

# KITCHEN CABINET Storage Options

**S**ure, it's important to level the cabinets and to fasten them securely to each other, the floor, and the walls. But, that's not what's really

going to grab and hold the hearts and minds of your customers. As a builder, you're in a position to play an invaluable role in the installation of a new kitchen. By steering a homeowner toward some of the myriad options and accessories that take their cabinets beyond mere good looks, you make a lasting contribution to the organization and functionality of their kitchen — long after you've swept up the last pile of sawdust.

Whether you're choosing new cabinets, or just upgrading an existing kitchen, the rubber hits the road behind the doors and inside the drawers. There's no lack of clever and practical accessories for organized cabinet storage; skim through a cabinetmaker's specification book and you'll find a wealth of options. Some are proprietary, but many others are available for custom work and retrofit. Often you'll find the same high-quality hardware and inserts in the cabinets of competing manufacturers. There's no reason why a low-end cabinet can't be upgraded with some of the same options found in middle and high-end lines. In this article, we'll identify some of what's out there for your next installation.

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For a working kitchen, it's what's inside the cabinets that counts



Glass-front cabinets are commonly found on the wall, but this base peninsula becomes a decorative room divider in an open floor plan.

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# DRAWERS

**B**efore you configure the inside of a drawer box, one of the best things you can do for any drawer is to mount it on full-extension slides. Single-extension slides leave about one-third of the drawer's contents concealed in the cabinet, while full-extension hardware exposes the entire drawer box. Smooth-operating ball-bearing slides can support as much as 150 pounds, fully extended.

*Drawer organizers* impose order on utensil storage, spice jars, silverware, cutlery, pot lids, and more. Sharp knives hold their edge better if they're not banging around loose in a drawer, easy-to-spot spices are less likely to attain antique status, silver keeps its shine in cloth-lined trays, and cooking utensils don't require untangling before use.



KRAFTMAID

Tiered storage packs a lot of utility into a single drawer. Layering related items makes better use of space, and improves user efficiency.



MERRILLAT

A self-storing cutting board frees up counterspace. When it's teamed up with a cutlery insert, the drawer becomes a stand-alone work station.



STARMARK/FIELDSTONE

Bake-a-holics may want a breadbox insert in their new kitchen for a European touch. A cordless vacuum stored nearby helps keep ahead of the crumb pile.



FEENY

Cut-to-fit drawer organizers come in lots of sizes and configurations, add a custom touch, and are removable for easy cleaning.



HERITAGE

Spice jars don't get lost in the dark recesses of the pantry if they're sorted in a dedicated drawer. An empty space tells you when it's time to buy more.

# PULLOUT SHELVES

**R**ollout shelves behind cabinet doors pull clear of the cabinet on full-extension slides, and make access to stored items easier. Some installers feel it's better to simply install a drawer and lose the door. This is both an ergonomic and an aesthetic debate, of door vs. drawer, and best left to the discretion of the user. But as a retrofit option, pull-outs can completely change a cabinet's application.

Some high-end cabinet lines offer proprietary sliding shelf systems that advance forward automatically when the cabinet door is opened. There are dozens of variations on the rollout theme, all designed to improve cabinet utility.



STARMARK/FIELDSTONE

Rollout shelves make multiple full-depth shelves in a single cabinet practical, while full-extension slides make it easy to get at everything in the cabinet.



HERITAGE



FEENY

Removable wire baskets hang from both sides of a rolling center frame and come in lots of sizes for a wide variety of storage uses. Inserts can be installed in cabinets with opening widths as narrow as 4 inches.



AMERICAN WOODMARK

Rollout shelves in a tall pantry cabinet make it easier to find what *you* are looking for, and harder for *it* to get lost in the back of the cabinet.



WELLBORN

Wire pullout baskets are ideal for dry storage of fruits and vegetables, and can be removed for bulk access and refilling.

# CORNER CABINETS

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A diagonal-faced cabinet makes room for a full-round carousel. Compared with a corner cabinet, a diagonal approach feels less cramped.

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A turnout shelf swings out of the cabinet, independent of the door, giving access to a pair of rollout shelves inside.

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An oval-shaped rotating shelf is a classy upgrade for base and wall cabinets.

