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**CR** ConsumerReports®



# Kitchen

**Planning & Buying Guide™**

**814**  
**PRODUCTS**  
Tested &  
Reviewed

**YOUR  
DREAM  
KITCHEN  
FOR A LOT LESS**

Refrigerators, ranges,  
dishwashers, countertops,  
flooring & more

**GOOF-PROOF  
Remodeling  
Guide**



**Quick & Easy  
WEEKEND  
MAKEOVERS**

JANUARY 2019 [CR.ORG](http://CR.ORG)



Please display until January 28, 2019



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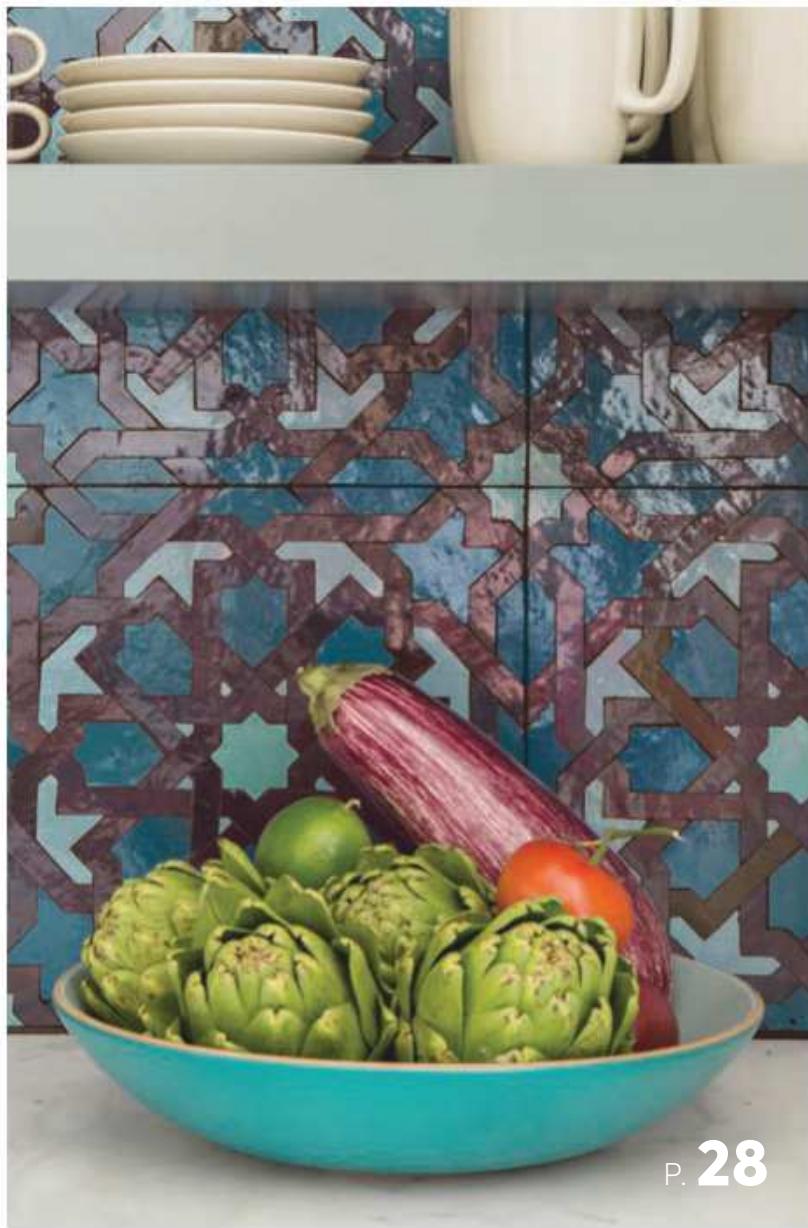


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# Kitchen

## Buying Guide

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## Remodeling With Confidence

You know you want good looks and top-notch products in your new kitchen, but how can you tell the really great gear from the not-good-enough? Don't worry: Consumer Reports is here to help.

Our team of kitchen pros—editors, researchers, market experts, and more—will guide you through your remodel, sharing insights straight from our labs on everything from fridges to flooring, and more.

When you're ready to shop, turn to the Buying Guide on page 32. You'll find thousands of ratings and reviews based on the exhaustive tests our engineers run on every product

we evaluate and on our surveys of CR members' experiences with the products in their homes. You can trust our advice because we're nonprofit and independent: We buy all the products we test, and we accept no ads.

So relax—buying the best for your kitchen update just got a lot easier.

—The Editors of  
**Consumer Reports**

**RATINGS** Overall Scores are based on a scale of 0 to 100. We rate products using these symbols:

- 🔴 POOR    🟡 FAIR    🟢 GOOD
- 🟢 VERY GOOD    🟡 EXCELLENT

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# UPDATE

Trends, product news, and expert advice

## TREND WATCH

### **Gold Rush**

No longer purely utilitarian, today's kitchens are living and entertaining centers with style to match, right down to everyday essentials—which are suddenly showing up in rich, gleaming gold. Case in point: this Goldtouch Bakeware Set, \$363 for 15 pieces; [williams-sonoma.com](http://williams-sonoma.com).





**TREND WATCH**

**Gold Rush**

1. Dualit NewGen 4-Slice Toaster, \$340; [surlatable.com](http://surlatable.com). 2. G25 Gold Tipped 60W Light Bulb, \$10; [cb2.com](http://cb2.com). 3. Gold Handled Utensils, \$10 each; [crateandbarrel.com](http://crateandbarrel.com). 4. Gold Accent Footed Colander, \$25; [crateandbarrel.com](http://crateandbarrel.com). 5. Gold Dipped Barstool, \$300; [westelm.com](http://westelm.com).



**Instant Pot Face-Off**

Can the Instant Pot DUO60 7-in-1, \$100, really replace multiple kitchen appliances? CR's testers decided to find out.

vs. **T-Fal CY505E Electric Pressure Cooker, \$70**

**TEST RESULT: Instant Pot wins by a nose.** The Instant Pot took just 54 minutes to turn out pork ribs that were juicy and tender. The 6-quart T-Fal took 56 minutes.

vs. **Crock-Pot SCCPVL610-S Slow Cooker, \$50**

**TEST RESULT: It's a tie.** Both turned out delicious pulled pork. The Instant Pot took a bit longer.

vs. **Aroma ARC-914SBD Rice Cooker, \$30**

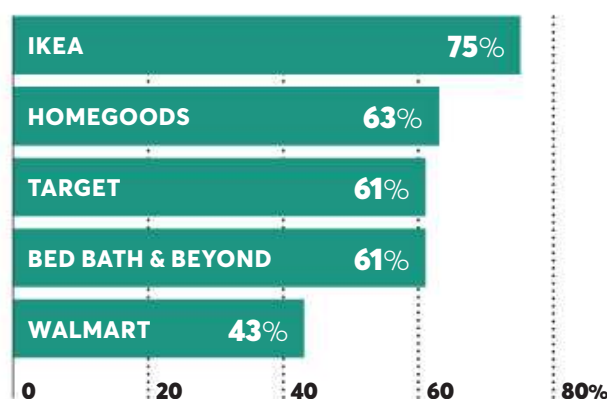
**TEST RESULT: Instant Pot wins.** Two cups of brown rice took 60 minutes in the Aroma rice cooker. The Instant Pot cooked the same amount in 45 minutes, and it tasted just as good.

vs. **Hamilton Beach 37530Z Steamer, \$40**

**TEST RESULT: Steamer wins.** Vegetables steamed in the Instant Pot were mushy, and their color had faded.

**What's America's Favorite Place to Shop for Home Furnishings?**

According to a new poll of 1,800 consumers from Market Force Information, a firm specializing in customer experience management, it's Ikea, by a wide margin. In the poll, Ikea won for product variety and availability, but Target was found to have the best store layouts.



Source: Market Force Information.





## Taking Color Inspiration From Nature

Paint manufacturers have made the choice of their “Color of the Year”—a single shade that trend forecasters believe will become dominant—an annual tradition. Some years, the picks are all over the spectrum, with seemingly little relation between them. In other years, like this one, the selections fall into lockstep around a single hue or theme. For 2019 that theme is nature, and the highly livable color choices are those of sea, sky, mist, and earth, below.



## Freezers With Smart Storage Features

*New options can help you organize your frozen food*

Stand-alone freezers used to contain little more in the interior cavity than wide-open space. That was especially true for chest freezers, though even uprights were short on organizational help.

Today’s models offer many features that make it easier to organize and store a variety of foods, from soft-freeze compartments for ice cream to tiered storage bins to convertible

models that can change from freezer to fridge, and back.

“Chest freezers usually offer more usable storage space than upright models,” says Joe Pacella, a test engineer at

Consumer Reports’ freezer lab. “But upright models come in self-defrosting configurations, which can save a lot of hassle.”

If you do opt for a chest freezer, one feature-filled model to consider is the GE FCM16DLWW, \$600 (left). One of our highest-rated manual-defrost chest freezers, it has a power light, a temperature alarm, a door lock, an LED interior light, and four tiered sliding storage bins. It earned high marks across the board, even netting a Very Good rating for our power-outage tests. With 15.6 cubic feet of usable storage, this model might fit the bill for your garage or basement.



PHOTO, TOP RIGHT: DEVOL



# Products We Love

It's easier (and more fun) to work in your new kitchen if you have great tools to go with your great design. Here are some top picks from our test labs, plus other handy essentials, each for under \$100.

**1. Oster Pro 1200 Plus Food Processor Attachment BLSTMB-CBF-000 \$90**

Though small at only 5 cups, this is a sturdy pick with great chopping and dicing features, as well as excellent grating. Plus, it will easily fit in any kitchen and costs hundreds less than some other models. [oster.com](http://oster.com)

**2. Melamine Mixing Bowls With Spout \$33 for three**

We haven't tested these bowls, but they have an appealing design, with easy-grip handles, spouts, and nonslip bases. [williams-sonoma.com](http://williams-sonoma.com)

**3. LooseLeaf Kale and Greens Stripper \$8**

This neat tool (which we have not tested) promises to make quick work stripping the leaves of greens herbs from their stems. [chefn.com](http://chefn.com)

**4. Bella Pro Series KT-3431 (90062) Toaster \$50**

This mighty mini toaster excelled in all of our tests, and even offers a "gluten free" setting to toast denser gluten-free breads at a lower temperature for longer. [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)

**5. Cuisinart Smart Stick CSB-75 Blender \$26**

Excellent at puréeing vegetables for soup, this drawer-sized gadget is also very good at blending yogurt. It also comes with a three-year warranty, better than most we tested. [cuisinart.com](http://cuisinart.com)

**6. Le Creuset Salt and Pepper Mill Set \$65 for two**

Though we haven't used this particular set, the mills have an important feature: an adjustable grinder so that you can opt for coarse, fine, or in between. [lecreuset.com](http://lecreuset.com)

**7. Cuisinart PerfecTemp Programmable DCC-3200 Coffee Maker \$90**

This drip coffee maker can brew a full 14 cups and rated Excellent for brew performance in our tests. It's programmable, with a small-batch setting and brew-strength control. The carafe is easy to handle and aced CR's dribble test. [cuisinart.com](http://cuisinart.com)

**8. Popco Silicone Kitchen Tongs \$11 for three**

Our food testers rely on silicone-tipped tongs similar to this nicely priced set, which is nonstick, heat-resistant, and dishwasher-safe. [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)

**9. CDN ProAccurate TCT572 Meat Thermometer \$70**

This thermometer garnered an Excellent rating in our response-time tests. It's easy to read, with large digits and a folding probe, and notes minimum and maximum temperatures. [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)







2



3



4

90

OVERALL SCORE



76

OVERALL SCORE



5



8

85

OVERALL SCORE



7



6

PHOTOS: JOHN WALSH/CONSUMER REPORTS (1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8)



# DESIGN NOTES



## **More Light, Improved Flow**

Combining the kitchen and family room and moving the sink to the bay-window wall created a light, open space with plenty of room to work and hang out.





## BEFORE & AFTER

# Better, and Bigger

An improved and expanded layout and a bright new look turned a dark, cramped Minneapolis kitchen into an inviting family gathering center.

A LARGER KITCHEN is probably high on most homeowners' wish lists, but sometimes size isn't enough. "Our old kitchen was actually pretty big," says Kelly McLain of the pre-renovation space she shared with her husband, Andrew Naughton, and their three daughters. "But the design was so inefficient, it felt much smaller than it was."

Among the problems in the original space: minimal counterspace, shallow cabinets, not enough light, and dual bottlenecks. "The refrigerator door opened into the breakfast table, so if someone wanted some milk during a meal, the person sitting by the fridge had to get up," says Kate. "And there was a desk right at the bottom of the stairs, and the door to the stairs was constantly hitting the desk chair—which, with three kids, was always left out."

Kelly and Andrew adapted to the cabinet issue by keeping their pots and pans on bookshelves in the



BEFORE





**Created for a Cook**

The old electric range was crowded between the sink and fridge, without proper ventilation. Now, the new gas range has a powerful hood and plenty of elbow room on either side.

adjoining family room, but there wasn't much they could do about the dark, cramped workspace without a major remodel. So, after making do for four years, they took the plunge, turning to Minneapolis-based kitchen designer Kate Roos for help.

Roos considered several approaches before settling on the right plan: joining the existing kitchen and family room to create one large space and swapping the locations of the workspace and dining areas. "Now, the sink is in front of the windows looking out at the back yard, and the kitchen has an efficient u-shape, with the range on one end and the fridge on the other."

The new layout and appliances combine to create an inviting and efficient prep and cleanup zone. Andrew, the main cook in the family, took particular care in choosing the range, a professional-style, six-burner gas model. "We were lucky, because a friend had the range we were considering, so we could test it out in person before buying it," Kelly says.

The style of the space was a collaboration between Kelly, Andrew, and Roos. "I had a lot of ideas saved on Pinterest, and Kate was able to use those ideas to help guide us to something that felt fresh and also right for the house," Kelly says. Case in point: the



gray Shaker-style cabinets Roos designed herself. “The gray adds a subtle hint of color,” she says. Subway tiles in a less common shape line the walls, for a slight twist on tradition. White marble counters and brass hardware complete the updated-classic look. “The hardware is probably my favorite detail,” says Kelly. “Now that we’ve been using it for a while, the finish is developing an even more beautiful patina.”

One thing the new kitchen lacks: an island. “We considered a small center island, but it just felt forced,” Roos says. Instead, she designed a built-in hutch that provides storage, extra counter

space, and a furniture-style accent with a finish that contrasts nicely with the rest of the cabinets. “We haven’t missed having an island at all,” Kelly says.

Renovation complete, the family spends about 90 percent of its time in the kitchen, in Kelly’s estimation. “We worried about eliminating the family room,” she says. “But now we love the kitchen so much, we’re always in here.”

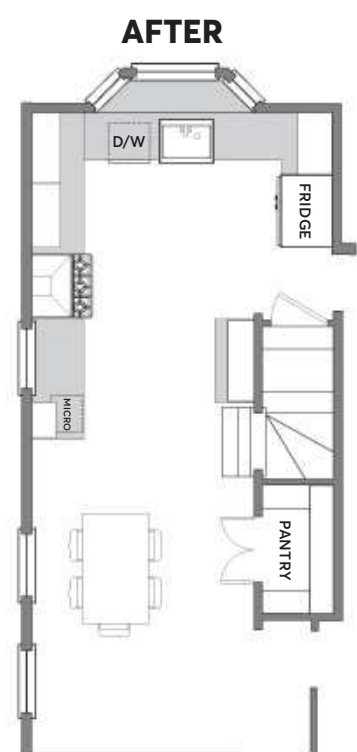
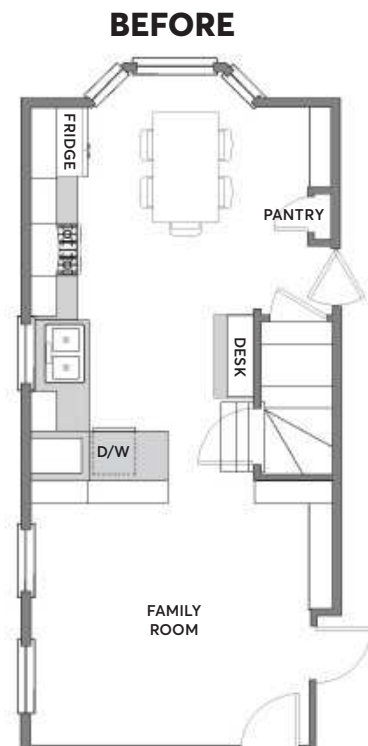
Brighter, better, and, yes, a bit bigger, it’s the improved flow that made the difference. “We just hosted the girls’ volleyball team, and never left the kitchen,” says Kelly. “It’s perfect for two, or five, or a crowd.”

