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cottage kitchens

**FORGIVING FLOORING.** With a predominately white palette, Marnie made sure to bring in design elements that would add warmth to the space. "At the beach people like white kitchens, so to offset the white, it is important to use softer textures like wood as well as mix metals in," she says. The flooring here is not hardwood but a luxury vinyl with a hickory pattern. "At the beach we use lots of luxury vinyl because you don't have to worry about maintenance, unlike real hardwood," she says. "It is much more forgiving with kids, water, wear and tear."



# Coastal Dream Kitchen

In this spacious, Nantucket-style kitchen, style and function merge elegantly to create the perfect beachside space for hosting family and friends.

BY LAURA SHIMKO | DESIGNER: MARNIE OURSLER IN COLLABORATION WITH JENNIFER GILMER KITCHEN AND BATH  
PHOTOGRAPHER: DANA HOFF PHOTOGRAPHY | STYLING: KARIN OLSEN



**Tips** Little details go a long way to create character and charm in your kitchen. The backsplash is a great example. Marnie recommends taking the backsplash all the way up to the ceiling, as she did in this kitchen design. "It really adds dimension and warmth, and it keeps your eye from transitioning from tile to drywall," she says. Light fixtures are another design element that you can use to further your style goals for your kitchen. "You can really change the look of the kitchen overall," Marnie says.

**|TOP LEFT| LIGHT & BRIGHT.** The white quartz countertops are a functional choice for their durability and ease of maintenance, and they add to the light and bright feel of the space. With an abundance of windows bringing in the nearby ocean views, Marnie brought some outdoor elements into her design. "The wood on the ceiling and trim around the windows add a beachy feel," she says. The glass pendant lights are a simple yet elegant finishing touch. "We went with an understated look that didn't take away from the rest of the design," she says.

**|TOP RIGHT| OFF-WHITE WARMTH.** One of the most visually appealing aspects of Marnie's design is the off-white, textured backsplash that stretches up to the ceiling. The thin, glazed tumbled brick was a challenge to find and had to be specially ordered. "It has larger grout lines because it is a natural, real material," she says. "It adds a lot of warmth to the space because of the texture and that it's not clean lines but has rough edges."

**|ABOVE LEFT| DELIGHTFUL DETAILS.** No matter the size of a kitchen, incorporating thoughtful details adds charm and a unique, personalized touch to the space. The elegant diamond window grille design was hand drawn by Marnie herself. "We also added leaded glass cabinets on the island to match the windows," she says. The hammered metal sink was another feature the clients specifically requested.

*As a fifth-generation home builder,* Marnie Oursler of Marnie Custom Homes loves to make her clients' coastal dream homes a reality. Located in Bethany Beach, Delaware, this kitchen is part of a spacious, custom-built home by Marnie and took about six months to complete. "The homeowners knew what they wanted and where they wanted things," she says. For the kitchen, their biggest request was to have a large, simple and practical space where they could entertain lots of family and friends once the pandemic passes. "They wanted a classic look, with an open floor plan to maximize the view," she says.

Marnie chose to have double islands to bring together style and function to fulfill the clients' needs. "The double islands are the anchor of the kitchen and allow for a place to congregate and a place to serve," she says. She went with a soft blue for a beachy feel and to offset some of the white.

Marnie's goal was to make this kitchen a truly custom space that accommodates the lifestyle of the homeowners. "Instead of doing seating at the bar, we did a wooden walnut custom table at the edge of the kitchen for the number of guests they wanted to host," she says. Multiple appliances, like the larger range, double oven and two dishwashers, allow for easy hosting. Finishing features such as the floating shelving and hardware combine function and style. "We went with the zinc shelves for additional storage and to break up the white by adding a different texture," she says. "It's all in the details." **CB**