and exposed redbrick wall. "Now I have that faux loft feel in a Victorian row house," says Donnajeane.

—SARA ANDERSON, ANDRIA SCOTT HURST

For More Info

Sources: southernliving.com/february2007



Blueberries star in this version of Baked Oatmeal. You can make the comforting dish up to a day ahead. Divide leftovers into single servings in microwave-safe containers for great meals in a hurry.