## Flipping the Layout

The original kitchen had all the appliances on one wall, a short peninsula separating it from an adjoining family room, and both a large breakfast table and a desk blocking traffic around the space. Combining the kitchen and family room and reversing the plan allowed for a tidy work zone along the rear, windowed wall and plenty of room for a large dining area. A new pantry (not pictured) next to the stairs provides ample extra storage.



**Built-In Style**  
Custom panels help the fridge blend in with the rest of the cabinetry. The 5x5-inch tiles on the back wall look modern but fit in with the home’s traditional four-square architecture.







**BEFORE & AFTER**

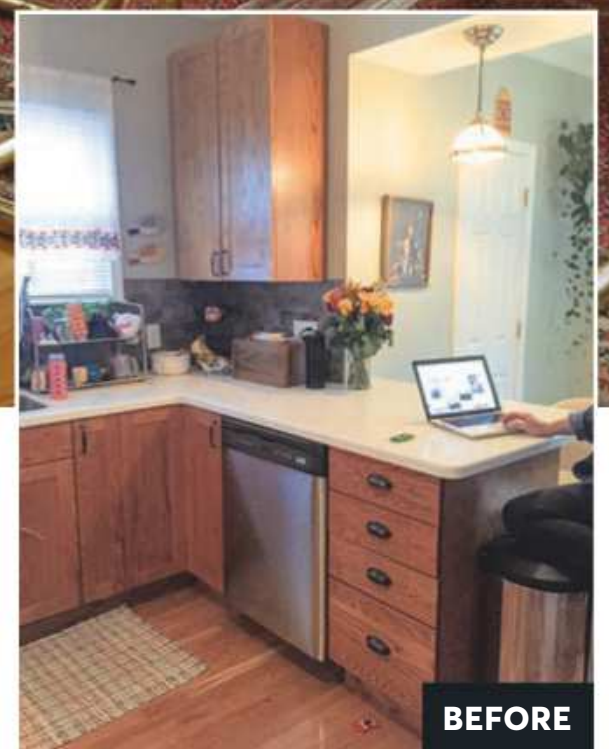
# Fast Face-Lift





**Same Space,  
New Face**

The original kitchen was dark and dingy, with oak cabinets and green walls. A brighter color scheme, new open shelving, and quirky vintage touches gave the space vibrant, modern personality.



Three weeks and modest investment gave a young family the fresh, fun kitchen they dreamed of, without the expense and mess of a major renovation. Steal their ideas for your own budget makeover.



It all started with Instagram. After falling for a pair of chairs posted by a local vintage shop, homeowner Dana Siomkos struck up a friendship with the owner, Amy Hughes, a design and remodeling expert. A glass of wine or two later and Amy had taken on the update of the kitchen Dana shares with her husband, Zane Latta, and their young daughters. The rest is social media history.

When Dana and Zane bought their Maplewood, N.J., colonial, the kitchen was functional but uninspiring. “It wasn’t really our style, but everything worked and it was all good quality,” Dana says. Wary of the expense and disruption of a major remodel, the couple didn’t feel they had any option but to live with the space as it was. And so they did, for nearly three years.

But then they met Amy, the owner of Salvage Style, a vintage design shop, also in Maplewood. “I was delivering some chairs, and Dana and I were chatting, and she was lamenting that they’d have to wait forever to redo the kitchen,” says Amy, who also has years of experience as an Ikea kitchen-design

teacher and several budget renovations under her belt. “When I saw the space, I knew that it had all the right stuff—it was just lacking color and a modern design sensibility,” she says. “And I didn’t think it would cost a lot or take more than a couple of weeks to give it a new look.” Dana and Zane jumped at the prospect of a makeover, and the project was soon underway, with Amy serving as renovation consultant and designer.

The plan was simple: Paint the sturdy, solid-oak cabinets and the walls, and replace the backsplash. Because the appliances were fairly new, and the white solid-surface countertop was neutral and in good shape, they decided to keep them, a major budget-saver.

Amy suggested a two-tone approach for the cabinets, with a rich blue on the base units and crisp white above, for a brighter look. Because the cabinets had a clear finish, they had to be stripped and sanded before receiving their fresh coats of paint, a big job Dana and Zane were happy to leave to the pros.

They decided to replace one large wall cabinet with open shelves. “The cabinet over the dishwasher was tall and bulky,” Amy says. “It made the space feel smaller and more closed off.”

### Smart Style Solutions

With the color update complete, it was time to add character. The herringbone backsplash was the biggest splurge of the project, Amy says. “The tiles were just long subway-style tiles from Home Depot, but installing them in a specialty pattern costs a lot more.”

To save money, she chose stock lumber for the floating shelves. “We found pieces with the varied look of antique lumber—for about a third of the price.” Another budget win: the brass cabinet hardware from Nest Studio. Dana provided her recruiting firm’s assistance in return for the pricey pulls.

The transformation took about three weeks and cost \$7,300, including new furniture and rugs. Dana and Zane love the results. “It’s clean and bright and looks like ‘us,’” Dana says. “We’re happy in our kitchen now.”

## Get the Look

*Finishing touches for a vintage-chic space*

REVEAL CABINET  
PULLS \$52 TO \$130  
[neststudiocollection.com](http://neststudiocollection.com)



MIDNIGHT  
BLUE 1638 \$70  
[benjaminmoore.com](http://benjaminmoore.com)



SHIRAZ  
PERSIAN  
RUG \$229  
[rugs.com](http://rugs.com)

THASSOS  
WHITE  
MARBLE  
1X3 \$14  
[tilezz.com](http://tilezz.com)







**BEFORE**



**Strategic Update**

Keeping the existing appliances, cabinets, and countertops helped rein in the budget dramatically. Painting the upper cabinets white helped them “disappear,” creating a brighter and more open effect.

PHOTOS: PREVIOUS SPREAD AND RIGHT, “AFTER”: LAURA MOSS



**KADEN  
SPOT RESIST  
FAUCET** \$425  
[moen.com](http://moen.com)

**CARSON ACACIA  
FOOTED FRUIT  
BOWL** \$60  
[crateandbarrel.com](http://crateandbarrel.com)



**KATE SPADE NEW  
YORK CHARLOTTE  
STREET VASE** \$100  
[wayfair.com](http://wayfair.com)



**RUSTIC  
FIREPLACE SHELF  
MANTEL** \$127  
[wayfair.com](http://wayfair.com)



**SINNERLIG  
BAMBOO  
PENDANT** \$70  
[ikea.com](http://ikea.com)







Vent  
It Right

Opt for a hood that is ducted outdoors, instead of a recirculating style.

**PROJECT PLANNING**

# Remodeling Secrets of the Pros

For a beautiful, functional, and on-budget renovation, heed these do's and don'ts from CR's experts and top kitchen designers





## Measure First

Fridge styles and sizes have changed, so check to make sure a new model will fit.

## Check Traffic

If yours is a family kitchen, pick flooring that can withstand heavy use.



Most kitchen designers' #1 piece of remodeling advice? Hire a certified designer to help you get the kitchen of your dreams. And they're not just talking from self-interest: An experienced professional with years of renovations under her or his belt really can maximize the efficiency and style of your space, make your project run more smoothly, and can even save you money by avoiding pricey rookie mistakes. It's an investment you're not likely to regret.

Yet as valuable as a pro's skills might be, hiring one just isn't in the budget for many prospective remodelers. That's why we asked CR's in-house experts and six National Kitchen & Bath Assn. (NKBA)-certified designers for their best remodeling tips. With their know-how—and the advice and Ratings in our Buying Guide on page 32—you can renovate like a pro, for a lot less.

### Planning & Budget

**DO: Live in your kitchen first.** “You have to spend time using the space to understand what works and doesn't,” says St. Louis-based Certified Kitchen Designer (CKD) Ashley Smith.

**DON'T: Rush the process.** “I tell every new client I speak with to take their time and do it right. You will live with your kitchen for many years and you want to love it,” says Brooke Eversoll, Certified Master Kitchen & Bath Designer (CMKBD), of Bee Studios in St. Petersburg, FL. “I also advise my potential clients to save up and do it once and do it right.” Smith agrees: “Anything new makes everything old look even older. Don't scale back your plans to

save money and think you'll upgrade something later. You'll regret not having what you want from the start, and it will cost you more to replace in the long run—if you ever get around to it.”

**DO: Think about resale.** “I always ask clients what their longevity in the house will be,” says Laura Eagan, CKD, of Estrella Cabinetry & Design Center in Goodyear, AZ. “If they'll only be there for a few years, or if they're remodeling to sell, then I recommend they spend money on things with ‘bling’ factor, like high-end appliances and a great tile backsplash and cabinet hardware—but to keep the cabinetry costs modest. No one's going to walk in and say, ‘I can clearly tell these are custom cabinets with plywood sides,’ but the specialty appliances will wow them.”

**DO: Base your budget on data.** “Nationwide, the industry rule of thumb is to spend 10 percent of the retail price of your house on your kitchen remodel, but you have to pay attention to the local market,” says Eagan. “In some areas of New York, for example, a \$300,000 house won't sell without a \$60,000 custom kitchen. But in Scottsdale, AZ,







## Choose Classics

For major elements, opt for timeless designs that will look great for years to come.



## Shop for Resale

High-end appliance models can be a smart investment if you plan to sell soon.



you could put a \$15,000 kitchen in that house and sell it tomorrow. Talk to a knowledgeable local real estate agent to see how much more your house would be worth after a kitchen remodel—and make that number your budget.”

**DON'T: Get caught up in trends.** “Try to choose timeless styles and materials that will look great for 10 to fifteen years,” says Elizabeth Leahy, an Associate Kitchen & Bath Designer (AKBD) based in San Diego, CA. “If you want something unique, go crazy on the backsplash. It’s not that expensive to replace it if you get tired of the look.”

### Layout

**DO: Make it functional.** “Look up the NKBA’s 31 Kitchen Guidelines online. These are all the specifications that designers use to make a space functional, things like the clearance you need between different elements in the kitchen,” says Leahy.

**DON'T: Crowd the island.** “Everyone wants an island, but you can’t shoehorn one into every space,” says Diane Wandmaker, CMKBD, of Kitchen Studios in Albuquerque, NM. “You have to make sure there’s enough space to walk around it, including behind someone sitting at a stool. And think about how many seats will really fit: The NKBA recommends a minimum of 24 inches in width for each seat, but even that isn’t enough if you’re sitting with your elbows on the counter.”

**DO: Save space with a banquette.** “It’s a great way to create a dining area in a corner,” says Leahy. “You can add storage inside the benches, too.”

### Appliances

**DO: Measure carefully before shopping for a new fridge.** “Measure the height and width of the space your current refrigerator is in, as well as the space between the face of the current fridge

and anything opposite it,” says CR test engineer Joe Pacella. “Some newer, higher-capacity fridges are taller and deeper than older models, and you want to be sure that it fits, with room for you to stand in front of it and open the door.”

**DO: Consider the cooktop.** “Look at how the burners are arranged,” says CR test engineer Tara Casaregola. “Are there enough large burners for your 12-inch frying pan and a stockpot, and are they in the positions you prefer?” Also, she says, take Btu/hr ratings with a grain of salt. “While you want a burner that can bring that big pot of water to boil, remember that most other cooking tasks use intermediate settings, not the highest flame or wattage.”

**DON'T: Get seduced by high-tech oven claims that add expense.** “Ask yourself if you really want to navigate a series of button presses and scrolling messages to cook a frozen pizza, or if you’re fine just following package directions,” says Casaregola.

**DO: Plan for adequate ventilation.** “A recirculating hood is not good enough; you want the hood to vent outside,” says Wandmaker. “And don’t go with an over-the-range microwave with built-in ventilation. They’re not very deep, so the vent can’t reach the front burners, which you’re using all the time.”

**DON'T: Make the microwave a focal point.** “Hide it in a pantry or in an appliance garage, or pick drawer-style model, which sits below the counter and opens like a drawer,” says Eversoll.

### Lighting & Technology

**DO: Plan plenty of LED illumination.** “Lighting is not just functional, it also adds beauty,” says Leahy. “You need task lighting over work areas—those are the undercabinet lights that illuminate the work surfaces and the can lights in the ceiling over pathways—ambient

lighting, like pendants over an island—and accent lighting, like a glow inside a cabinet, or along a cabinet toe kick.”

**DON'T: Forget the dimmer switches.** “LEDs give off a lot of light and you don’t always want the full-blown effect,” says Wandmaker. “Dimmer switches let you control the level depending on the situation and mood.”

**DON'T: Get too “smart.”** “Smart home tech is very cool, but it can be super expensive,” says Leahy. “Also, you have to consider obsolescence—everything is changing very quickly right now. And, finally, there’s the security element. Some of these systems are very easily hacked.”

### Surfacing & Materials

**DO: Consider quartz for countertops.** “Quartz is more durable and less porous than marble or granite, and, because it’s a manufactured material it’s consistent from slab to slab—so you have a lot of flexibility if you want to use it on both a countertop and a backsplash, for example,” says Eagan.

**DO: Mix finishes and materials.** “Juxtaposing sleek metals with natural elements is one of the best ways to bring interest and a collected feel to your kitchen,” says designer Shea McGee of Studio McGee in Salt Lake City, UT.

**DON'T: Ignore traffic patterns when choosing flooring.** “If your kitchen is the hub of your home, with kids, spouses, even pets adding to wear and tear on the floors, you’ll want a floor with great wear resistance,” says CR test engineer Joan Muratore. “It’s also smart to look for flooring that can stand up to scratches, stains and moisture.”

**DO: Weigh your DIY comfort level.** “If you want to install flooring yourself, consider flooring that can be floated—meaning it can be installed on top of your existing floor, without having to use nails or glue,” says Muratore.





1



2

**1. Add Undercabinet Lighting** Bright work surfaces are safer and easier to use. **2. Mix Materials** Varied wood and metal finishes add warmth and personality. **3. Accommodate the Island** Leave room to circulate around the kitchen. **4. Build a Banquette** Built-in seating can save space.



3



4



**Streamlined Style**

Want your new kitchen to look fresh and clean for years? Plan more storage than you think you'll need so that you can keep counters open.





## ORGANIZING TIPS

# Clearing the Clutter

Creating the neat and tidy kitchen of your dream is easier than you may think. Just follow this simple three-step plan.

Digging through a drawer for the candy thermometer you use once a year. Searching for a lid that fits the storage container you just ladled the leftovers into. Moving two or three small appliances aside every time you want to roll out cookies on the counter. If these scenarios sound familiar, it's time to take control of your kitchen clutter. We know: This can seem like an overwhelming task. But it doesn't have to be. We asked the experts, professional organizers certified by the National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals (NAPO), for their best, easiest tips for creating an orderly, efficient workspace. Here's how.

PHOTO: MICHELLE DREWES

## Disorganization Danger Zones

*For a space that's easy to keep neat, take heed of these mistakes:*

### **Opening up a too-small kitchen.**

"When you remove a wall to connect the kitchen to another room, you're also cutting cabinet space," says Lisa Mark, Certified Professional Organizer (CPO), of The Time Butler in Los Altos, Calif. "You may not enjoy the layout if you have no storage."

**Neglecting the island.** "Make sure the island base has plenty of storage. You can even include cabinets on the side you sit on—just keep things there that you don't use too often," Mark says.

### **Eliminating upper cabinets.**

"Open shelving is pretty, but they're a recipe for disaster for most people," says Houston-based CPO Ellen Delap. "Unless you can live in a very minimal way, with perfectly matched dishes and accents that look great all the time, you're better off with closed upper cabinets."

### **Including a kitchen desk.**

"Kitchen desks inevitably become a dumping ground," says Sara Bereika, CPO, of Abundance Organizing in Richmond, Va. "If you have some extra space in your kitchen, you're better off with more cabinets, not an office area."



## Design Notes > Organizing Tips

### Use Every Inch

If you're planning new cabinets, be sure to run upper units all the way to the ceiling, and don't forget to include storage cabinets in the island base.



### 1. Take an Inventory

Whether you're preparing for a remodel or just want to be able to find the things you need without endless shifting and sorting, your first job is to figure out what you have—and what you really need. “Take everything out of your drawers and cabinets, and then start the purge,” says Sara Bereika, Certified Professional Organizer (CPO), of Abundance Organizing in Richmond, Va. Bereika recommends disposing of (or donating) anything “broken, rusty, or that you haven't used in years.”

in the “rarely” section. You'll want to plan storage for the items you use most often in the main kitchen workspace, but less frequently used tools and serving items could go in a high cabinet or pantry, and seldom-used items might move out of the kitchen entirely, if space is limited.