Corners are the crux of cabinet layout. There are quite a few ways to handle corners, including L-shaped cabinets, blind corners, diagonal fronts, and even open shelving. What you or the client choose will depend on available space, accessibility, aesthetics, and room configuration. The best solutions come from experience, not an unlimited budget, so study lots of designs and draw your own conclusions.

*Corner carousel shelves* come in three basic shelf shapes: kidney, pie-cut, and full-round. Whether the door revolves with the shelves (pie), or swings out on hinges (kidney), determines the style and function of corner cabinets. Either shape has less surface area than a full round shelf of equal diameter, which can only be used in a diagonal-faced cabinet. A diagonal installation gives users a more open approach to the cabinet with little loss of floor area.

*Blind corner cabinets* with half-round turn-out shelves are arguably the most practical corner solution. Some half-round shelves only rotate out of the cabinet from the "hidden" corner; these can be linked to the door so they swing out automatically. Others not only turn out, but also slide forward from the cabinet to improve access. The elongated D-shaped shelf in the sliding system has more surface area than a half-round shelf. At least one manufacturer's system allows only the lower shelf to slide; check this before you buy.

*Wall corner cabinets* have many, if not all, of the same options that base cabinets have. Pie-cut shelves with affixed, rotating doors, or full-round carousels behind diagonal fronts make items much easier to reach, especially on the upper tiers. Typically, though, shallow wall cabinets make an inside corner easier to reach, which is why blind corner wall cabinets don't usually get the hardware treatment available for base cabinets.



FEENY

Half-round turnouts affixed to the back of the door swing out automatically, but sliding turnouts have larger trays, and give better access to the contents of the cabinet.



STARMARK/FIELDSTONE

Articulating center hinges let a corner door lie flat against adjacent cabinets. A proprietary wood carousel is a high-end option that enhances the appearance (and the price) of the cabinet.



HERITAGE

Blind corners aren't easy to design around. Clever hardware and a lighted interior, topped by a drawer, turn otherwise dead space into hard-working storage that gets maximum use out of a challenging cabinet.

# PANTRY STORAGE

Swing-outs eliminate the need to remove one item before getting the one behind it. Instead, from behind the door, a back-to-back shelf pivots out, exposing a shallow fixed shelf at the back of the cabinet, with three or more layers of storage. You've probably already seen swingouts featured in tall pantry cabinets, but they work in base cabinets, too. The visual impact of this design usually elicits big consumer "wows," but be aware that some people find them cumbersome to use.

**Pullout pantries.** Many users prefer pullout storage systems, which reduce full access to one motion, rather than a series. Like a set of piggyback drawers behind a unifying face panel, the entire content of the cabinet slides out giving full two-sided access.



MERRILLAT

Turnouts organize storage into book-like layers, and add visual excitement.



KRAFTMAID

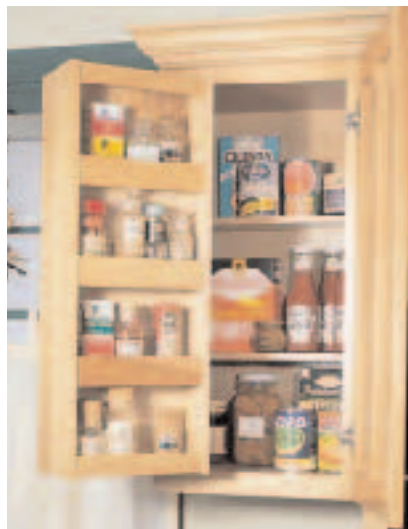
A base cabinet "food file" brings the tall pantry concept down below the counter, but still presents contents at a glance.



HERITAGE



WELLBORN



AMERICAN WOODMARK

One or two wall-hung turnout cabinets may be all the pantry storage needed in a small household.



LEEROWAN

Wire storage systems adapt to just about any room, closet or cabinet. Rolling baskets, sorting trays, and shelving in various widths are just a few of the options available in these systems.

# PULLOUTS



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Many users prefer a pullout pantry to layered turnout shelves. Two-sided access to the entire contents of a cabinet puts everything within reach.



KRAFTMAID

Instead of using a blank cabinet filler, install a 3-inch-wide pullout filler, perfect for all those little jars and cans.



RUITT

Decorative columns become fully functioning members of cabinet society, fronting classy pullout storage for pot lids, trays, and baking pans.



HERITAGE

A single-sided pullout installed under a kitchen sink or in a bathroom vanity keeps cleaning equipment handy.



