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# kitchen chronicles



1 part  
**WILD,**  
3 parts  
**TAME**

Tried-and-true fixings plus a few surprises make this kitchen a standout.

## kitchen chronicles

**A**t first glance, Kristy Socarras Bigelow and Brian Bigelow's Denver kitchen looks pretty classic—subway tiles, open shelves, oak floors. But a closer inspection reveals this room is far from ordinary. Around one corner, there's a breakfast nook with seat-to-ceiling tiles in graphic patterns, a nod to Kristy's Cuban heritage. Across the room, there's an armoire painted aqua. And around the dining table, bright yellow chairs (see next page). "What can I say? I'm from Miami—I can't live without color!" says Kristy, who owns three trendy Cuban restaurants in Colorado. When the Bigelows started designing their kitchen about two years ago, they contemplated a neutral palette. "I loved the idea of a clean and simple room, but I knew I wouldn't be happy unless it had some spunk," says Kristy. So she worked the tile wall into the design, which led to other bursts of color. Now the space has just the right ratio of splashy to subdued.

Brian and Kristy with kids (from left) Leelé, 6, Mitchell, 10, and Giana, 4, around the breakfast table



### TILED WALL

A 32-inch-by-46-inch window is surrounded by a patchwork of 8-inch-square cement tiles from [cubantropicaltile.com](http://cubantropicaltile.com). "I wanted it to look a little crazy but also have cohesive parts," says Kristy. She figured out the design by laying the tiles on the floor first.

### BANQUETTE

Nothing can compete with those tiles, so the rest of the breakfast nook is neutral: a dark stained table from West Elm, a white banquette with silver vinyl seat cushions (try [fabric.com](http://fabric.com) for a similar fabric), and a hammered metal pendant.



### DARK CABINETS

Kristy's contractor built the oak cabinets and deep drawers that run around the room's perimeter and serve as the base for the 4-foot-long island. They're stained black with a distressed finish. The brushed nickel pulls are from Rocky Mountain Hardware.

### FLOATING SHELVES

To keep the room feeling airy, Kristy hung 2-inch-thick shelves, stained black to match the cabinets, over glossy white subway tile. "I love how the open storage lets me put the stuff I collect on display," she says. The shelves hold pottery, vintage glasses, and serving pieces.

### SLEEK PENINSULA

"On most Sundays, we invite friends over for a casual dinner," says Kristy. Guests sit at the granite-top peninsula on metal stools—leftovers from one of Kristy's restaurants—while she plates food. Between get-togethers, the stools stay tucked under the 11½-inch-deep ledge.

### CLOCK AND LIGHTS

Kristy found the graphic wall clock for about \$100 at a local Denver store. "I bought it nearly 10 years ago, but people still ask me where it's from," she says. The understated lights are a pair of nautical-style fixtures—about \$30 each from The Home Depot.



### TABLE AND CHAIRS

The family eats dinner at the big oak table, which is from a local furniture shop. In the afternoon it doubles as a homework station. For an unexpected twist, Kristy mixed yellow metal chairs from Frontgate with traditional black cross-back ones.

### MULTIPURPOSE ART

The wood panel on the wall is actually one of the dining table's two extra leaves. Kristy painted it yellow, and when it's not being used to expand the table, she hangs it on the wall and tapes the kids' paintings and drawings to it.

### CHANDELIER

The gold-tone wire birdcage pendant—which has birds crafted with real feathers roosting in it!—is by Graham and Green. Kristy found it at a lighting shop in Paris. "It's the cutest thing," she says. "I smile every time I look at it."

### ARMOIRE

Instead of adding more stained wood to the dining area, Kristy went with a cabinet done in weathered aqua paint that she uses for storage. Set in the corner, it holds dishes, wine glasses, the kids' games, and a few extra wall tiles.