Next, consider how you actually use your kitchen and plan storage to maximize efficiency. “Think in terms of activity zones,” says Bereika. “You might have a food-prep zone, a clean-up zone, a coffee-making zone, a lunch-prep zone, say,

With the obvious nonessentials out of the way, take a look at what's left, and be particularly hard-boiled about small appliances, tools, and sentimental items. “We all love gadgets,” says Ellen Delap, CPO, a professional organizer in Houston. “But a lot of them are single-function, so unless you use it every day, it certainly shouldn't live on your counter—and you may not need it at all.” Regina Lark, Ph.D., CPO, of A Clear Path in Los Angeles says, “Many of my clients have things that were their mother's or grandmother's. There's an emotional reason for keeping those items, but if they're rarely used, you don't need to store them in your kitchen.”

Once you've whittled down your kitchen's contents to must-haves only, make a list of every single item. You can share this with your kitchen designer or cabinet designer if you're remodeling (it will help them plan adequate storage), and if you're just de-cluttering, it will help you sort what you have before putting everything away.

### 2. Make a Plan

Before you begin replacing anything in cabinets or drawers, look at your inventory list and divide it by items you use most days, occasionally, and rarely. For example, the coffee maker would probably go in the “most days” section, the food processor in the “occasionally” section, and the holiday-themed dishes

**A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING** (opposite page) *Top row, left to right: Knives* stay accessible and off the counter with the help of a magnetic strip; *linens* and other flat items live neatly in a shallow, divided drawer; *spices* are easy to identify when they stand label-up in a drawer near the range. *Middle row, left to right: Utensils* nestle in a special drawer, so they're off the counter and yet easy to grab when cooking; *coffee supplies* in a slide-out unit make quick work of making early morning joe; *dishes* can be easier to put away when stored in a drawer, not an upper cabinet. *Bottom row, left to right: Pots and pans* are reachable in a corner cabinet, thanks to a slide-out insert; *cleaning products* and other essentials are quick to grab from drawers near the sink; *small appliances* lift up from below, then disappear when not in use.









**Pantry Planning**  
Accessorize to make it easy to find things on pantry shelves. Bins can corral everything from salad dressing packets to water bottles; matching canisters keep dry goods fresh and looking neat.



Ideally, you'll want storage for all the items you need for each activity right in its zone, so the coffee beans, filters, sugar, and mugs should be right near the coffee maker, and the sandwich bags and lunch boxes should be stored together in the lunch-prep zone." The idea is to minimize the number of steps required to complete a particular task so that you can work more quickly and easily.

If you're remodeling, this is the time to focus on your cabinet plan. Most professional organizers prefer deep drawers to base cabinets. "A drawer allows much easier access, because you can see everything inside as soon as you pull it out," Delap says.

They also counsel making good use of vertical space. "Many kitchens have a soffit above the cabinets, which is a lot of linear cabinet space wasted," says Lisa Mark, CPO, of The Time Butler in Los Altos, Calif. "If you're adding new cabinets, take them right up to the ceiling. Yes, you may need a ladder to reach the top shelves, but that's okay if you're storing less-often used items up there." If you're trying to make your existing cabinets more efficient, consider adding DIY storage accessories like slide-out shelves inside cabinets, or a pivoting storage system within a corner cabinet.

### 3. Put It All Away

Before you fill up your new cabinets (or refill your old ones), take another look at your inventory and ask yourself one last time whether there's anything you don't need. Then figure out how you'll organize the interiors of drawers and cabinets so that your pared-down supplies will stay neat and orderly. The pros we polled favor individual clear, plastic bins to hold

**Keep It Clean**  
Store cooking utensils in drawers or cabinets, not in a crock beside the range.



everything from cooking utensils to flatware to sauce mix packets. They like low-sided bins for bags of chips and bread, and matching canisters for dry goods. (For more ideas, see "Storage Solutions That Work," below.)

"Use the backs of cabinet and pantry doors for more storage if you need it," says Mark. "Spice racks, hooks, and even a hanging shoe rack are great ways to add storage without adding cabinets."

Limit the items kept on the counter as much as possible. "You might want a small Lazy Susan with olive oil, salt, and pepper near the range, but I prefer to keep utensils in a nearby drawer—it's easy to load up the space with canisters otherwise," Lark says. And don't go crazy with wall-mounted knife racks and rail systems, she adds. "We tend to fill up any storage we have, and those systems can start to look very distracting very quickly."

## Storage Solutions That Work

All the pro organizers we spoke to mentioned the same clutter-busting tools. Here, their go-to keep-it-neat gear.



Racked baking sheets and trays slide out easily. **.Org Vertical Mesh Organizer Rack**, \$15. [bedbathandbeyond.com](http://bedbathandbeyond.com)



Keep cooking essentials accessible on a turntable by the cooktop. **Bamboo Lazy Susan**, \$10. [containerstore.com](http://containerstore.com)



Erasable labels are perfect for canisters and bins. **3M Scotch Chalkboard Label Tape**, \$8. [containerstore.com](http://containerstore.com)



Stackable, airtight canisters keep dry goods fresh and ready. **Steel 3-Piece POP Container Set**, \$50. [oxo.com](http://oxo.com)



Free up cabinets by hanging up pots and pans overhead. **Enclume Oval Pot Rack**, \$540. [williams-sonoma.com](http://williams-sonoma.com)





## DIY IDEAS

# Weekend Makeovers

Not ready to remodel? No problem: It's easy to give your kitchen a fresh new look with these five low-cost, high-impact DIY projects.

### 1. Make a Splash on the Backsplash

When it comes to making a strong style statement, the space between your counters and cabinets is prime kitchen real estate. This space is at eye level, where you can't help but notice a bold treatment, but is small enough that a bright color or strong pattern won't overwhelm (and will be easy to swap out later, if your tastes change). Here, glazed Moroccan-style tiles in rich blue and brown create an instant focal point.





## 2. Add Color in Unexpected Places

Walls, base cabinets, and islands are the usual candidates to transform with the power of paint, but they're not the only options. Consider giving your ceiling a color makeover, a trick that not only will introduce a decorative element to the space but also can draw the eye up, making the room look larger. Another idea: Paint just the recessed portion of upper cabinet doors.





### 3. Create a Cozy Dining Nook

When planning an eat-in area for your kitchen, don't stop at the table and seating. For an inviting, elegant dining space, include design accents like art—this is the perfect place for a mini-gallery wall—and attractive lighting. For practicality, choose easy-care indoor-outdoor upholstery for seating, or upholster a banquette in wipeable vinyl.





#### 4. Sneak in Storage Everywhere

In a space-challenged kitchen, it pays clutter-free dividends to get creative with storage. Floating shelves are a quick-to-install, versatile solution that fit in many otherwise wasted spaces, like the gap between a range hood and cabinets on either side, or in an empty corner between the cabinets and countertop. Here, a small shelf offers a stowaway zone for small serving pieces and a few pretty accents, adding both storage and style.



#### 5. Dress up the Windows

Love the modern look of industrial-style steel-framed windows but not their high price? Black paint in a satin finish will create the same high-contrast look for a fraction of the cost. Just be sure to use painter's tape around the edges of each pane to ensure straight, crisp lines, and use one of our top-rated paints (see page 126) for the best, longest-lasting results. If black isn't your cup of tea, go for a more subtle look with a soft gray, or try a bright hue—red! aqua!—for a fun and whimsical accent.





# BUYING GUIDE

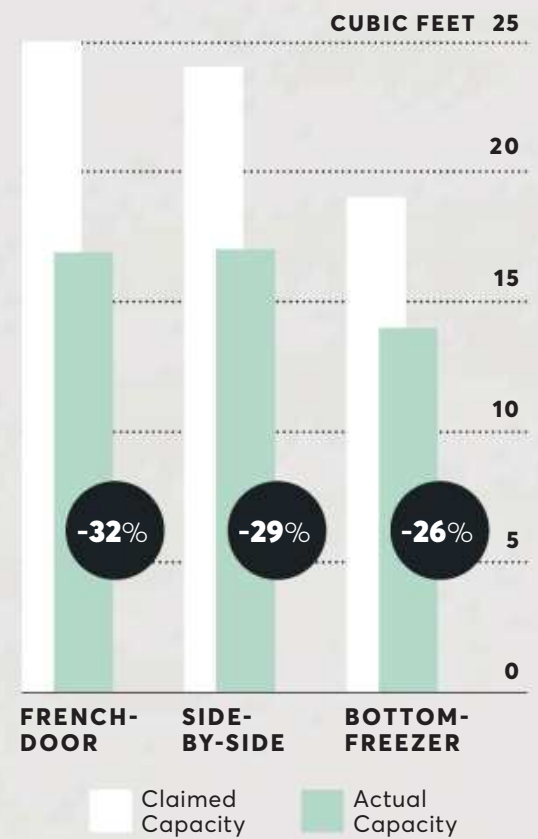






## How Much Space Does Your Fridge *Really* Have?

Some models may have as much as 32 percent less usable storage than the claimed capacity on their stickers. For real-world numbers, check for total usable capacity in our ratings.



**5.4**  
MILLION

The number of temperature readings we collect for every refrigerator in our tests to detect warm and cold spots, and determine which will keep your food fresh longer.

### REVIEWS & RATINGS

#### APPLIANCES

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## REFRIGERATORS

# Chilling Out

Flexible configurations, WiFi connectivity ... today's refrigerators offer more convenient options than ever. And they store more food and keep it fresher longer while using less energy.

Today's fridge features go far beyond simply providing a glass of ice water without having to open the door. With custom panels, you can get a built-in that matches your kitchen cabinets exactly. And forget four doors—some models have five. Our fridge-by-fridge guide helps you choose the right type for your family, demystifies claimed vs. usable storage space, and helps you find the quietest models so that you—and your groceries—can chill out.

## What to Consider

*Think about the size and type that will work best for you. Focus on interior storage features, too.*

### Style

There's a refrigerator configuration to suit every household. French-door models are exploding in popularity. Some consumers prefer the convenience of bottom-freezers, which put fresh food at eye level, but top-freezers and side-by-sides can make more efficient use of space in a smaller kitchen. Here's what you need to know to make the best choice.

### Size

Refrigerator configurations come in a range of sizes and capacities. Always measure where you plan to put the refrigerator before you shop. And check that any model you consider can fit through doorways. Allow room for the refrigerator's doors to swing open and for a 1-inch clearance around sides and back for adequate airflow.

### Capacity

Most manufacturers recommend 19 to 22 cubic feet for a refrigerator that serves a family of four. But if you do a big weekly shopping trip or buy in bulk, you may need more—up to 30 to 33 cubic feet. Our tests found that the amount of usable storage capacity was often less than the amount claimed. Check our refrigerator ratings for more.









## Focus on Features

Models at all prices are increasingly tricked out. French-door styles are usually the most loaded. Of course, you'll pay top dollar for some of those features. Here's a look at the ones we think add the most convenience.

### Through-the-Door Ice and Water Dispenser

This is one of the conveniences most requested by consumers. But buyer beware: Our surveys have found that this is the most problematic feature. Energy costs are higher, too, and you trade ice and water for storage space in the freezer.

### Door-in-Door Storage Access

Without opening the entire door, you can grab frequently used beverages and condiments. That can save on energy costs.

### Freshness Features

Dual evaporators help maintain higher humidity levels in the

refrigerated areas and prevent freezer odors from migrating there. Air purifiers eliminate bacteria and mold spores, and vacuum-sealed crisper drawers are claimed to keep food fresher longer.

### Temperature Controls

You decide how cold your fridge is in certain areas. For example,





LG

set a drawer to be cooler than the rest of the fridge to store meat, fish, and cold cuts better.

### Better Shelves and Drawers

You can rearrange split shelves to different heights independently and adjust doors to fit taller items. But if your door has deep storage bins meant for eggs, milk,

or butter, be aware that these items will stay fresher on internal shelves, where the temperatures are cooler. Elevator shelves crank up and down without needing to be unloaded. Shelf snuggers attach to racks to secure bottles and jars. Pullout shelves or bins make access to stored items easier.

## Decode the EnergyGuide Label

Energy efficiency has become a big selling point with consumers. All new refrigerators are a lot more efficient than they were a decade ago. Here's a look behind the label to help you go as green as possible.

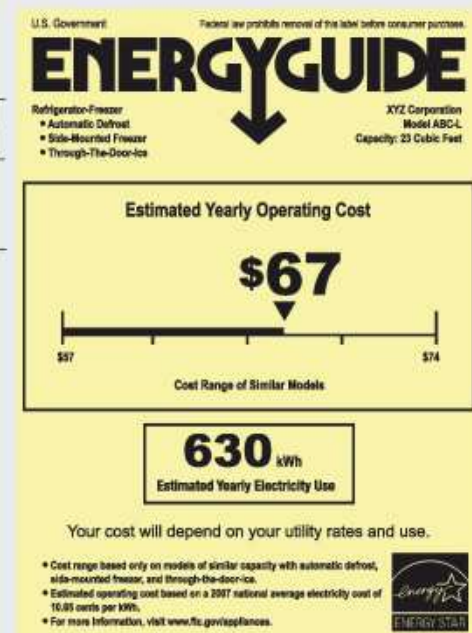
The Energy Star rating from the Environmental Protection Agency is a good place to start when shopping. It means that a product is in or near the top 25 percent of the market. But efficiency varies by model (i.e., an unlabeled top-freezer might be more efficient than an Energy Star certified French-door model). Additionally, we test for energy consumption, which can add up to a \$60 difference per year—more than \$500 over the life of the unit.

For an apples-to-apples comparison of which models are most efficient, look at the EnergyGuide labels of the refrigerators you're considering and compare the annual operating costs and the kilowatt-hours used per year.

We give all of the refrigerators we test an overall score for energy efficiency and list their estimated annual energy cost. You can check our refrigerator ratings for details.

Key features of the appliance and the similar models that make up the cost-comparison range.

Maker, model number, and size of the appliance.



Estimated yearly operating cost (based on the national average cost of electricity) and the range of operating costs for similar models.

Estimated yearly electricity consumption.

The ENERGY STAR® logo indicates that as model meets strict criteria for energy efficiency.



## On the Market

Here's a look at the different configurations you'll find. See our full refrigerator ratings to find out how models in the different sizes and styles below performed in our tests.



### Built-In

Pricey and made to fit almost flush with cabinets and counters, these sleek beauties come in bottom-freezer, side-by-side, and French-door styles. They're usually wide (30 to 48 inches) with a capacity of up to 27 cubic feet (of which only about 70 percent is usable). Look for optional front panels to match your kitchen cabinets. Or get the look for a little less with freestanding counter-depth versions. Another built-in option: An all-refrigerator column model, as narrow as 18 inches, to make the most of a kitchen nook.



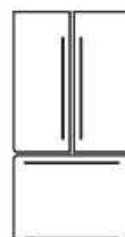
### Top-Freezer

A traditional refrigerator that's good for a lot of storage in a fairly tight spot. These tend to offer the most space for their size (widths vary from 28 to 33 inches). Manufacturers claim capacities of up to 23 cubic feet, but our tests have found that average usable capacity is about 17 percent less. Allow for a wide swing of the doors, and get used to crouching down to reach lower shelves and drawers.



### Bottom-Freezer

These range from 24 to 36 inches wide, and claimed capacities approach 30 cubic feet, though average usable space is less than that of comparable top-freezers (plus top-freezers cost less). Instead of the freezer (which you use less) being at eye level, the refrigerator shelves are easily scannable. Just get used to bending to rifle through frozen goods.



### French-Door

It has two narrow doors on top and a freezer below. Sometimes there is one drawer (or more) in-between. Widths range from 30 to 36 inches. Claimed capacities go up to 34 cubic feet, though the average usable space is much less, at about 17 cubic feet. The space-saving small-swing doors have the added value of letting you open only half of the fridge when stashing smaller items.



### Side-by-Side

The fridge is on one side and the freezer on the other, and these usually have through-the-door ice and water dispensers. Widths are typically 33 to 36 inches, and capacity is claimed to be up to 30 cubic feet (but only about 70 percent is usable). Narrow doors are a plus for small kitchens, but they don't open wide enough for, say, a pizza box. And tall, narrow compartments make items at the back hard to find. Overall, they're not as energy- or space-efficient as other types.



## Recommended Products

Most models we tested chill and freeze adequately and include pullout shelves or bins, split shelves, spill guards, and roomy storage on the door. Top-scoring models usually deliver more consistent temperatures. Once you know how much space you have, particularly the width, look at our recommended models to find ones that fit your needs. Fridges that have higher energy-efficiency scores use less electricity for their capacity. And if your household isn't large, remember that a smaller conventional refrigerator is likely to use less electricity overall than a larger model will.