FEENY

Wire baskets on a pullout frame are removable and interchangeable, adding flexibility and easy cleaning to an already versatile system.

# RECYCLING

Recycling household waste is the wave of the present, and mandatory in many communities. Sorting the trash is made easier with a wide array of options. Pullouts made to hold one or more containers operate on either top or bottom-mounted slides; top-mounted units tend to operate with less side wobble. Usually, there's enough space left above or below the unit to install a drawer for can liners, twine, and other processing accessories.

Recycling-in-the-round comes with a corner carousel-mounted bin system. Most manufacturers offer this cabinet option.



AMERICAN WOODMARK

Pullout trash containers are a big improvement over the can under the sink. Dual containers roll out smoothly on full-extension slides for easy access and removal.



STARMARK/FIELDSTONE

Top-mounted slides align the hardware with the pulling force, taking some wobble out of fixed-panel trash pullouts. A hideaway cutting board over the trash provides convenient scrap disposal.



FEENY

Heavy duty full-extension slides turn a wide base cabinet into a recycling center, with four dedicated containers for sorting disposables, and a pair of drawers to keep bags, twist-ties, string, and disinfectant spray handy.



MERILLAT

A slideout tray makes twin barrels accessible, with space left over for a drawer, creating a compact recycling unit.



RUTT

A drawer for old newspapers and fresh trash bags tops a double-container pullout, with top-mounted slides for better stability.



STARMARK

Recycling-in-the-round can be added to a standard 36-inch corner base, with three separate containers for sorting waste.

# SPECIALTIES



FEENY

Instead of taking up valuable cabinet space, hang stemware in undercabinet racks.



KRAFTMAID

Homeowners can dust off a few bottles from the cellar and display their good taste in a built-in wine rack, in one of dozens of different base or wall cabinet configurations.

Some accessories are intended to bring a unique “character” to the look of a kitchen, by departing from conventional design, or adding a whimsical touch. Some are purely practical, and take advantage of overlooked space. Combining these diverse elements helps make a kitchen into a personal, and practical, space.



MERILLAT

Spice drawers make a neat infill beneath upper cabinets, where counter space isn't at a premium. A single row under the cabinets saves precious counter space.



STAMARK

A sink panel storage tray for soap, sponges, and scrubbers takes advantage of the gap in front of the basin and serves as a safe place for jewelry while washing dishes.

*Safety features* for cabinets include “child-proof” catches, intended to protect children from dangerous items, and keep items safe from dangerous children. Kids are persistent and ingenious, though, and are likely to discover the system override all too soon. At least you can still keep the cat out of the cupboard.



KRAFTMAID

A swing-up shelf lifts bulky appliances out of storage. The hardware locks in place for use, while a dedicated outlet inside the cabinet keeps the appliance ready for duty.



MERILLAT

Overhead racks turn open sky into storage, and cookware into functional decor.



MERRILLAT

Open cabinets, undercabinet shelves, and plate racks put tableware on accessible display, and provide protection for fine china, without stacking.



HERITAGE

A lockable, slide-out cage keeps household poisons safely stored.

## DISPLAY



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Pull-out willow weave baskets break up the hard geometry of flush cabinet fronts, add a little informality, and provide an attractive display for fruits and vegetables.

Open and glass-front cabinets soften up the facade, give cabinets more of a furniture look, and bring unity to open floor plans.

*Glass-fronts* retain the open look, but protect stored objects from dust. They also add formality to cabinet faces. Glass-fronts can be frosted or etched with a decorative pattern.



KRAFTMAID

Glass-front drawers become showcase compartments for dry goods, fruits and vegetables, bread, and spice storage – just like dispensing bins in an old-time grocery store.

Thanks to the following manufacturers for assisting with this article:

American Woodmark  
540/665-9100  
www.americanwoodmark.com

Aristokraft  
812/482-2527  
www.aristokraft.com

Heritage Custom Kitchens  
717/354-4011  
www.hck.com

Knappe & Vogt/Feeny  
616/459-3311  
www.kv.com

KraftMaid Cabinetry  
888/562-7744  
www.kraftmaid.com

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www.mcraft.com

Merillat  
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www.merillat.com

Rutt Custom Cabinetry  
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StarMark  
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Wellborn Cabinet  
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