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# Butler's Pantry

Connecting the dining room to the kitchen area, typically via swinging doors, the butler's pantry was the setting for any last minute food preparation. This room was a convenient spot to transfer food from pot to plate, and put together salads, desserts, and cocktails just before serving the family and guests in the dining room. In addition, the butler's pantry was a space that buffered the homeowner from the undesirable sights, sounds, and smells of the kitchen and servant areas.



Butler's Pantry at the White House, circa 1920. Library of Congress image.

This pantry also provided storage for fine dishware, glasses, and silver – all under lock and key and most likely accessible to only the most trusted servant. Traditionally, this esteemed staff member was the butler, but it is unclear whether Mr. and Mrs. Plant ever retained a servant in this position.

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# Butler's Pantry

## Mahogany Cabinets and Counters

This original cabinetry was probably intended to hold fine china, silver, and items for serving meals in the formal dining room next door. Not only was it a convenient storage space, but a room where fine and expensive serving ware could be kept secure and out of the busy kitchen where it might be broken or damaged.

## Ammonia-Brine Refrigerator

Tom Plant had this unit installed during the original construction of the house. It featured an electrically powered ammonia and brine cooling system. There is an identical refrigerator directly behind this unit in the Cook's Pantry (not currently on exhibit), as well as walk-in cold storage rooms in the basement. The small freezer unit in the upper right compartment used Sulphur dioxide as a coolant, and was installed sometime after 1918. The motors for both systems are located in the basement.

## Plate Warmer

In this home, a Simplex electric plate warmer brought dishware to the proper temperature before meals were plated and served. Ask a museum guide to see the appliance!



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