### TOP-FREEZER



**79**  
OVERALL SCORE

**A1** LG LTCS20220S  
66Hx30Wx33D \$900

Excellent energy efficiency and noise performance and very good thermostat control lift this fridge to the top of our ratings. It also has good temperature uniformity. The trade-offs: poor crisper and ice-making performance. [lg.com](http://lg.com)



**78**  
OVERALL SCORE

**A2** LG LTCS24223S  
68Hx33Wx33D \$1,000

This model delivers excellent energy efficiency and noise performance and very good temperature performance. But ice-making is just fair and crisper performance is poor. [lg.com](http://lg.com)



**78**  
OVERALL SCORE

**A3** Frigidaire Gallery  
FGTR2037TF  
70Hx30Wx33D \$850

A top model in our ratings, this fridge is very good overall. It provides excellent thermostat control, temperature uniformity, and energy efficiency, and good noise performance. But it fared poorly in our ease-of-use tests. [frigidaire.com](http://frigidaire.com)

### BOTTOM-FREEZER



**90**  
OVERALL SCORE

**B1** LG LDCS24223S  
69Hx33Wx33D \$1,440

This model boasts 17.1 cubic feet of total usable capacity. It has excellent temperature performance, energy efficiency, and noise performance, as well as digital controls, spillproof shelves, and an open-door alarm. [lg.com](http://lg.com)



**89**  
OVERALL SCORE

**B2** Kenmore Elite 79043  
70Hx33Wx33D \$1,300

Superb temperature performance and exceptional energy efficiency and noise performance help this model, at 17.1 cubic feet (usable), earn a top spot on our recommended list. Other pluses include digital controls, spillproof shelves, and an open-door alarm. [kenmore.com](http://kenmore.com)



**89**  
OVERALL SCORE

**B3** Kenmore Elite 79023  
69Hx30Wx34D \$2,000

This refrigerator has excellent thermostat control, temperature uniformity, energy efficiency, and noise performance. Ice-making and crisper performance are both good. It has spillproof shelves, digital controls, and a door-open alarm. [kenmore.com](http://kenmore.com)



✓ Recommended Products

THREE-DOOR FRENCH-DOOR



**85**  
OVERALL SCORE

**C1** Kenmore Elite 74113  
69Hx36Wx36D \$3,000

This excellent all-around performer has 21.5 cubic feet of capacity (usable). Among the features are dual evaporators, an open-door alarm, spill-proof shelves, ice storage in the freezer, and digital controls.  
[kenmore.com](http://kenmore.com)



**84**  
OVERALL SCORE

**C2** Samsung RF28HDEDPWW  
69Hx36Wx34D \$2,200

An excellent all-around performer, this 20-cubic-foot model (usable capacity) has an external water dispenser, dual evaporators, ice storage in the fridge, and spill-proof shelves.  
[samsung.com](http://samsung.com)



**83**  
OVERALL SCORE

**C3** LG LFC24770ST  
69Hx33Wx33D \$1,710

**\$ CR BEST BUY**  
With 17.4 cubic feet of usable capacity, this excellent performer is fit for a family. Among its features are dual evaporators, an open-door alarm, spillproof shelves, and digital controls.  
[lg.com](http://lg.com)



**81**  
OVERALL SCORE

**C6** LG LFXS30766S  
69Hx36Wx34D \$2,600

It's quiet, energy-efficient, and temperature accurate. It offers 19.1 cubic feet of usable capacity, special adjustable shelves, split and pullout shelves, an ice and water dispenser, a temperature-controlled meat/deli bin, gallon storage on the door, and touchpad controls.  
[lg.com](http://lg.com)

FOUR-DOOR FRENCH-DOOR



**D11** LG Signature LUPXS3186N  
70Hx36Wx37D  
\$6,255  
[lg.com](http://lg.com)

**78**  
OVERALL SCORE

**From Our Experts**

*"This 36-inch-wide four-door French-door model has two doors for the fridge on top—one of which has a glass door-in-door—and two equally sized freezer compartments beneath. It also has a nifty feature: Waving your foot beneath the right freezer door will automatically open the right fridge door."*

—Joe Pacella, Project Leader



**80**  
OVERALL SCORE

**D1** Samsung RF22K9381SR  
72Hx36Wx29D \$3,000

This exceptionally quiet 36-inch-wide four-door French-door model delivers superb temperature control. It has 15.8 cubic feet of usable capacity, an external ice and water dispenser, digital controls, and many other convenient features.  
[samsung.com](http://samsung.com)







Ratings > Refrigerators

Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results					Features									
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Temperature uniformity	Thermostat control	Energy efficiency	Noise	Ease of use	Cabinet-depth model	Exterior height (in.)	Exterior width (in.)	Exterior depth (in.)	Total usable capacity (cu. ft.)	Energy cost/yr. (\$)	Stainless/SS-look option	Energy Star	Icemaker	Water dispenser
A TOP-FREEZER																					
✓	1	LG LTCS20220S	79	\$900	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓		66	30	33	16.7	61	•	•	•	
✓	2	LG LTCS24223S	78	\$1,000	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓		68	33	33	19.6	65	•	•	•	
✓	3	Frigidaire Gallery FGTR2037TF	78	\$850	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓		70	30	33	16.7	55	•		Opt.	
✓	4	Samsung RT21M6213SG	76	\$900	–	–	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓		68	33	32	20.2	51	•	•		
✓	5	Samsung RT21M6215SG	75	\$900	–	–	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓		68	33	32	20.2	62	•	•	•	
✓	6	Blomberg BRFT1522SS	75	\$1,100	–	–	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓		68	28	26	12	52	•	•	•	
✓	7	Samsung RT18M6215SG	75	\$750	–	–	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓		67	29	29	13.6	58	•	•	•	
✓	8	Frigidaire FFHT1832TS	74	\$840	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓		67	30	31	14.9	52	•		Opt.	
✓	9	Maytag MRT311FFFM	74	\$900	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓		66	33	31	17.5	56	•		Opt.	
✓	10	Whirlpool WRT549SZDM	72	\$720	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓		66	30	33	16	49	•		•	
Ⓢ	11	Frigidaire FFTR1821TD	72	\$600	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓		66	30	31	15.3	52	•		Opt.	
✓	12	Frigidaire Gallery FGTR1837TF	71	\$800	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓		66	30	31	15.2	47	•	•	Opt.	
	13	Frigidaire FFTR2021TS	70	\$600	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓		69	30	33	16.7	55	•		Opt.	
	14	Maytag MRT711BZDM	67	\$870	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓		66	33	32	18.1	57	•		Opt.	
	15	Whirlpool WRT511SZDM	67	\$900	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓		66	33	32	18.1	57	•		Opt.	
	16	GE GTS21FSKSS	66	\$700	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓		67	32	32	17.6	56	•		Opt.	
	17	Frigidaire FFHT1821TS	65	\$720	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓		64	30	30	14.2	47	•	•	Opt.	
	18	Kenmore 79433	64	\$1,350	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓		69	33	32	19.4	71	•	•	•	Int.
	19	GE GTE15CTHRWW	64	\$570	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓		62	28	30	11.6	43		•	Opt.	
	20	Kenmore 78032	63	\$1,235	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓		69	33	32	19.6	71	•	•	•	
	21	GE GTS18GSHSS	62	\$675	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓		68	28	29	13.4	51	•		Opt.	
	22	Kenmore 60412	61	\$450	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓		66	30	30	15.8	52	•		Opt.	
	23	Insignia NS-RTM21SS7	61	\$620	–	–	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓		67	33	34	18	51	•	•	•	
	24	GE GIE21GSHSS	60	\$1,260	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓		67	33	33	17.7	62	•	•	•	
	25	Haier HRT18RCWW	59	\$520	–	–	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓		66	30	33	15.1	53	•		Opt.	
	26	Whirlpool WRF532SMHZ	59	\$1,620	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓		69	33	32	15.2	59	•	•	•	
	27	Amana ART104TFDW	55	\$400	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓		63	28	30	12.4	48	•		Opt.	
	28	Summit Ingenious Series FF1935PLIM	54	\$1,500	–	–	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓		73	30	27	17.1	61			•	
	29	Whirlpool WRT106TFDW	54	\$565	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓		66	28	32	12.9	50			Opt.	
	30	Haier HT21TS85SP	54	\$720	–	–	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓		67	32	32	17.2	50	•	•	Opt.	
	31	Hotpoint HPE15BTHWW	53	\$520	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓		62	28	30	11.6	43		•	Opt.	
	32	Insignia NS-RTM18SS7	52	\$600	–	–	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓		67	30	32	15.1	47	•	•	•	
	33	Hotpoint HPS15BTHLWW	51	\$430	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓		62	28	30	11.6	48			Opt.	
	34	GE GAS18PSJSS	51	\$810	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓		67	28	31	13.3	51	•		Opt.	
	35	Whirlpool WRT519SZDM	51	\$765	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓		66	30	33	16	54	•		•	
	36	GE GTE18ISHSS	50	\$900	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓		67	30	33	13.9	48	•	•	•	
	37	Ikea Frostig IK8FXNGFDM [70288753]	49	\$700	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓		66	30	32	16.1	53	•		Opt.	



Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results					Features									
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Temperature uniformity	Thermostat control	Energy efficiency	Noise	Ease of use	Cabinet-depth model	Exterior height (in.)	Exterior width (in.)	Exterior depth (in.)	Total usable capacity (cu. ft.)	Energy cost/yr. (\$)	Stainless/SS-look option	Energy Star	Ice maker	Water dispenser
A TOP-FREEZER <i>Continued</i>																					
	38	GE GIE18GSHSS	49	\$790	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	67	28	31	13.9	57	•	•	•		
	39	Amana ART308FFDW	48	\$530	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	66	30	32	16.1	53	•		Opt.		
	40	Kenmore 60505	48	\$600	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	66	30	30	15.8	52	•		Opt.		
	41	Westinghouse WWTR1821QW	47	\$480	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	67	30	30	14.9	52	•		Opt.		
	42	Whirlpool WRT541SZDM	46	\$945	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	66	33	32	18.1	51	•	•	Opt.		
	43	GE GTE16GTHWW	46	\$630	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	65	28	30	11.9	44		•	Opt.		
	44	Whirlpool WRT318FMDM	42	\$800	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	66	30	33	15.1	64	•		•		
	45	GE GTS16GTHWW	41	\$580	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	65	28	30	11.9	49			Opt.		
	46	Kenmore 71212	41	\$650	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	67	33	29	17.8	61	•	•	•		
B BOTTOM-FREEZER																					
✓	1	LG LDCS24223S	90	\$1,440	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	69	33	33	17.1	61	•	•	•		
✓	2	Kenmore Elite 79043	89	\$1,300	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	70	33	33	17.1	61	•	•	•		
✓	3	Kenmore Elite 79023	89	\$2,000	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	69	30	34	15.8	60	•		•		
\$	4	Kenmore 69313	84	\$700	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	66	30	31	13.4	58	•		•		
✓	5	KitchenAid KRBR109ESS	76	\$1,530	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	67	30	31	12.1	61	•	•	•		
	6	Amana ABB2224BRM	74	\$1,200	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	69	33	31	15.3	59	•	•	•		
	7	KitchenAid KRBR102ESS	74	\$1,620	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	69	33	31	14.9	75	•	•	•		
	8	GE GDE25ESKSS	74	\$1,620	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	69	33	35	17.1	79	•	•	•		
	9	Amana ABB1924BRM	72	\$1,260	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	66	30	31	12.5	58	•	•	•		
	10	GE GDE21ESKSS	71	\$1,485	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	70	30	35	14.6	74	•	•	•		
	11	Whirlpool WRB329DMBM	67	\$1,260	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	67	30	31	12.1	61	•	•	•		
	12	Bosch B11CB50SSS	66	\$2,350	-	-	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	•	79	24	26	8.4	46	•	•	•	
	13	Haier HRB15N3BGS	65	\$900	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	•	68	28	24	11.9	55	•	•	•	
	14	Whirlpool WRB322DMBM	65	\$1,260	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	69	33	31	14.9	75	•	•	•		
	15	Fisher & Paykel Active-Smart RF170WDRUX5	64	\$2,000	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	•	68	32	28	13	69	•	•	•	Ext.
	16	Fisher & Paykel Active-Smart E522BRX5	64	\$1,800	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	•	67	32	29	13.4	59	•	•	•	
	17	Blomberg BRFB1822SSN	63	\$1,700	-	-	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	60	30	31	13.7	68	•	•	•		
	18	GE GDE20GSHSS	63	\$1,485	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	67	30	33	13.7	73	•	•	•		
	19	GE GLE12HSLSS	57	\$1,450	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	•	70	24	26	7.7	52	•	•	•	
	20	Whirlpool URB551WNGZ	55	\$1,705	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	•	74	24	27	8.4	51	•	•	•	
	21	Haier HBQ18JAD[W]	39	\$900	-	-	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	66	30	32	14.9	95		•	•		
	22	Blomberg BRFB1522SS	38	\$1,950	-	-	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	•	76	28	28	14.7	68	•	•	•	
	23	Summit FFBF287SSIM	37	\$1,800	-	-	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	•	76	28	27	14.5	68	•	•	•	
	24	Fisher & Paykel Active-Smart RF135BDRUX4	31	\$2,100	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	•	68	25	28	9.7	70	•	•	•	Ext.



Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results					Features									
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Temperature uniformity	Thermostat control	Energy efficiency	Noise	Ease of use	Cabinet-depth model	Exterior height (in.)	Exterior width (in.)	Exterior depth (in.)	Total usable capacity (cu. ft.)	Energy cost/yr. (\$)	Stainless/SS-look option	Energy Star	Icemaker	Water dispenser
C THREE-DOOR FRENCH-DOOR																					
✓	1	Kenmore Elite 74113	85	\$3,000	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	36	21.5	99	•	•	•	Ext.
✓	2	Samsung RF28HDEDPWW	84	\$2,200	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	20	89	•	•	•	Ext.
💰	3	LG LFC24770ST	83	\$1,710	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	33	33	17.4	78	•	•	•	
✓	4	Samsung RF28MFEDES8	83	\$2,800	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	19	81	•	•	•	Ext.
✓	5	Kenmore Elite 73153	81	\$2,200	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	19.5	95	•	•	•	Ext.
✓	6	LG LFXS30766S	81	\$2,600	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	19.1	101	•	•	•	Ext.
✓	7	LG LFXS32736D	81	\$3,410	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	35	21.5	94	•	•	•	Ext.
✓	8	Kenmore Elite 74033	80	\$2,600	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	19.1	96	•	•	•	Ext.
✓	9	Samsung RF28HFPDBSR	80	\$2,000	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	20	80	•	•	•	Ext.
	10	Kenmore 70333	79	\$1,700	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		69	36	32	16.3	97	•	•	•	Ext.
	11	Samsung RF26HFPNBSR	79	\$2,300	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑		69	36	33	18.3	80	•	•	•	Int.
	12	Kenmore Elite 73163	79	\$2,400	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	19.2	95	•	•	•	Ext.
	13	LG LFXS24566S	79	\$2,340	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		69	36	32	16.3	97	•	•	•	Ext.
	14	Samsung RF20HFENBSR	79	\$1,350	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		71	32	30	14.8	80	•	•	•	
	15	GE GNE29GSKSS	79	\$1,830	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		70	36	34	20.9	84	•	•	•	Ext.
	16	LG LFXC24726S	78	\$3,060	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	•	69	36	29	15	88	•	•	•	Ext.
	17	Kenmore 71323	78	\$1,700	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		68	30	33	15.3	76	•	•	•	Ext.
	18	LG LFXS29766S	78	\$2,400	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	35	19.6	95	•	•	•	Ext.
	19	Samsung RF265BEAESG	78	\$3,000	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		70	36	34	17.3	93	•	•	•	Ext.
	20	GE GFD28GSLSS	78	\$2,800	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑		70	36	33	19.8	103	•	•	•	Ext.
	21	Kenmore Elite 71313	77	\$1,400	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓		69	33	33	17.4	78	•	•	•	
	22	GE GFE28GSKSS	77	\$1,700	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		70	36	34	19.5	93	•	•	•	Ext.
	23	GE Cafe CYE22TSHSS	77	\$2,790	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	•	70	36	30	15.1	86	•	•	•	Ext.
	24	GE Profile PYE22PSKSS	77	\$2,970	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	•	70	36	30	15.1	86	•	•	•	Ext.
	25	GE GYE22HSKSS	77	\$2,610	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	•	70	36	30	15.1	86	•	•	•	Ext.
	26	LG LFCS22520S	77	\$995	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓		68	30	33	14.8	76	•	•	•	
	27	Kenmore Elite 73133	77	\$2,000	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		69	33	33	15.7	89	•	•	•	Ext.
	28	Samsung RF30HDEDTSR	77	\$3,800	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		69	36	35	20.9	97	•	•	•	Ext.
	29	LG LFXS28968S	76	\$2,000	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		70	36	34	19.4	94	•	•	•	Ext.
	30	Samsung RF28HFEDBSR	76	\$2,000	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		69	36	34	20	94	•	•	•	Ext.
	31	Frigidaire FFHB2740PS	76	\$2,100	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓		69	36	34	17.5	92	•	•	•	Ext.
	32	LG LFCS31626S	76	\$2,430	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	20.8	87	•	•	•	
	33	Kenmore 73115	76	\$2,400	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		70	36	34	19.3	102	•	•	•	
	34	GE GFE26GSKSS	76	\$1,980	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		70	36	35	17.1	91	•	•	•	Ext.
	35	LG LFXS24663S	75	\$2,200	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		70	36	32	16.7	89	•	•	•	Ext.



Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results					Features									
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Temperature uniformity	Thermostat control	Energy efficiency	Noise	Ease of use	Cabinet-depth model	Exterior height (in.)	Exterior width (in.)	Exterior depth (in.)	Total usable capacity (cu. ft.)	Energy cost/yr. (\$)	Stainless/SS-look option	Energy Star	Icemaker	Water dispenser
C THREE-DOOR FRENCH-DOOR <i>Continued</i>																					
	36	<b>Samsung</b> RF28HDEDBSR	75	\$2,200	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	20	93	•	•	•	Ext.
	37	<b>Samsung</b> RF26J7500SR	75	\$2,000	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		69	36	34	16.4	90	•	•	•	Ext.
	38	<b>LG</b> LFXS24623S	75	\$2,000	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		69	33	33	15.7	89	•	•	•	Ext.
	39	<b>LG</b> LFXS28566S	75	\$2,200	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑		70	36	34	19.2	93	•	•	•	Ext.
	40	<b>GE</b> Profile PFE28KSKSS	75	\$2,700	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	35	20.1	93	•	•	•	Ext.
	41	<b>LG</b> LFX21976[ST]	75	\$2,700	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	•	70	36	28	13.5	82	•	•	•	Ext.
	42	<b>GE</b> Profile PWE23KMKES	74	\$2,340	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	•	69	36	29	16	77	•	•	•	Int.
	43	<b>Samsung</b> RF261BEAE[SR]	74	\$1,350	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑		69	36	35	18.6	80	•	•	•	Int.
	44	<b>Samsung</b> RF263BEAE[SR]	74	\$1,700	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	35	17.1	82	•	•	•	Ext.
	45	<b>LG</b> LFXS27466S	74	\$1,700	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		70	36	33	19.2	92	•	•	•	Ext.
	46	<b>LG</b> LFCS25426D	74	\$1,900	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓		69	36	32	17.6	80	•	•	•	
	47	<b>KitchenAid</b> KRFC704FBS	74	\$3,870	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	•	71	36	29	15.3	95	•		•	Ext.
	48	<b>Kenmore</b> Elite 74023	73	\$2,200	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	19.5	96	•	•	•	Ext.
	49	<b>Kenmore</b> 70343	73	\$1,300	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑		69	36	34	18.2	92	•	•	•	Ext.
	50	<b>LG</b> LFX25974ST	73	\$1,700	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		69	36	32	16.2	97	•	•	•	Ext.
	51	<b>KitchenAid</b> KRFF302ESS	72	\$1,620	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓		69	33	32	15.2	59	•	•	•	
	52	<b>KitchenAid</b> KRFF300ESS	72	\$1,710	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓		69	33	32	15.2	59	•	•	•	
	53	<b>GE</b> GNE21FSKSS	72	\$1,525	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓		70	30	35	13.7	74	•	•	•	
	54	<b>GE</b> GNE25JSKSS	72	\$1,300	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓		69	33	35	16.4	79	•	•	•	Int.
	55	<b>Samsung</b> RF220NCTASR	72	\$1,500	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓		67	30	34	16	81	•		•	
	56	<b>LG</b> LFXS30726S	72	\$2,400	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	19.5	96	•	•	•	Ext.
	57	<b>KitchenAid</b> KRFC302ESS	71	\$2,970	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	•	73	36	28	14.3	82	•		•	Int.
	58	<b>GE</b> Cafe CFE28TSHSS	71	\$2,790	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		70	36	35	15.1	94	•	•	•	Ext.
	59	<b>GE</b> GFE24JSKSS	71	\$1,800	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓		70	33	36	15.2	88	•	•	•	Ext.
	60	<b>KitchenAid</b> KRFF507ESS	71	\$2,600	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		69	36	34	18.3	100	•		•	Ext.
	61	<b>GE</b> Profile PYD22KSLSS	71	\$3,300	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	•	70	36	28	19.4	94	•		•	Ext.
	62	<b>Kenmore</b> Elite 75053	70	\$2,800	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		69	36	33	14.1	88	•	•	•	Ext.
	63	<b>Kenmore</b> 70443	70	\$1,700	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	•	69	36	29	14.7	85	•	•	•	Ext.
	64	<b>Samsung</b> RF18HFENBSR	70	\$1,250	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	•	71	33	29	13	77	•		•	
	65	<b>Maytag</b> MFC2062FEZ	70	\$2,100	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	•	69	36	28	13.6	73	•	•	•	Int.
	66	<b>LG</b> LFXC24796D	69	\$2,900	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	•	70	36	29	14.5	92	•	•	•	Ext.
	67	<b>GE</b> Cafe CYE22USHSS	68	\$2,970	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	•	70	36	30	15.1	86	•	•	•	Ext.
	68	<b>Amana</b> AFI2539ERM	68	\$1,710	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓		69	36	33	15.9	97	•		•	Ext.
	69	<b>KitchenAid</b> KFIV29PCMS	68	\$3,195	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑		70	36	34	17.6	68	•	•	•	Ext.
	70	<b>Maytag</b> MFI2570FEZ	67	\$1,980	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓		70	36	33	15.9	88	•	•	•	Ext.
	71	<b>Maytag</b> MFF2558FEZ	65	\$1,800	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓		69	36	33	17.1	79	•	•	•	
	72	<b>Maytag</b> MFT2776FEZ	65	\$2,800	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑		70	36	33	18.3	91	•	•	•	Ext.



Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results					Features									
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Temperature uniformity	Thermostat control	Energy efficiency	Noise	Ease of use	Cabinet-depth model	Exterior height (in.)	Exterior width (in.)	Exterior depth (in.)	Total usable capacity (cu. ft.)	Energy cost/yr. (\$)	Stainless/SS-look option	Energy Star	Icemaker	Water dispenser
C THREE-DOOR FRENCH-DOOR <i>Continued</i>																					
	73	Ikea Nutid IX6HHEXDS [80288757]	65	\$1,800	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	•	69	36	28	13.6	73	•	•	•	Ext.
	74	KitchenAid KRFF305ESS	64	\$1,800	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	•	69	36	33	17.4	79	•	•	•	Int.
	75	GE GWE19JSLSS	64	\$1,700	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	•	70	33	28	12.2	71	•	•	•	
	76	Ikea Nutid IX7DDEXDS [10292258]	63	\$1,900	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	•	69	36	34	16.4	88	•	•	•	Ext.
	77	LG LFC28768ST	63	\$1,890	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	•	69	36	33	20.1	83	•	•	•	
	78	Whirlpool WRF995FIFZ	61	\$3,420	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	•	70	36	37	21.6	97	•	•	•	Ext.
	79	Haier HRF24E3APS	61	\$1,800	–	–	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	•	69	36	34	16.9	88	•	•	•	Ext.
	80	Samsung RF23HCEDBSR	60	\$2,500	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	•	69	36	29	16	90	•	•	•	Ext.
	81	Dacor Distinctive DTF36FCS	60	\$3,050	–	–	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	•	70	36	30	14.3	71	•	•	•	Int.
	82	Beko BFFD3622SS	60	\$2,500	–	–	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	•	70	36	30	14.3	71	•	•	•	Int.
	83	Whirlpool WRF954CIHM	60	\$3,330	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	•	70	36	29	15.4	87	•	•	•	Ext.
	84	Whirlpool WRF540CWHZ	59	\$1,890	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	•	69	36	28	13.6	73	•	•	•	Int.
	85	Blomberg BRFD2230SS	58	\$2,600	–	–	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	•	70	36	30	14.3	71	•	•	•	Int.
	86	Whirlpool WRF540CWBM	58	\$1,100	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	•	69	36	28	13.6	73	•	•	•	Int.
	87	Kenmore 73105	58	\$2,100	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	•	70	36	34	19.1	102	•	•	•	Ext.
	88	Ikea Nutid IX7HHEXDS [40288759]	58	\$1,500	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	•	69	36	33	17.4	79	•	•	•	
	89	Whirlpool WRF736SDAM	57	\$1,980	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	•	69	36	34	16.4	88	•	•	•	Ext.
	90	Whirlpool WRF555SDFZ	56	\$1,400	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	•	70	36	33	15.9	88	•	•	•	Ext.
	91	DCS RF201ACUSX1	54	\$3,000	–	–	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	•	70	36	24	13.5	69	•	•	•	Ext.
	92	Whirlpool WRF560SEYM	53	\$1,620	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	•	68	30	33	13.3	72	•	•	•	Ext.
	93	Whirlpool WRF560SMHZ	53	\$1,440	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	•	68	30	33	13.3	72	•	•	•	Ext.
	94	Frigidaire Gallery FGHN2868TF	53	\$2,020	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	•	70	36	34	19.6	83	•	•	•	
	95	Whirlpool WRF535SMHZ	52	\$1,700	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	•	69	36	33	17.4	79	•	•	•	Int.
	96	Whirlpool WRF767SDEM	52	\$2,000	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	•	69	36	34	17.4	91	•	•	•	Ext.
	97	Whirlpool WRF757SDEM	52	\$1,900	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	•	69	36	34	17.4	91	•	•	•	Ext.
	98	GE GYE18JBLTS	52	\$2,340	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	•	70	33	28	11.2	79	•	•	•	Ext.
	99	Frigidaire Gallery FGHB2868TF	51	\$2,205	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	•	70	36	34	18	92	•	•	•	Ext.
	100	Frigidaire Gallery FGHB2866PF	50	\$1,900	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	•	70	36	34	18.6	92	•	•	•	Ext.
	101	Frigidaire Gallery FGHG2368TF	49	\$2,550	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	•	70	36	29	15.5	76	•	•	•	
	102	Frigidaire FFHN2740PS	49	\$1,665	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	•	70	36	34	19.1	83	•	•	•	
	103	Bosch 800 Series B26FT50SNS	48	\$2,515	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	•	70	36	34	17.3	89	•	•	•	Ext.
	104	Bosch 800 Series B21CT80SNS	48	\$2,700	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	•	70	36	29	13.4	80	•	•	•	
	105	Frigidaire Gallery FGHG2366PF	48	\$2,205	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	•	70	36	29	15.3	76	•	•	•	
	106	Frigidaire Professional FPBS2777RF	47	\$2,700	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	•	70	36	32	18.2	101	•	•	•	Ext.



Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results					Features							
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Temperature uniformity	Thermostat control	Energy efficiency	Noise	Ease of use	Cabinet-depth model	Exterior height (in.)	Exterior width (in.)	Exterior depth (in.)	Total usable capacity (cu. ft.)	Energy cost/yr. (\$)	Stainless/SS-look option	Energy Star

C THREE-DOOR FRENCH-DOOR *Continued*

107	<b>Frigidaire</b> Gallery FGHD2368TF	47	\$2,750								•	70	36	29	13.9	85	•	•	•	Ext.
108	<b>Frigidaire</b> Gallery FGHN2866PF	45	\$1,935								•	69	36	31	19.5	83	•	•	•	
109	<b>Frigidaire</b> Professional FPBG2277RF	45	\$2,560								•	70	36	29	16	83	•	•	•	
110	<b>Frigidaire</b> Gallery FGHF2366PF	45	\$1,900								•	70	36	29	13.9	85	•	•	•	Ext.
111	<b>Electrolux</b> IQ-Touch EI23BC82SS	42	\$3,400								•	70	36	29	15.9	83	•	•	•	
112	<b>Fisher &amp; Paykel</b> Active-Smart RF170ADUSX4	42	\$2,400								•	68	32	28	12.6	75	•	•	•	Ext.
113	<b>Electrolux</b> IQ-Touch EI23BC32SS	41	\$2,495								•	70	36	29	15.9	85	•	•	•	
114	<b>Electrolux</b> Wave-Touch EW28BS85K[S]	40	\$2,835								•	69	36	34	18.1	94	•	•	•	Ext.
115	<b>Frigidaire</b> Professional FPBC2277RF	40	\$2,970								•	70	36	29	14.4	93	•	•	•	Ext.
116	<b>Electrolux</b> Wave-Touch EW23BC87SS	39	\$3,830								•	69	36	29	14.3	93	•	•	•	Ext.
117	<b>Electrolux</b> Wave-Touch EW28BS87SS	39	\$3,060								•	70	36	34	18.9	101	•	•	•	Ext.
118	<b>Smeg</b> FTU171X7	38	\$3,000	–	–						•	70	36	33	16.9	88	•	•	•	Ext.
119	<b>Maytag</b> MFF2258FEZ	37	\$1,800								•	69	33	32	15.5	75	•	•	•	
120	<b>Electrolux</b> IQ-Touch EI23BC37SS	37	\$2,925								•	70	36	29	14.3	83	•	•	•	Ext.
121	<b>Whirlpool</b> WRF550CDHZ	35	\$3,200								•	70	36	28	11.6	89	•	•	•	Ext.
122	<b>Fisher &amp; Paykel</b> Active-Smart RF201ADUSX5	34	\$2,600								•	71	36	28	14.4	69	•	•	•	Ext.

D FOUR-DOOR (OR MORE) FRENCH-DOOR

	1	<b>Kenmore</b> Elite 72483	81	\$2,600							•	69	36	36	21.1	96	•	•	•	Ext.
	2	<b>Samsung</b> RF23M8070SR	80	\$3,550							•	70	36	29	14.5	82	•	•	•	Ext.
	3	<b>Samsung</b> RF22K9381SR	80	\$3,000							•	72	36	29	15.8	91	•	•	•	Ext.
	4	<b>Samsung</b> RF28NHEDBSG	79	\$3,600							•	70	36	34	12.7	96	•	•	•	Ext.
	5	<b>Samsung</b> RF23M8570SG	79	\$3,300							•	70	36	29	14.3	85	•	•	•	Ext.
	6	<b>LG</b> LMXS30746S	79	\$3,240							•	69	36	36	21.1	96	•	•	•	Ext.
	7	<b>Samsung</b> RF28K9070SR	79	\$2,600							•	71	36	35	20.4	101	•	•	•	Ext.
	8	<b>LG</b> LNXS30866D	79	\$2,900							•	69	36	37	21.7	99	•	•	•	Ext.
	9	<b>LG</b> LMXS30796D	79	\$3,000							•	71	36	36	19.4	100	•	•	•	Ext.
	10	<b>Samsung</b> RF28N9780SR	78	\$3,400							•	72	36	34	13.9	100	•	•	•	Ext.
	11	<b>LG</b> Signature LUPXS3186N	78	\$6,255							•	70	36	37	21.8	104	•	•	•	Ext.
	12	<b>Samsung</b> RF28JBEDBSR	78	\$2,685							•	70	36	34	16.8	93	•	•	•	Ext.
	13	<b>LG</b> LMXS30786S	77	\$3,330							•	69	36	36	20.1	89	•	•	•	Ext.
	14	<b>Samsung</b> RF22NPEDBSR	77	\$3,600							•	70	36	29	15	88	•	•	•	Ext.
	15	<b>Samsung</b> RF31FMESBSR	77	\$3,795							•	69	36	36	19	87	•	•	•	Ext.
	16	<b>Dacor</b> DRF36C100SR	77	\$4,590	–	–					•	69	36	31	14.3	71	•	•	•	Ext.
	17	<b>Samsung</b> RF22KREDBSR	77	\$2,900							•	70	36	29	14.9	86	•	•	•	Ext.



