

HOMES & GARDENS

I thought I was totally over gray kitchens – but this surprisingly textured, vintage-style space has proved gray can be warm and welcoming if you know how to use it

The reimagined kitchen is unrecognizable from the before photos



(Image credit: Dart Studio/Niamh Barry Photography)



By [Molly Malsom](#) published 3 days ago in [Home-tours](#)

Gray is a color of contention when it comes to interiors, especially in the kitchen. It's a hue that dominated the 2010s, a decade filled with regretful decor, and a [kitchen color](#) most designers say is on the out.

As someone who lived through the seemingly endless love of [gray kitchens](#), I've become a bit numb to them. I don't hate them per se, just a bit tired of them, and it takes a lot for one to catch my eye. That was, until I saw this textural design that contradicts everything I thought about this controversial color.

This kitchen is warm and textured, with the perfect amount of vintage style that it feels tasteful and timeless. And it's all thanks to an expertly chosen paint shade and a layered mix of materials.

Before



While the color is a real talking point of the newly remodeled kitchen, it was just one of many things that required a rethink in this space. And it was a project tasked to interior designer Olivia Botrie of [Dart Studio](#), who explains that the kitchen before had a very different look and feel.

"The kitchen layout was very similar, but the finishes felt noticeably less elevated. The microwave was placed over the stove rather than integrated elsewhere, and the refrigerator wasn't panel-ready, which gave the kitchen a more utilitarian feel," she recalls.



'Overall, the detailing and level of refinement were minimal compared to what we typically aim for – the space lacked the layered finishes and thoughtful touches that create a polished, high-end look,' she adds.

The kitchen layout was one of only two things that the client wanted to retain, the second being the original character of the 130-year-old home through vintage-inspired details and thoughtful materials.

'Since our client has a background in interior design, she came to the project with a clear vision. She was after a vintage look with a quirky Victorian twist – layered, character-filled, and full of personality. Her home embraces a maximalist style with rich details, bold choices, and a sense of storytelling, and the kitchen was designed to blend seamlessly into that imaginative, curated aesthetic.'

After



(Image credit: Dart Studio/Niamh Barry Photography)

Every small detail in this kitchen plays an important role in both the functionality and the authenticity of the design. 'The finished kitchen feels cohesive and intentional, combining vintage charm with everyday practicality – an upgrade that respects the home's history while making it more functional for modern living,' Olivia explains.

'We replaced all the millwork with custom cabinetry featuring classic profiles and a timeless, muted color palette. The new kitchen backsplash brings in texture and a subtle nod to the past with vintage-inspired tile,' she says, adding that new appliances, sink, and faucet were key to this.

But it's the choice to introduce gray on the cabinets that immediately caught my eye – and most importantly, how Olivia has taken a rather unloved hue and made it feel warm and full of character.



(Image credit: Dart Studio/Niamh Barry Photography)

'The cabinets are finished in Farrow & Ball's Drop Cloth, a soft, muddy neutral that creates a warm, timeless backdrop and complements the home's vintage character. I'd describe it as a soft, putty-toned neutral – understated and versatile,' she describes.

'It's not overtly warm, but it definitely leans more towards beige than gray, giving it a subtle warmth that keeps it from feeling too cool or stark. It works beautifully as a grounding tone and pairs well with both warm and cool palettes.'

As well as the shade of gray chosen, the materials Olivia has introduced aid its success in this space. 'To ensure the color felt warm and inviting, I paired it with rich walnut countertops, warm-toned wood flooring, and unlacquered brass accents,' she explains, noting that this natural warmth and texture bring a much-needed contrast and balance the various tones.



(Image credit: Dart Studio/Niamh Barry Photography)

'This balance prevents the space from feeling overly cool or sterile, while still keeping it grounded and sophisticated. The interplay between the muted cabinetry and the warmth of the surrounding materials creates a layered, welcoming atmosphere.'

But beyond the color, there are plenty of standout features that really tie the whole space together. From the wood kitchen flooring to the custom cabinetry that runs all the way to the ceiling, it really is all in the details.

'I really love the stone detailing at the base of the faucet and around the bottom of the sink. It's a subtle feature, but it adds a thoughtful, custom touch that elevates the whole space,' she says.



(Image credit: Dart Studio/Niamh Barry Photography)

'These kinds of small design moments might be easy to overlook, but they contribute to that layered, well-considered feeling that makes the kitchen feel truly special and cohesive. It's details like this that bring a sense of craftsmanship and intention to the overall design.'

The kitchen backsplash is another feature that adds warmth and vintage style to the room, but in a very practical way. 'The backsplash features handmade tile selected specifically for its aged appearance, adding texture and a sense of history. A classic farmhouse sink paired with a traditional bridge faucet reinforces the heritage feel, both aesthetically appropriate and deeply functional,' Olivia explains.

'Kitchen lighting was chosen with the same level of care: handmade sconces with pleated clay shades and walnut backplates offer a soft, ambient glow while echoing the natural warmth of the refinished walnut countertops, originally from the homeowner's father's workshop. Every element works together to create a space that feels both fresh and familiar – rooted in the past, but built for the present.'



(Image credit: Dart Studio/Niamh Barry Photography)

The finishing touches really bring in a sense of tradition and personality. A brass pot hanger on the wall adds a nod to vintage kitchens while providing additional storage. On the countertops, pretty ceramics and elevated kitchenware create a lived-in, curated look that reinforces that unfussy feeling.

And finally, it's the small details that create a cozy, inviting atmosphere in the kitchen that encourages you to spend time here outside of cooking. A charming banquette in the corner filled with plush cushions creates a casual seating space, collected art on the walls adds personality, and the counter lamp creates a different layer of ambiance.

This galley kitchen is by no means a sprawling space, but it feels warm, cozy, and inviting. And while it's thanks to all of these various elements working together, the unexpected paint color really is the grounding force.

Whatever your opinion of decorating with gray, this kitchen proves that the right shade can still feel chic and timeless. It works beautifully with the vintage elements throughout the design, and proves that with the right materials and approach to layering, it's a color that's perhaps not as outdated as we might think.