

The Holiday Kitchen: Downsized

The kitchen is often a focal point at the holidays. Preparing family dinners, assembling a dish for pot luck and baking cookies for neighbors are important traditions for many of us, even as we downsize.

“When we help people sort their belongings during fall and winter months, we ask a lot of questions and pay special attention to holiday traditions. Even when moving to a kitchen with limited space, we will do our best to find room for the holiday punch bowl or well worn rolling pin that our customer uses year after year,” said John Buckles, President of Caring Transitions.

Many kitchen shelves are bursting with seasonal traditions. An inventory of any cook’s kitchen may include: cookbooks, stemware, dessert plates, baking pans, multiple sets of measuring spoons, liquid and dry measuring cups, cookie cutters, cake plates, assorted utensils, muffin tins, cookie trays, jello molds, pie plates, loaf pans, spice racks, mixers and even seasonal/holiday duplicates of the previous items. So how do we downsize and reassemble all of this for a smaller apartment or kitchenette?

Space Plan

Before moving to any new kitchen, decide how much cupboard and shelf space you will have and then compare it to your existing kitchen. This will give you a better idea of what you really can take with you. Don’t take too much. Tough decisions may be necessary; bringing too much stuff is often a cause of stress, regret and unexpected expenses.

Define Needs

As you begin to decide what will go into your new cupboards, keep in mind the size and special limitations of your new kitchenette or apartment. Begin with your everyday needs, which typically include four to six place settings, including bowls, plates, cups, mugs and silverware. Unless you are one of the few who entertains often, most likely you will not need more than that. In those cases, an extra set of spoons, forks, dessert, luncheon or salad plates will typically do the trick. Apply the same rule to utensils, pots, pans and serving dishes. Focus on your daily needs and uses first, then use any additional space for the special occasion items.

Add Joy

After you have organized enough room for the basics, move on to the fun stuff. If you have kitchen items that are sentimental, family heirlooms or even items steeped in tradition, *and you have room*, be sure to bring them along to your new home. If you do not have room for everything, you may need to make some choices:

1. Reassess your available space and possibly reduce the number of daily items to create more space.
2. Take pictures of the sentimental but not necessarily practical items and then sell, donate or gift them to others.
3. Locate additional storage possibilities.

Find Value

It is difficult to part with possessions when they have great sentimental value. When taking pictures it may help us to capture memories while moving on to establish a new home. This provides us with an environment that is comfortable and not overcrowded with boxes and storage bins.

Great value can also be discovered when we are able to see our favorite things enjoyed and appreciated by others. The holidays are an ideal time to share family traditions by passing heirlooms and their stories along to new generations. As an alternative, charitable contributions will go on to support families and non-profit organizations.

Selling Goods

Estate Sales are typically held indoors or even [online](#), therefore they continue throughout the winter months. Some people believe they should dispose of small household goods and only include large items and furniture in an estate sale, but that is a myth. Kitchen goods can often add value and depth to a sale.

Bakeware, cookware, small appliances in good condition, complete sets of utensils, dishes and china are all valuable to today's thrifty shoppers. Collectors will often pay more for unique, retro or antique items. If you are unsure how to set up a sale or establish value for your possessions, consult with a professional [Estate Sale specialist](#).

Creative Storage

Moving items to storage is typically considered a "last resort" when downsizing. In many instances, storage is just putting off for tomorrow the tough choices we cannot make today. Yet, in some cases, when downsizing is the result of personal loss or a traumatic event, storage may be a short term solution to help us postpone decision-making while we move through the grief process.

In addition to using remote storage options, there are many ways to create additional space in your new kitchen. The following are ideas that can also make great gifts. Remember, if you choose to utilize new storage solutions, be sure to apply the "1 in=1 out" rule to every purchase; for every item you purchase, be sure to get rid of something else.

Plastic Goods

Stackable containers and lids may help those with limited cupboard space. No more searching for a lid that fits! There are several options available from [Tupperware](#) and [Rubbermaid](#).

Recipes and Cookbooks

The new Neat Desk® scanner can reduce volumes of recipes, receipts and other paperwork to easily accessible and manageable digital files. Find out more information about the [Neat Desk®](#).

Spices

For organizing your holiday spices into space saving designs, there are a few new items on the market, the [Spice Stack](#) and the [Swivel Store](#).

You can also follow this link for more space saving ideas from [Food Republic](#).

With the right amount of planning and resources, downsizing near the holidays does not need to be an overly stressful event. According to Buckles, “Moving or decluttering our homes gives us an opportunity to inventory our belongings and focus on today’s needs, not yesterday’s. During these long winter months, household projects that focus on assessing our possessions, often leads to the discovery of memories and traditions that may be long forgotten.”

About Caring Transitions

As life changes, it may become necessary to leave a familiar home and part with personal belongings in order to downsize and relocate to a smaller home or retirement community. At Caring Transitions, we help our clients understand the process, evaluate their options and make informed decisions that suit their best interests. We are committed to making each client’s experience positive by minimizing stress and maximizing results.

Visit us online at www.CaringTransitions.net

Call Caring Transitions for a Consultation – (800) 647-0766

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