Ratings > Refrigerators

Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results					Features									
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Temperature uniformity	Thermostat control	Energy efficiency	Noise	Ease of use	Cabinet-depth model	Exterior height (in.)	Exterior width (in.)	Exterior depth (in.)	Total usable capacity (cu. ft.)	Energy cost/yr. (\$)	Stainless/SS-look option	Energy Star	Ice maker	Water dispenser
D FOUR-DOOR (OR MORE) FRENCH-DOOR <i>Continued</i>																					
	18	Samsung RF30KMEDBSR	77	\$2,195	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		70	36	36	20	95	●	●	●	Ext.
	19	Samsung RF23J9011SR	77	\$2,700	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	●	72	36	29	16.1	88	●	●	●	Ext.
	20	Samsung RF28HMELBSR	77	\$1,930	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	●	69	36	29	15.1	86	●	●	●	Ext.
	21	Kenmore 72595	77	\$2,300	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		70	36	34	13.4	102	●		●	Ext.
	22	Samsung RF25HMEDBSR	76	\$2,600	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		69	33	34	16.6	89	●	●	●	Ext.
	23	Samsung RF28HMEDBSR	76	\$2,300	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	18.8	93	●	●	●	Ext.
	24	Kenmore 72493	76	\$2,000	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		69	36	33	17.1	92	●	●	●	Ext.
	25	LG LMXS28626S	76	\$2,000	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		70	36	34	18.1	93	●	●	●	Ext.
	26	LG LMXC23746S	74	\$3,900	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	●	71	36	29	14.7	86	●	●	●	Ext.
	27	Samsung Family Hub RF28K9580SR	74	\$5,040	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		72	36	35	19	100	●	●	●	Ext.
	28	LG LNXC23766D	74	\$2,900	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	●	71	36	29	13.9	91	●	●	●	Ext.
	29	LG Signature LUPXC2386N	74	\$7,650	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	●	70	36	30	15.5	92	●	●	●	Ext.
	30	Maytag MFX2676FRZ	73	\$2,805	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		69	36	34	17.5	100	●		●	Ext.
	31	LG LMXC23796D	73	\$3,000	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	●	69	36	30	14.8	76	●	●	●	Ext.
	32	LG LMXS27626S	73	\$2,000	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		69	36	33	17.6	92	●	●	●	Ext.
	33	Whirlpool Gold GZ25FSRXY[Y]	72	\$2,250	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓		69	36	34	17	82	●	●	●	Ext.
	34	Samsung RF30HBEDBSR	71	\$2,995	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	36	20.5	95	●	●	●	Ext.
	35	Whirlpool WRV986FDEM	71	\$2,890	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		70	36	34	17.1	109	●		●	Ext.
	36	KitchenAid KRMF706EBS	70	\$3,275	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑		70	36	34	17.1	99	●		●	Ext.
	37	Frigidaire FFBN1721TV	70	\$990	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	●	70	33	30	13.9	65	●			
	38	Fulgor Milano FM36CDFDS1	69	\$2,500	—	—	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	●	70	36	29	14.3	80	●		●	
	39	Bertazzoni Professional Series REF36X	68	\$2,850	—	—	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	●	70	36	29	14.2	80	●		●	
	40	Samsung RF24FSEDBSR	68	\$2,400	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	●	69	36	28	14.3	86	●	●	●	Ext.
	41	Haier HRQ16N3BGS	61	\$1,170	—	—	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	●	71	33	27	12.5	58	●	●		
	42	Blomberg BRFD2650SSN	59	\$2,700	—	—	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓		73	36	34	17.5	88	●	●	●	Ext.
	43	Whirlpool WRX986SIHZ	57	\$2,400	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	17.9	73	●	●	●	Ext.
	44	Haier HRF15N3AGS	56	\$775	—	—	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	●	71	28	27	11.2	63	●		●	
	45	Whirlpool WRX735SDHZ	55	\$1,700	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓		70	36	32	16	88	●	●	●	Ext.
	46	Bosch 800 Series B21CL81SNS	47	\$2,610	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	●	70	36	29	14.3	80	●		●	
	47	Bosch 800 Series B21CL80SNS	46	\$2,800	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	●	70	36	29	13.8	80	●		●	
	48	Blomberg BRFD2652SS	40	\$2,500	—	—	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑		73	36	34	17.6	70	●	●	●	Ext.
E SIDE-BY-SIDE																					
✓	1	Kenmore 51763	73	\$1,300	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	18.7	79	●	●	●	Ext.
Ⓢ	2	Kenmore 51783	73	\$1,200	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	●	69	36	29	14.6	84	●		●	Ext.
	3	LG LSXS26366S	71	\$1,500	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	20.7	92	●		●	Ext.



Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results					Features									
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Temperature uniformity	Thermostat control	Energy efficiency	Noise	Ease of use	Cabinet-depth model	Exterior height (in.)	Exterior width (in.)	Exterior depth (in.)	Total usable capacity (cu. ft.)	Energy cost/yr. (\$)	Stainless/SS-look option	Energy Star	Icemaker	Water dispenser
E SIDE-BY-SIDE <i>Continued</i>																					
	4	Whirlpool WRS586FIEM	71	\$1,530	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	33	18.9	83	•	•	•	Ext.
	5	Whirlpool WRS588FIHZ	70	\$1,300	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	33	20.5	96	•		•	Ext.
	6	Kenmore Elite 51773	69	\$1,600	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	21.8	95	•		•	Ext.
	7	Electrolux EI26SS30J[S]	69	\$1,710	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		70	36	34	16.1	96	•	NA	•	Ext.
	8	LG LSXS26326S	69	\$1,300	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	20.6	92	•		•	Ext.
	9	Whirlpool WRS571CIDM	68	\$1,200	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	•	69	36	28	14.6	84	•		•	Ext.
	10	LG LSXC22386S	68	\$1,980	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	•	70	36	30	16.2	78	•	•	•	Ext.
	11	LG LSXC22486S	68	\$1,700	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	•	70	36	30	16.2	78	•	•	•	Ext.
	12	Frigidaire FFSS2625TS	68	\$1,010	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑		70	36	32	17.4	91	•		•	Ext.
	13	Kenmore Elite 51823	67	\$1,400	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑		66	33	32	17.1	78	•	•	•	Ext.
	14	Frigidaire FGSS2635TF	67	\$1,000	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑		70	36	34	18.5	91	•		•	•
	15	Amana ASI2275FRS	67	\$900	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓		69	33	33	13.3	85	•		•	Ext.
	16	Kenmore 51335	66	\$1,100	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓		70	36	32	10.8	90	•		•	Ext.
	17	Amana ASI2575FRS	66	\$990	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓		69	36	33	15.8	90	•		•	Ext.
	18	Bosch 300 Series B20CS30SNS	66	\$1,975	—	—	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	•	70	36	28	14.5	76	•	•	•	•
	19	Frigidaire FFSS2325TS	66	\$1,115	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑		70	33	32	15.5	87	•		•	Ext.
	20	KitchenAid KRSF505ESS	65	\$2,250	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	18.7	79	•	•	•	Ext.
	21	Whirlpool WRS321SDHZ	65	\$1,170	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓		67	33	32	12.7	85	•		•	Ext.
	22	Whirlpool WRS325FDAM	65	\$1,000	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓		69	36	33	15.1	90	•	•	•	Ext.
	23	Frigidaire FFHS2622MW	65	\$945	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓		70	36	32	17.9	91	•		•	Ext.
	24	Whirlpool WRS325SDHZ	65	\$1,000	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓		69	36	33	15.1	90	•	•	•	Ext.
	25	Kenmore 51115	64	\$1,600	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓		69	36	33	15.1	90	•	•	•	Ext.
	26	Frigidaire FGSC2335TF	64	\$1,200	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	•	70	36	29	16	125	•		•	•
	27	GE Profile PSS28KSHSS	62	\$1,980	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		70	36	33	17	95	•		•	Ext.
	28	Maytag MSS26C6MFZ	62	\$1,495	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	33	18.6	91	•		•	Ext.
	29	Samsung RS25H5121SR	62	\$950	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	18.6	82	•	•	•	Ext.
	30	Frigidaire Gallery FGHS2355PF	62	\$1,350	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑		69	33	34	15.4	82	•	•	•	Ext.
	31	Whirlpool WRS555SIHZ	62	\$1,350	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓		70	36	32	17.7	90	•		•	Ext.
	32	Whirlpool WRS331SDHM	61	\$1,170	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓		67	33	32	13.7	78	•	•	•	•
	33	Frigidaire FFHS2322MW	61	\$900	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓		70	33	32	15.7	87	•		•	Ext.
	34	Amana ASD2575BRS	61	\$1,100	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓		69	36	32	15.8	90	•	•	•	Ext.
	35	LG LSXS26386S	61	\$1,600	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑		70	36	34	20.3	84	•	•	•	Ext.
	36	Frigidaire FFSC2323LS	60	\$1,710	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	•	70	36	28	15.3	87	•		•	Ext.
	37	Samsung RH25H5611SR	60	\$1,500	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑		70	36	35	19	83	•	•	•	Ext.
	38	Whirlpool WRS576FIDM	60	\$1,350	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑		69	36	34	18.9	91	•		•	Ext.
	39	Samsung RS25J500DSR	60	\$1,000	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		69	36	34	18.5	90	•		•	Ext.
	40	Maytag MSC21C6MFZ	60	\$1,440	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	•	69	36	28	14.1	84	•		•	Ext.



Ratings > Refrigerators

Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results					Features									
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Temperature uniformity	Thermostat control	Energy efficiency	Noise	Ease of use	Cabinet-depth model	Exterior height (in.)	Exterior width (in.)	Exterior depth (in.)	Total usable capacity (cu. ft.)	Energy cost/yr. (\$)	Stainless/SS-look option	Energy Star	Ice maker	Water dispenser
E SIDE-BY-SIDE <i>Continued</i>																					
	41	<b>KitchenAid</b> KSF22C4CYY	59	\$1,700	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓		66	33	33	13.4	65	●	●	●	Ext.
	42	<b>GE</b> Profile PSE25KSHSS	59	\$1,800	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑		70	36	33	16.1	83	●	●	●	Ext.
	43	<b>GE</b> GSS23HSHSS	59	\$1,650	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑		70	33	33	15.2	87	●	●	●	Ext.
	44	<b>GE</b> GSE25ESHSS	58	\$1,260	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓		70	36	32	16.5	83	●	●	●	Ext.
	45	<b>Frigidaire</b> FFSS2314QS	58	\$990	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓		69	33	33	15	71	●	●	●	Ext.
	46	<b>GE</b> Profile PZS22MSKSS	58	\$2,765	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	●	70	36	29	13.8	86	●	●	●	Ext.
	47	<b>Samsung</b> RS22HDHPNSR	57	\$1,900	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	●	69	36	28	19.5	83	●	●	●	Ext.
	48	<b>Kenmore</b> 41173	57	\$800	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓		70	36	32	17.5	74	●	●	●	Opt.
	49	<b>Amana</b> ASI2175GRS	57	\$1,030	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓		70	36	32	16.4	91	●	●	●	Ext.
	50	<b>Whirlpool</b> WRS315SNHM	57	\$1,080	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓		70	36	32	17.5	74	●	●	●	Opt.
	51	<b>Amana</b> ASD2275BRS	56	\$1,200	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓		66	33	33	13.1	85	●	●	●	Ext.
	52	<b>Whirlpool</b> WRS315SDHM	56	\$1,080	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓		70	36	32	16.4	91	●	●	●	Ext.
	53	<b>GE</b> GSS25GSHSS	55	\$1,000	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑		70	36	33	16.3	91	●	●	●	Ext.
	54	<b>Beko</b> BFSB3622SS	55	\$1,900	—	—	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	●	72	36	29	14.8	75	●	●	●	Ext.
	55	<b>Blomberg</b> BSBS2230SS	55	\$2,000	—	—	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	●	72	36	29	14.8	75	●	●	●	Ext.
	56	<b>Samsung</b> RH22H9010SR	54	\$2,000	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	●	69	36	28	15.3	82	●	●	●	Ext.
	57	<b>Whirlpool</b> WRS335FDDM	53	\$1,255	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓		69	36	33	15.4	83	●	●	●	Ext.
	58	<b>Hotpoint</b> HSS25ATHWW	53	\$1,000	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓		69	36	33	14.5	91	●	●	●	Ext.
	59	<b>Samsung</b> RS25H5000SR	51	\$1,000	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	●	69	36	29	18	90	●	●	●	Ext.
	60	<b>GE</b> GSE23GSKSS	49	\$1,440	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑		69	33	33	14.1	79	●	●	●	Ext.
	61	<b>Amana</b> ASI2575GRS	48	\$900	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓		70	36	32	16.8	91	●	●	●	●
	62	<b>GE</b> GZS22DSJSS	47	\$2,070	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	●	70	36	27	14	86	●	●	●	Ext.
	63	<b>Kenmore</b> 50023	47	\$900	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓		69	36	33	15.7	90	●	●	●	Ext.
	64	<b>Samsung</b> RH29H9000SR	47	\$2,000	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑		69	36	36	21.2	91	●	●	●	Ext.
	65	<b>Kenmore</b> 51123	45	\$950	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓		69	36	33	15.5	90	●	●	●	Ext.
F BUILT-IN																					
✓	1	<b>Miele</b> MasterCool KF1903SF	83	\$8,600	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	●	83	36	25	14.1	74	●	●	●	
✓	2	<b>Dacor</b> Modernist DRF427500AP	81	\$9,450	—	—	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	●	85	42	25	16.6	81	●	●	●	
✓	3	<b>Thermador</b> Freedom Collection T36BB820SS	80	\$7,400	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	●	84	36	25	14.3	86	●	●	●	
✓	4	<b>Bosch</b> Integra 800 Series B36BT830NS	80	\$7,500	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	●	84	36	25	13.8	80	●	●	●	
✓	5	<b>LG</b> LSSB2791[ST]	78	\$8,500	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	●	84	42	26	17.0	97	●	●	●	Ext.
✓	6	<b>Dacor</b> Modernist DRF367500AP	78	\$8,150	—	—	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	●	84	36	24	14.6	71	●	●	●	Int.
	7	<b>Sub-Zero</b> BI-42UFD/S	76	\$9,800	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	●	83	42	26	17.4	89	●	●	●	
	8	<b>Sub-Zero</b> BI36UFDS	76	\$9,900	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	●	84	36	25	14.8	84	●	●	●	
	9	<b>Jenn-Air</b> JF42NXFXDE	75	\$8,500	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	●	83	42	26	17.0	82	●	●	●	
	10	<b>Sub-Zero</b> IT36CI	75	\$7,600	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	●	83	36	25	15.1	77	●	●	●	



Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results					Features									
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Temperature uniformity	Thermostat control	Energy efficiency	Noise	Ease of use	Cabinet-depth model	Exterior height (in.)	Exterior width (in.)	Exterior depth (in.)	Total usable capacity (cu. ft.)	Energy cost/yr. (\$)	Stainless/SS-look option	Energy Star	Icemaker	Water dispenser
F BUILT-IN <i>Continued</i>																					
	11	Jenn-Air JB36NFXRE	74	\$7,400										83	36	26	14.9	77			
	12	Sub-Zero BI42SIDS/PH	74	\$9,800										84	42	26	16.4	96			Int.
	13	Miele PerfectCool KFN9955IDE	73	\$6,500										80	36	24	13.6	72			
	14	Samsung RS27FDBTNSR	72	\$6,570										84	48	26	20.3	109			Ext.
	15	Dacor Discovery DYF36BFTSR	71	\$8,000	—	—								84	36	26	15.8	74			
	16	Miele KFN9855IDE	71	\$5,000										80	36	25	13.7	55			
	17	Jenn-Air JF36NFXDE	69	\$8,000										83	36	26	14.5	85			
	18	Thermador Freedom Collection T30BB820SS	69	\$7,000										84	30	25	12.2	78			
	19	Bosch Integra B30BB830SS	69	\$6,500										84	30	25	12.2	78			
	20	GE Monogram ZICP36ONHRH	68	\$7,100										84	36	26	14.5	78			
	21	GE Monogram ZIPP36ONHSS	68	\$8,500										84	36	26	14.0	85			
	22	KitchenAid KBFN502ESS	63	\$9,000										83	42	26	17.0	82			
	23	KitchenAid KBBR306ESS	62	\$8,200										83	36	26	14.9	77			
	24	DCS RS36W80JC	61	\$6,050	—	—								80	36	24	12.1	69			
	25	Fisher & Paykel RS36W80J	61	\$5,300	—	—								80	36	24	12.1	69			
	26	KitchenAid KBFN406ESS	61	\$8,500										83	36	26	14.5	85			
	27	DCS RS36A80UC1	59	\$5,500	—	—								80	36	24	11.7	72			Ext.
	28	Fisher & Paykel Active Smart RS36A80U1	59	\$5,400	—	—								80	36	24	11.7	72			Ext.
	29	GE Monogram ZIC30GNZII	57	\$7,050										80	30	24	11.5	69			
	30	Liebherr CS2060	49	\$5,100										80	36	25	13.7	69			
	31	Liebherr CBS2062	48	\$6,400										80	36	25	13.9	68			
	32	Liebherr CS2062	45	\$5,300										81	36	25	13.7	69			
	33	Viking VCBB5363ERSS	45	\$9,050										83	35	24	15.3	78			
	34	Viking VCSB5423SS	45	\$10,160										83	42	26	18.3	91			
	35	Liebherr HCB1560	44	\$5,600										80	30	24	10.9	65			

**HOW WE TEST: Overall Score** combines test results with survey data for predicted reliability and owner satisfaction, and is based on a 100-point scale. **Predicted reliability** estimates the likelihood that newly purchased models from a given brand, not under service contract, will break

within the first five years. **Owner satisfaction** reflects the proportion of CR members who are extremely likely to recommend the refrigerator they bought. In cases where we have insufficient survey data to provide a brand level rating, indicated by a dash (—), we assume the model has

average reliability and satisfaction. **Energy efficiency** indicates energy consumption based on usable storage space and the national average electricity cost. **Temperature uniformity** is the ability to mitigate warm and cold spots in the fridge and freezer compartments. **Thermostat control** assesses the

ability to reach and maintain a set temperature despite changes in room temperature. **Noise** reflects quietness of operation based on noise-meter readings and a panel of listeners. **Ease of use** assesses layout and features.



