THE RENTER'S HOME

The Pre-Shopping Checklist

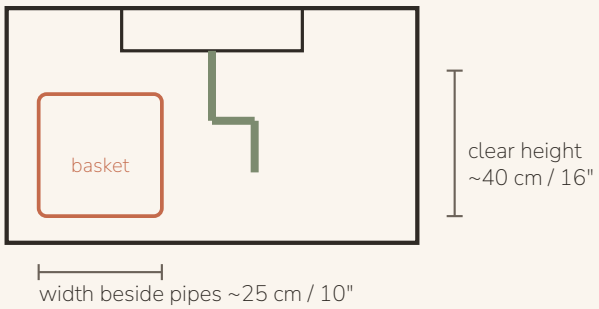
Measure first. Buy once. Everything fits the first time.

Hi, I'm Sarah. Every storage mistake I've ever made came from buying before measuring — the basket that was two inches too wide, the riser nothing could stack on. So now I measure first, every time. This is the exact checklist I use before any storage run: my measurements, the standard sizes rental kitchens actually come in, and the fit rules that save me from return trips.

Step 1 — Measure these spaces (write yours in)

Space	Exactly what to measure	Typical rental size	Yours
Under-sink cabinet	Floor to underside of the sink bowl; width around the pipes, not wall to wall	~40 cm / 16" clear height · ~25 cm / 10" beside pipes	
Cabinet shelves	Height between shelves — and from the top shelf to the cabinet roof	28–35 cm / 11–14" between shelves	
Deepest cabinet	Front frame to back wall (the frame is narrower than the inside!)	55–60 cm / 22–24" deep	
Fridge-side gap	Floor to counter height, width of the gap at its narrowest point	15–20 cm / 6–8" on most rentals	
Counter depth	Front edge to backsplash, where racks and rails would sit	~60 cm / 24" standard	
Tallest bottle	Your tallest spray / oil bottle, cap included	23–28 cm / 9–11" for most sprays	
Door swing	Open every cabinet door fully — note hinges and handles that steal space	Hinges steal 2–3 cm per door	

What to measure under the sink



The pipes decide everything. Measure the open space beside them — that's the only space a basket or caddy can actually use.

A worked example — Sarah's current kitchen

Under-sink: 38 cm clear height (my trap hangs low), 24 cm beside the pipes → my basket is 35 × 22 cm and slides past the trap.

Fridge gap: 17 cm → the slim cart is 15 cm wide. Two spare centimetres is the difference between gliding and jamming.

Shelf spacing: 30 cm → risers at 15 cm tall leave 15 cm above. My tallest bottle is 26 cm, so bottles live on the cabinet floor, not the riser.

The standard-sizes cheat sheet

Rental kitchens are built from a small set of standard modules. If your measurements are missing, these are the safest assumptions — and the reason most "universal" storage products are sized the way they are.

Item	Standard range	Why it matters
Base cabinet widths	30 / 40 / 50 / 60 cm modules (12–24")	Bins sold in 25 & 35 cm widths exist because of these modules
Wall cabinet depth	30–35 cm / 12–14"	Why most turntables top out at 30 cm — bigger hits the door
Counter height	88–92 cm / 35–36"	Over-sink racks must clear both the counter and the tap
Sink cabinet	60–80 cm wide, pipes centre-left or centre-right	Measure both sides of the pipes — one side is always wider
Fridge gap	10–20 cm / 4–8"	Under 12 cm: hooks & magnetic strips. 15–20 cm: a slim cart fits
Drawer depth (inside)	45–50 cm / 18–20"	Cutlery trays are sized to this — check before buying "extra long"
Shelf thickness	1.6–2 cm / ¾"	Clip-on and clamp-on shelves need this number to grip

The product fit guide

Product	Buy this size	Skip it if…	~Price
Under-sink basket / caddy	≤25 cm wide, ≤38 cm tall	…the trap hangs lower than 35 cm — measure first	$12–25
Shelf risers	15–18 cm tall, legs near the corners	…headroom above is under 12 cm — nothing will stack	$10–20
Turntable (lazy Susan)	25–30 cm / 10–12" diameter	…cabinet is a 30 cm module — the door frame will catch it	$9–16
Slim fridge-gap cart	2 cm narrower than your gap	…the gap is under 12 cm — use hooks instead	$25–45
Door-mounted rack	Slim profile, ≤9 cm deep	…the door doesn't close cleanly in the slow-close test	$14–28
Tension rod (under-sink)	Spans the cabinet width minus 2 cm	…cabinet sides are flimsy — rods need firm walls to grip	$8–14
Stackable shelf inserts	Match shelf depth minus 3 cm	…shelf spacing is under 28 cm — stack of two won't fit	$12–22

Prices are typical US online prices, October 2026 — treat them as planning numbers, not promises.

Step 2 — Sarah's fit rules (check before you buy)

☐ Measure the space AND the product. Both. Every time. Product pages list the box size as often as the product size — check the diagram, not the headline.

☐ The 2 cm rule. Whatever you're fitting into a gap, buy it at least 2 cm narrower than the gap. Walls bow, floors slope, doors sag — rentals are never perfectly square.

☐ Headroom is storage. A riser without 12 cm of clear space above it is just a low table. Plan what stacks on top before you buy it.

☐ The slow-close test. Anything mounted on a door: tape it in place, then close the door slowly. If it kisses a shelf or hinge, it will scrape every day.

☐ Pipes first. Under the sink, the plumbing owns the space and you're the guest. Curved, split and sliding organisers exist for exactly this reason.

☐ The moving-day rule. No drills, no screws, no adhesive on paint you don't own. If it can't come off cleanly on moving day, it doesn't come home.

☐ One in, measured twice. Buy for the kitchen you have today, not the remodel in your head. Rental storage should pack flat and move with you.

What it costs — three honest budgets

Budget	What you get	Cost
The starter trio	Ideas 1, 4 & 13 from the post: under-sink basket, shelf risers, slim fridge-gap cart — fixes most small kitchens	$55–100
Five to eight fixes	The trio plus a turntable, door rack, tension rod and drawer organisers	$90–200
The whole kitchen post	All 23 ideas from "23 Small Kitchen Storage Ideas for Renters"	$375–690

Step 3 — Take to the store

☐ This checklist, filled in — phone photo of it too, in case the paper stays on the counter

☐ A tape measure (the store's rulers are always missing when you need one)

☐ Photos of your cabinets with the doors open, pipes and all

☐ Your budget from the table above — decided at home, not in the aisle

Want the ideas that go with these numbers?

Every measurement on this page comes from "23 Small Kitchen Storage Ideas for Renters (That Need Zero Drills)" — the full post, with photos of every idea in a real rental kitchen, is at therentershome.com. New small-space ideas go up on Pinterest first: pinterest.com/therentershome.

— Sarah