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6 small kitchen trends designers say will be everywhere in 2026

Story by Hannah Baker • 4mo • ⌚ 3 min read

Small kitchens can be a design challenge—not just because of a lack of storage and counter space, but also because they can look cluttered and chaotic. As a New Yorker, I know the struggle of truly teeny kitchen spaces and how difficult it can be to design around such a small footprint. To solve your design woes, we spoke to some designers about what trends they're seeing for small kitchens in 2026 that can help you streamline and upgrade your own space.



Decorative Cabinet Inserts

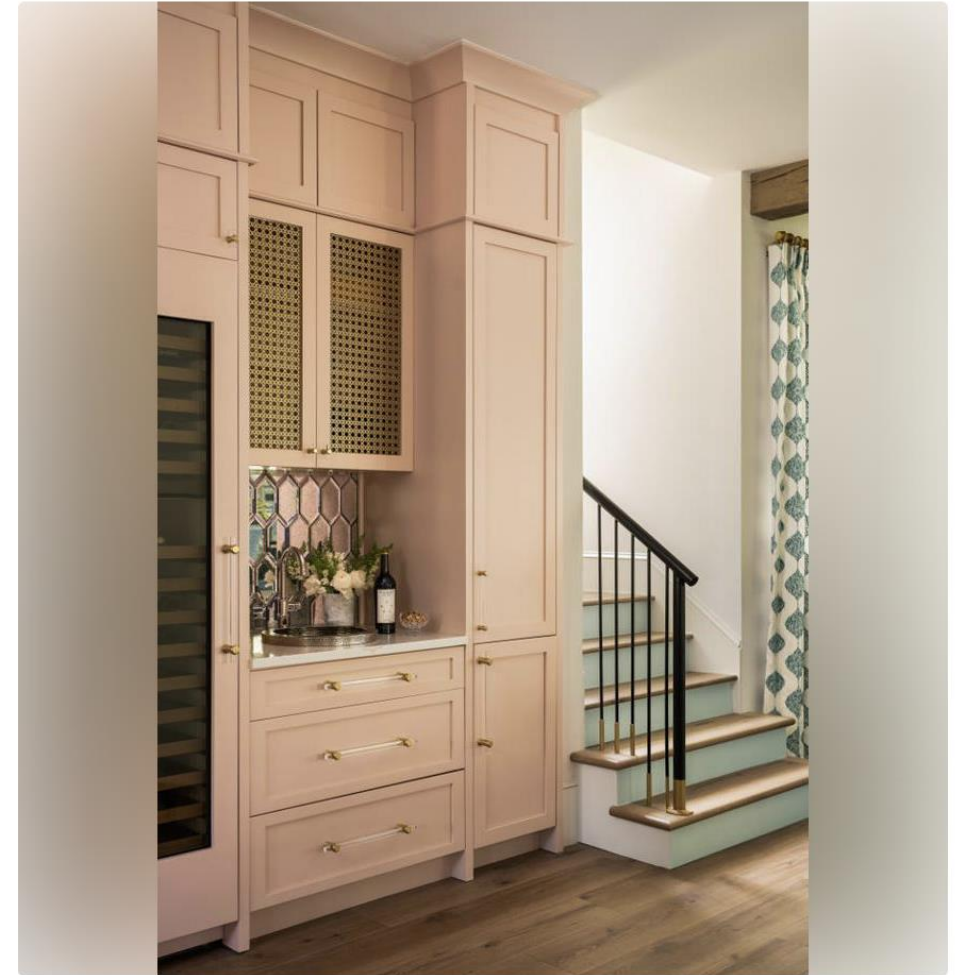


Photo by Katie Charlotte Photography, Metal Inserts by Modern Metal, Design by J. Banks Design

Annie Kantor, founder and director of design for Modern Metal, says that cabinet inserts (decorative panels you can use instead of glass) are trending for 2026.

"They work incredibly well for compact kitchens because they allow you to introduce new, compelling, and even personalized design to your space, without expanding your actual cabinet footprint," she says. "It's about leaning into what you do have to work with, and making those elements impactful design moments. It's also a popular choice for homeowners seeking a design update, without the commitment of an entire renovation—a trend you'll come across anytime there's economic uncertainty in the air."