## RANGES

# Now You're Cooking!

The right range can offer high-tech performance and good looks for a surprisingly budget-friendly price. Here's how to get the most from this do-it-all appliance.

The range is the workhorse of the kitchen, and if it's stylish, then it's probably the centerpiece, too. Electric radiant smoothtop ranges remain the best-sellers, but you have more options than ever, including double-oven ranges for the multitasker in all of us. At Consumer Reports, we buy every range we test. So we know what it's like to pay big money for pro-style ranges. We don't rate them on style—that's your call—but we do test and score them on how quickly they deliver cooktop heat, simmer, bake, broil, and self-clean, just as we do with all ranges we test. Spoiler alert: Our tests have found you can spend a lot less for top performance. Read on to find out how.







**Thermador**  
RANGE COOKERS





## What to Consider

*Remodeling or starting from scratch? Cooking for a crowd or just for two—or one? These questions and others will help you decide what you need in a new range.*

### Type

Freestanding ranges are the most popular and easiest to install. The oven control panel is usually on the back panel, above the cooktop surface. But manufacturers of many new models have moved the oven controls to the front, eliminated the back panel, and offer the same ease of installation. For an even more custom built-in look, there are slide-in models where the

cooktop rests on the counter on either side.

### Size

Most electric and gas ranges are 30 inches wide, which is the size we buy and test. Pro-style ranges usually span 36 inches or more; we test both 30-inch and 36-inch models. They're big on style but aren't the best-performing ranges we've tested. Even regular ranges now have beefy

knobs, rugged grates, stainless trim, and more style for a lot less money.

### Capacity

A roomy oven comes in handy when baking or entertaining. We measure oven space you can actually use, so check the capacity scores in our range ratings. The smallest ovens in our tests are a little more than 2 cubic feet; the largest are almost 4 cubic feet.







## Focus on Features

Here's a look at some of the perks found on new ranges.

### Control Lockout

It lets you disable the oven controls. We recommend it if the electronic-oven control panel is at the front of the range rather than on the back panel, especially if there are small children in the house.

### Double Ovens

Two separate ovens let you, say, roast a turkey in one while baking pies in another, and at different temperatures. Some ranges pair a smaller top oven with a larger oven below; others have two same-sized ovens. Keep in mind there's no storage drawer, and usually the convection feature is in the bottom oven.

### Expandable Elements, Bridge, and Oval Burners

On gas cooktops, oval burners accommodate griddles and elongated pans. Some electric rangetops have an elongated bridge element that spans two burners to fit a griddle or other odd-shaped cookware. Most electric radiant and induction smoothtops have an expandable burner that lets you choose the burner that best matches the pot's diameter.

### Hot-Surface Warning Lights

This light warns when an element is still hot and is particularly useful on electric radiant smoothtops. Some ranges have a warning light for each burner; others just have one.

### Convection

Many mid- and higher-priced ranges use one or more fans to circulate hot air in the oven. Some ovens, usually electric models, have an additional convection heating element. Convection typically reduces cooking time, especially for large roasts.

### Variable Broil

Most electric and gas ovens have this feature. Variable broil provides adjustable settings for foods that need slower or faster cooking.

### Time/Delayed Start

This lets you set a time for the electric or gas oven to start and stop cooking. But this feature is not essential; it mainly buys you preheating time, and most foods shouldn't stay in a cold oven for long.





MIELE

## On the Market

*There are three types of ranges based on fuel: electric, gas, and dual-fuel, which pairs a gas cooktop with an electric oven. Both gas and electric have their advantages.*

### Electric Smoothtop

Ranges with electric radiant smoothtops are the popular pick. All of the models in our tests have at least one high-power burner. Most have expandable dual or triple elements that let you switch from a large, high-power element to a small, lower-power element within it. Some ranges have a warming element in the center to keep side dishes warm.

There's a lot of residual heat, so when reducing the temperature it can take a few minutes to really settle at the lower setting.

### Electric Induction

Electric ranges with an induction cooktop use magnetic coils below the ceramic glass surface to quickly generate heat directly to the pan, offering precise simmering and control. You'll find these models in our ratings of electric ranges.

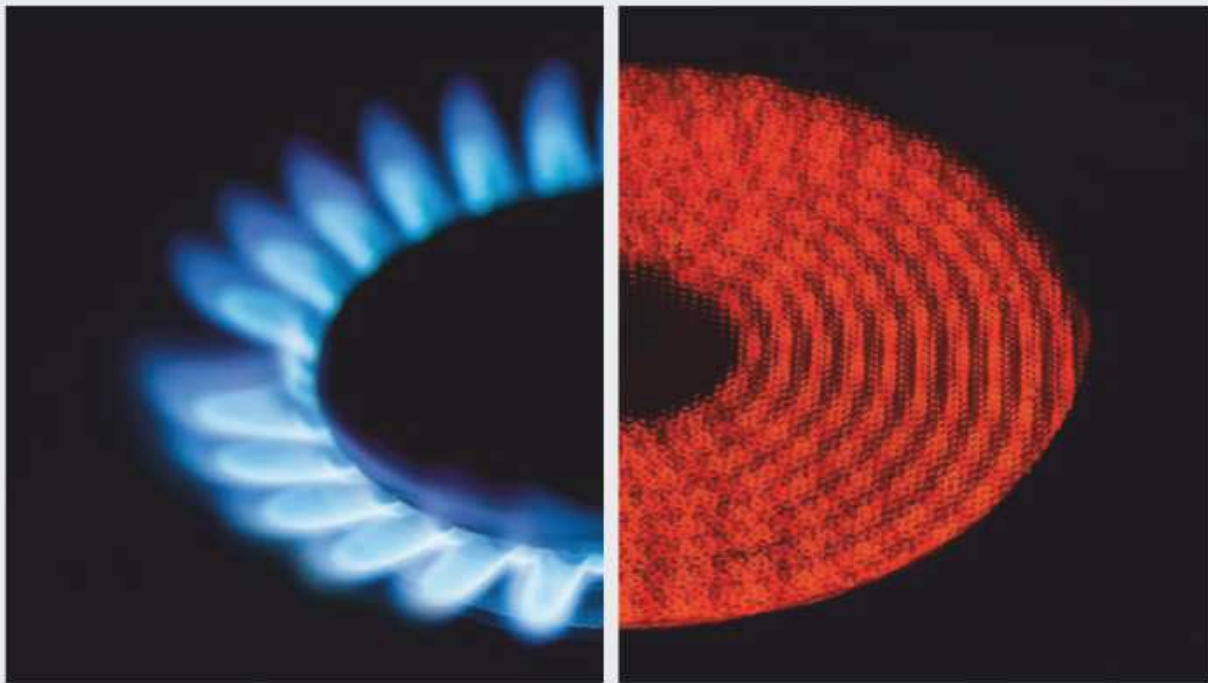
Magnetic cookware is needed for induction to work. If a magnet strongly sticks to the bottom of a pot, it will work with an induction cooktop. Some stainless-steel cookware is induction-capable, and some isn't.

### Gas

The capacity of a burner is measured in British thermal units (Btu) per hour. Most ranges have four surface burners in three sizes: one or two medium-power burners (about 9,000 Btu), a small burner (about 5,000 Btu), and one or two large ones (about 12,000 Btu or more). Some have a fifth burner instead of a center section.

Response time is quick, especially when compared with a radiant smoothtop. And with most gas burners, you can strike a match to light them when the power is out.





## Gas or Electric Range—Which Is Better?

*Each type has its strengths, and they're not what you might assume. The good news is that either one can deliver great results.*

When your range conks out, you're typically limited to replacing the type you have with one that runs on the same fuel source. "Most consumers prefer to cook with gas, but of course, not everyone has gas service," says Claudette Ennis, a market analyst who covers ranges for Consumer Reports.

In fact, only about half the homes in the U.S. have that option; the rest rely on electric. But as much as gas ranges are hyped in real estate listings and on cooking shows, do they deliver cooking performance that's significantly better than electric?

"If you could determine how well a range could cook from its fuel source, my job would be pretty boring," says Tara Casaregola, who oversees CR's range, wall-oven, and cooktop lab. "We see the greatest discrepancies between individual models, and you can find excellent choices in gas or electric."

In CR's range tests, the best ones of either type deliver solid performance across the board. Read on for a breakdown of the two types. And be assured that if you live in an area without natural gas service, your culinary ambitions won't be limited by the type of range you own.

### How We Compare Performance

We look at most of the models in our range ratings, focusing on electric smoothtop and gas ranges, because they make up a majority of what consumers see in stores. (Electric coil-top and induction ranges have a much smaller slice of the market.)

We compare results from the four most crucial tests we perform: ones for high heat, low heat, baking, and broiling. And although performance varies from model to model whether the range is gas or electric, our tests show which type of fuel has the edge in each assessment.

### The Bottom Line

In most cases, electric ranges have a serious performance edge over gas models. But there are exceptions to almost every rule, and that's certainly the case here. Within our range ratings, you'll find plenty of models that earn top scores in each test we perform, regardless of fuel source.

Those numbers should give you hope if you're limited to electric. But if you're fortunate enough to have a choice between gas and electric, you might want to do some extra research to make sure you get a range that best fits your style of cooking.

## Testing Showdown: Electric vs. Gas

### HIGH HEAT

Manufacturers of gas and electric ranges have been in a race for years to maximize the output of large burners, which you use to, say, boil a big pot of water for pasta.

**Which is faster?** Electric, by a mile. Of the 50 electric smoothtop ranges in our ratings, about 68 percent earn a score of Excellent for our high-heat cooking test. None of the gas ranges we tested can claim that, though many score Very Good.

### LOW HEAT

Given enough time, any range will boil water. But there's no cure for a cooktop with erratic simmering, which can scorch delicate sauces or melted chocolate in an instant.

**Which simmers better?** Electric again offers a slight edge, with about 60 percent of the models in our tests earning Excellent marks vs. 48 percent for gas ranges.

### BAKING

Lofty cakes and evenly browned cookies aren't a given unless you've got an oven that bakes evenly.

**Which bakes better?** Gas takes the cake here, with over two-thirds of the models in our ratings earning scores of Excellent or Very Good in our slew of baking tests. Just over half of the electric models reach those ratings.

### BROILING

Some of the biggest performance differences we see between gas and electric ranges are in broiler performance.

**Which broils better?** You might assume that gas broilers are better because they cook with a flame. But in our tests, they routinely underperform their electric counterparts. Sixty-two percent of electric ovens earn scores of Excellent or Very Good in our broiling tests. Less than 20 percent of gas ranges do.



## Recommended Products

The recommended ranges will bring pasta water to a fast boil, hold a big batch of spaghetti sauce or chili at a low simmer, and deliver dozens of cookies that are evenly baked and nicely browned. They all do at least an okay job broiling, and many are excellent—nice if you enjoy a good steak or burger. The ovens are large, and self-cleaning is good or better. CR Best Buys are recommended ranges that combine impressive performance and value.

### ELECTRIC SMOOTHTOP



**83**  
OVERALL SCORE

**A1** Samsung NE58F9710WS

**SMOOTHTOP, DOUBLE OVEN (30-INCH)** \$1,600

This range has one oven cavity and a single door but comes with a partition that lets you cook at different temperatures simultaneously. Cooktop high-power burner heat is fast. Simmering, broiling, and self-cleaning are superb, and baking is impressive. The oven has convection. [samsung.com](http://samsung.com)



**80**  
OVERALL SCORE

**A2** LG LDE4415ST

**SMOOTHTOP, DOUBLE OVEN (30-INCH)** \$1,620

Pairing a smaller top oven with a larger oven below, this freestanding model has four burners, including two that are high power for fast heat, plus a warming element on the cooktop. Both high heat and simmering are superb. Baking, broiling, and self-cleaning are all very good. [lg.com](http://lg.com)



**85**  
OVERALL SCORE

**B1** GE Profile PB911SJSS

**SMOOTHTOP, SINGLE OVEN (30-INCH)** \$990

This top-rated freestanding range has four cooktop elements, including one that's high power. It excels at fast heat and simmering. Baking and broiling are both very good. Oven capacity is large, and there's a convection feature and a cooking drawer. Self-cleaning is excellent. [ge.com](http://ge.com)

### ELECTRIC INDUCTION

#### From Our Experts

*"If I were buying an electric range, I'd go with an induction smoothtop for the quick response of the cooktop elements. This model has excellent overall performance."*

—Tara Casaregola, Test Program Leader



**85**  
OVERALL SCORE

**C2** Kenmore Elite 95073

**INDUCTION (30-INCH)** \$1,400  
[kenmore.com](http://kenmore.com)



**85**  
OVERALL SCORE

**C1** GE Profile PHS930SLSS

**INDUCTION (30-INCH)** \$2,340

Overall, this range is excellent, offering superb fast cooktop heat from its highest-power burner and steady simmering. Baking and broiling are both very good. The large oven has a convection mode, and the self-cleaning cycle is excellent. [ge.com](http://ge.com)







Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results						Features					
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Cooktop (high)	Cooktop (low)	Baking	Broiling	Oven capacity	Self-cleaning	High-power elements/burners	Medium-power elements/burners	Low-power elements/burners	Convection mode	Slide-in	Stainless steel available
A SMOOTHTOP, DOUBLE OVEN (30-INCH)																		
✓	1	Samsung NE58F9710WS	83	\$1,600	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	1	2	1	•	•	•
✓	2	Whirlpool WGE755C0BS	82	\$1,370	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	0	2	•		•
	3	LG LDE4415ST	80	\$1,620	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	0	2	•		•
	4	Samsung NE59J7850WS	79	\$1,200	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	1	2	1	•		•
	5	GE JB860SJSS	78	\$1,350	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	2	0	2	•		•
	6	Ikea Betrodd 602.885.60 [IES900DS]	73	\$1,000	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	2	0	2			•
B SMOOTHTOP, SINGLE OVEN (30-INCH)																		
✓	1	GE Café CS980STSS	86	\$2,550	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	1	2	2	•		•
✓	2	GE Profile PB911SJSS	85	\$1,080	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	0	2	•		•
Ⓢ	3	LG LRE3193ST	84	\$700	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	NA	2	0	2	•		•
✓	4	Kenmore Elite 95052	84	\$1,000	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	0	2	•		•
✓	5	Kenmore Pro 92583	83	\$1,900	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	1	1	•		•
✓	6	LG LSE4613ST	82	\$1,200	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	2	0	2	•		•
✓	7	Samsung NE58F9500SS	82	\$1,200	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	0	2	•	•	•
Ⓢ	8	LG LRE3083SW	82	\$810	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	0	2	•		•
✓	9	Bosch HEI8054U	81	\$1,980	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	2	0	2	•	•	•
✓	10	Frigidaire Gallery FGEF3035RF	81	\$810	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	0	2	•		•
	11	Kenmore 94242	79	\$930	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	2	0	2	•		•
	12	GE JS760SLSS	78	\$1,620	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	0	2			•
	13	Whirlpool WEE510S0FS	77	\$1,080	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	2	0	2			•
	14	GE JB655SKSS	77	\$600	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	2	0	2	•		•
	15	Samsung NE59N6650SS	77	\$900	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	0	2	•		•
	16	Samsung NE59J7630SS	77	\$1,000	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	0	2	•		•
	17	Samsung NE59M4320SS	75	\$650	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	2	0	2	•		•
	18	Kenmore 96183	71	\$550	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	2	0	2	•		•
	19	Frigidaire FFEF3054TS	70	\$675	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	2	0	2			•
	20	Whirlpool WFE515S0ES	67	\$630	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	2	0	2			•
	21	Maytag MER8800DS	67	\$900	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	2	0	2	•		•
	22	GE JBS60RKSS	66	\$605	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	NA	1	1	2			•
	23	Samsung NE59M4310SS	65	\$530	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	2	0	2			•
	24	Kenmore Elite 42793	65	\$2,600	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	2	0	2	•		•
	25	Kenmore Elite 95223	65	\$1,800	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	2	0	2	•		•



Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results						Features					
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Cooktop (high)	Cooktop (low)	Baking	Broiling	Oven capacity	Self-cleaning	High-power elements/burners	Medium-power elements/burners	Low-power elements/burners	Convection mode	Slide-in	Stainless steel available

B SMOOTHTOP, SINGLE OVEN (30-INCH) *Continued*

	26	Kenmore 95123	64	\$1,300									2	0	2		
	27	KitchenAid KFEG500ESS	62	\$1,250									2	0	2		
	28	GE JB645RKSS	59	\$630									2	0	2		
	29	Whirlpool WFE320M0EW	59	\$420								NA	2	0	2		
	30	Whirlpool WFE975H0HV	58	\$1,170									2	0	2		
	31	Whirlpool WEE745H0FS	57	\$1,200									2	0	2		
	32	Whirlpool WFE520S0FS	53	\$800									2	0	2		
	33	Whirlpool WFE550S0HZ	49	\$950									2	0	2		
	34	Whirlpool WFE525S0HZ	47	\$720									2	0	2		
	35	Amana AER6303MF	47	\$440								NA	0	2	2		
	36	Maytag MER6600FZ	46	\$600									2	0	2		

C ELECTRIC INDUCTION

	1	GE Profile PHS930SLSS	85	\$2,120									3	1	0		
	2	Kenmore Elite 95073	85	\$1,400									2	1	1		
	3	LG LSE4617ST	82	\$2,700									2	2	0		
	4	Frigidaire Gallery FGIF3036TF	81	\$1,080									4	0	0		
	5	Frigidaire Gallery FGIF3061NF	78	\$1,530									2	1	1		
	6	Frigidaire FFIF3054TS	78	\$1,000									4	0	0		

D GAS AND DUAL-FUEL, DOUBLE OVEN (30-INCH)

	1	LG Signature LUTD4919SN	83	\$3,000									2	2	1		
	2	Samsung NY58J9850WS	81	\$2,970									2	2	1		
	3	GE PGB980ZEJSS	78	\$2,130									2	2	1		
	4	LG LDG4315ST	75	\$1,500									2	2	1		
	5	GE Café CGS995SELSS	74	\$2,800									3	2	1		
	6	GE JGB860SEJSS	64	\$1,530									2	2	1		
	7	GE Café CGS990SETSS	59	\$2,970									2	2	1		
	8	KitchenAid KFGD500ESS	59	\$1,700									1	2	2		
	9	Whirlpool WGG745S0FS	59	\$1,200									1	2	2		



Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results						Features					
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Cooktop (high)	Cooktop (low)	Baking	Broiling	Oven capacity	Self-cleaning	High-power elements/burners	Medium-power elements/burners	Low-power elements/burners	Convection mode	Slide-in	Stainless steel available
E GAS AND DUAL-FUEL, SINGLE OVEN (30-INCH)																		
✓	1	Samsung NX58H9500WS	79	\$2,000	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	2	1	•	•	•
Ⓢ	2	Samsung NX58H5600SS	76	\$800	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	2	2	1	•	•	•
Ⓢ	3	Samsung NX58K3310SS	75	\$550	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	NA	2	2	1	•	•	•
✓	4	GE JGS760SELSS	74	\$1,900	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	2	2	1	•	•	•
✓	5	GE Profile PGS930SELSS	74	\$2,340	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	2	2	1	•	•	•
✓	6	Samsung NX58F5500SS	74	\$900	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	2	2	1	•	•	•
✓	7	LG LRG4113ST	74	\$945	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	2	2	1	•	•	•
✓	8	Samsung NX58M6630SS	74	\$800	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	2	2	1	•	•	•
✓	9	GE PGB911ZEJSS	72	\$1,500	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	2	3	NA	•	•	•
✓	10	LG LRG3193ST	72	\$750	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	NA	2	2	1	•	•	•
✓	11	GE JGB700SEJSS	71	\$700	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	2	2	1	•	•	•
✓	12	Frigidaire Gallery FGGF3058RF	71	\$1,150	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	2	2	1	•	•	•
✓	13	Kenmore 75232	71	\$730	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	2	2	1	•	•	•
✓	14	Kenmore 74332	70	\$760	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	2	2	1	•	•	•
✓	15	LG LSG4513ST	70	\$1,400	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	2	2	1	•	•	•
Ⓢ	16	LG LRG3061ST	70	\$810	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	NA	2	2	1	•	•	•
	17	Frigidaire FFGF3054TS	69	\$720	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	2	2	1	•	•	•
	18	GE JGB660SEJSS	69	\$650	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	2	2	1	•	•	•
	19	GE JGBS66EEKES	68	\$675	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	NA	2	2	1	•	•	•
	20	Kenmore 74237	68	\$750	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	2	2	1	•	•	•
	21	Bosch HDI8054U	67	\$2,500	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	2	1	2	•	•	•
	22	GE JGSS66EELES	67	\$1,260	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	NA	2	2	1	•	•	•
	23	Kenmore 74143	66	\$600	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	2	1	1	•	•	•
	24	LG LRG3081ST	65	\$900	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	2	2	1	•	•	•
	25	GE JGBS60DEKWW	65	\$400	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	NA	1	2	1	•	•	•
	26	GE Café C2S985SETSS	65	\$3,000	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	2	2	1	•	•	•
	27	Ikea Betrodd 002.885.58 [IGS505DS	59	\$800	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	2	NA	2	•	•	•
	28	Kenmore 75123	58	\$1,400	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	2	2	1	•	•	•
	29	KitchenAid KSGG700ESS	57	\$1,890	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	2	2	1	•	•	•
	30	KitchenAid KFGG500ESS	53	\$1,215	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	2	2	1	•	•	•
	31	Maytag MGR8800DS	52	\$990	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	2	2	1	•	•	•
	32	Kenmore Elite 42783	51	\$3,100	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	2	1	1	•	•	•



Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results						Features					
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Cooktop (high)	Cooktop (low)	Baking	Broiling	Oven capacity	Self-cleaning	High-power elements/burners	Medium-power elements/burners	Low-power elements/burners	Convection mode	Slide-in	Stainless steel available

E GAS AND DUAL-FUEL, SINGLE OVEN (30-INCH) *Continued*

	33	Whirlpool WEG745H0FS	51	\$1,300									2	2	1			
	34	Whirlpool WFG525S0HS	51	\$765									2	2	1			
	35	Bosch 800 Series HGI8054UC	50	\$1,980									2	1	2			
	36	Whirlpool WFG745H0FS	50	\$900									2	2	1			
	37	Frigidaire Professional FPGH3077RF	49	\$2,250									3	1	1			
	38	Whirlpool WFG975H0HZ	48	\$1,170									2	2	1			
	39	Kenmore 32673 Slide-in	48	\$1,050									2	2	1			
	40	Whirlpool WFG540H0ES	48	\$1,000									2	2	1			
	41	Whirlpool WFG550S0HZ	48	\$945									2	2	1			
	42	Kenmore Pro 72583	45	\$2,000									3	1	1			
	43	Amana AGR6603SF	44	\$600									1	2	1			
	44	Kenmore 75113	43	\$1,050									2	1	1			
	45	Maytag MGR6600FZ	42	\$650									2	2	1			
	46	Whirlpool WEG515S0FS	38	\$1,170									2	1	1			

F PRO-STYLE GAS AND DUAL-FUEL (30-INCH)

	1	GE Monogram ZGP304NRSS	70	\$4,700									1	3	NA			
	2	KitchenAid KDRS407VSS	69	\$4,230									3	NA	1			
	3	Wolf DF304	67	\$6,400									3	1	NA			
	4	NXR DRGB3001	63	\$1,700	-	-						NA	4	NA	NA			
	5	Dacor DR30G	60	\$3,500								NA	3	1	NA			
	6	Miele HR1124	59	\$5,000	-	-							4	NA	NA			
	7	Wolf GR304	57	\$4,900								NA	3	1	NA			
	8	Thermador PRG304GH	57	\$4,400								NA	4	NA	NA			
	9	Jenn-Air JGRP430WP	55	\$4,000									3	NA	1			
	10	Bertazzoni PRO304GASX	46	\$3,350								NA	1	1	2			
	11	NXR Professional Pro3051	46	\$2,200	-	-						NA	4	NA	NA			
	12	Smeg C30GGXUI	46	\$3,000	-	-						NA	1	4	NA			
	13	American Range ARR304	37	\$4,600	-	-						NA	3	1	NA			



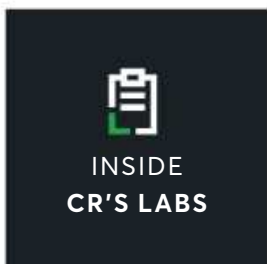
Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results						Features					
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Cooktop (high)	Cooktop (low)	Baking	Broiling	Oven capacity	Self-cleaning	High-power elements/burners	Medium-power elements/burners	Low-power elements/burners	Convection mode	Slide-in	Stainless steel available
G PRO-STYLE GAS AND DUAL-FUEL (36-INCH)																		
✓	1	GE Monogram ZDP364NDPSS	76	\$7,600	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	4	NA	NA	•	•	
✓	2	KitchenAid KDRU763VSS	75	\$7,300	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	3	NA	1	•	•	
	3	Thermador PRG366JG	65	\$7,700	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	6	NA	NA	•	•	
	4	Kucht Pro Style KRG3618U	65	\$3,000	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	NA	6	NA	NA	•	•	
	5	GE Café CGY366SELSS	63	\$5,130	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	6	NA	NA	•	•	
	6	Wolf GR366	63	\$6,000	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	NA	5	1	NA	•	•	
	7	NXR DRGB3602	61	\$3,000	-	-	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	NA	6	NA	NA	•	•	
	8	Frigidaire Gallery FGGF3685TS	42	\$3,150	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	2	2	1	•	•	
	9	BlueStar RCS36SBSS	41	\$3,600	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	NA	5	NA	1	•	•	
	10	Haier HCR6250AGS	41	\$1,900	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	NA	1	3	1	•	•	
	11	Jenn-Air JGRP436WP	40	\$5,200	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	5	NA	1	•	•	
	12	Smeg C36GGXU	33	\$3,200	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	NA	1	1	4	•	•	

**HOW WE TEST: Overall Score** combines test results with survey data on reliability and satisfaction. **Predicted reliability** estimates the likelihood that newly purchased models from a given brand, not under service contract, will break within the first five years. **Owner satisfaction** reflects the proportion of CR members who are extremely

likely to recommend the range they bought to friends and family. In cases where we have insufficient survey data to provide a brand-level ratings, indicated by a gray dash (-), we assume the model has average reliability and satisfaction. **Cooktop high** is a measure of how quickly the highest-power burner brings a large pot of water to a near-boil. **Cooktop**

**low** indicates how steadily a low-power burner maintains a simmer, and whether the highest-power burner, set to low, scorches delicate foods, like tomato sauce. **Baking** is a rating of how evenly the oven bakes cakes and cookies on multiple racks. **Broiling** is a measurement of how well the upper element browns a full tray of hamburger patties,

and how even it is. **Oven capacity** is a measure of usable space in the cavity (for double-oven ranges, the rating includes both ovens). **Self-cleaning** evaluates the oven's ability to clean itself of a lab-calibrated mixture of sticky foods, including pie filling, lard, eggs, and tapioca.



Our engineers measure how fast a large pot of water heats using the most powerful burner and test the heating provided by the lowest power burner to gauge how it's suited for gentle tasks like melting chocolate. To assess baking evenness, they bake trays of cookies and cakes on multiple racks, checking for brownness, top and bottom. And, they smear a pre-measured sticky mess inside the oven cavity to see how well the self-cleaning function performs.



CR test engineer Tara Casaregola



# Pro-Style Ranges Don't Always Live Up to Their Prices

Look no further than CR's top-rated traditional ranges for features that elevate your game in the kitchen.

Peek into the kitchen of your favorite restaurant and you're likely to see some equipment that helps the chef turn out top-tier food—warming drawers, multiple convection ovens, and plenty of burners for searing meats and simmering sauces.

But if you want to cook like a pro in your own kitchen, you don't have to spend \$5,000 or more on a pro-style range—and you might not want to, at any price.

"Even basic conveniences that you'd take for granted on a regular range, like a digital oven display or preheat light, are often missing on pro-style ranges," says Tara Casaregola, who oversees range testing for CR.

While you might be willing to shrug off a few missing features, we've highlighted five that could make you rethink the choice to go pro.

## Self-Cleaning Cycles

The idea of hand-scrubbing an oven seems dated, but that's often what you're signing up for with a pro-style range. More than half the models in our ratings lack a self-cleaning setting.

On the other hand, you'll find the feature on almost every traditional range we've evaluated, even on some models that cost less than \$500. That makes it harder to justify the \$5,000 you could spend on a pro model that requires manual scrubbing.

## Extra Burners

It was once rare for a 30-inch range to come with more than four burners, but you can now find five on every recommended gas range in our range ratings. Most electric ranges have a fifth burner, too, or a rangetop warming zone.

On the flip side, only two 30-inch pro-style ranges we've tested offer a fifth burner, and neither scored well. However, the pro ranges are more likely to give you three or even four high-power burners.

Many gas ranges feature an oblong fifth burner in the center of the rangetop and include a drop-in griddle designed to replicate a restaurant flattop—perfect for pancakes.

You generally have to splurge on a 48-inch pro-style range to find a built-in griddle, and even then you'll have to sacrifice two burners to make room.

## Double Ovens

Cooking two different foods at two different temperatures simultaneously presents a challenge—unless you have two ovens. That's a feature you'll find on traditional gas and electric ranges costing as little as \$1,000.

None of the 30-inch pro-style ranges we've evaluated offer dual ovens, though some pro-style range manufacturers offer dual side-by-side ovens on ranges 48 inches and wider.

## Warming Drawers

A simple warming drawer below the main oven will keep dishes, dinner rolls, or just about anything warm until you're ready to eat. Some gas and electric ranges even provide temperature controls for the drawer, allowing you to tackle light baking. And even the most basic models offer a storage drawer for pots and pans below the oven cavity.

None of the pro-style ranges in our ratings feature a warming or storage drawer.



## Specialty Settings

Because pro-style range manufacturers tend to roll out fewer models than mass-market brands, they're often late to the party with helpful and innovative oven settings.

Though some pro-style ranges now have a built-in meat probe, it's still hard to find special oven programs such as slow cook or delayed start.

## Still Want to Go Pro?

Our top-rated pro-style ranges can cost anywhere from \$4,000 to \$8,000-plus. Check our full range ratings and recommendations for other good choices at a variety of prices.



## COOKTOPS

# Warming Trends

Design flexibility is just one of the attractions of a cooktop and wall-oven combo, which allows you to place cooking appliances right where you want them.

Style and flexibility are the biggest attractions of a cooktop and wall-oven combination. The look is modern, and you have more choices about where you can install the appliances. Most cooktops are gas or conventional smoothtop electric. But induction technology is growing in popularity as prices fall. See our ratings to find a cooktop that pairs the best performance and price. Professional installation is usually required, so don't forget to factor in that expense as well.

## What to Consider

*To choose the right cooktop for your kitchen, take both your space and your cooking style into account*

### Size

Most cooktops are 30 or 36 inches wide, so that's what we test. But you'll find cooktops ranging from 21 to 48 inches. Some have five or even six burners, but that doesn't mean you'll have room to use them all at once.

### Fuel

Both electric and gas cooktops are capable of delivering a fine performance. But you may find it easier to judge heat by the appearance of a gas flame. And when you turn the knob from high to medium on a gas model, the pot and the food in it experience that change almost immediately. Electric elements tend to heat faster and maintain low heat better than gas burners. Electric induction cooktops use an electromagnetic field to directly heat pans, offering quick response and control. In our tests, no other technology was faster than the fastest induction elements, but we're talking 2 to 4 minutes faster to bring 6 quarts of water to a near boil.

### Features

A high-power cooktop element or burner will heat large pots and pans more quickly. Touch-sensitive controls on smoothtops are sleek, but some are more finicky and less intuitive than conventional knobs. Manufacturers tout the high Btu of burners, but we've found that they don't always deliver faster heating.







## Focus on Features

*These are the key details to consider when shopping for a new cooktop*

### Hot-Surface Warning Lights

It's an important safety feature because the cooktop surface can remain hot long after an element has been turned off. Many smoothtops have at least one warning light. Ideally, each element should have a separate warning light.

### Expandable Elements, a Bridge, and Oval Burners

On gas cooktops, oval burners accommodate griddles and elongated pans. Most smoothtops have an expandable burner that lets you choose the size that best matches a pot's diameter. Some cooktops have an elongated bridge element that spans two burners to accommodate rectangular or odd-shaped cookware such as a griddle. (In some, one knob or touch control operates both.)

### Controls

On cooktops, the controls take up space on the surface and can limit the area that cookware can cover. Electric models with touch-sensitive controls provide a flat, easy to clean surface, but they can be finicky.







GE

## On the Market

Choose from electric smoothtop, electric induction smoothtop, or gas. You'll find that each has its advantages.

### Smoothtop

Electric radiant smoothtops are a popular pick. All of the models we tested have at least one high-power burner. Most have expandable dual or triple elements that let you switch from a large, high-power element to a small, low-power element within it.

There's a lot of residual heat, so when reducing the heat it can take a few minutes to really settle at the lower setting. Smoothtops make it easy to clean up spills but require a special cleaner, and dropped pots and sugary liquids can damage them.



### Induction

Electric induction cooktops use magnetic coils below the ceramic glass surface to quickly generate heat directly in a pan, offering precise simmering and control. You'll see these models in our ratings of electric cooktops.

Magnetic cookware is needed for induction to work. If a magnet strongly sticks to the bottom of a pot, it will work with an induction cooktop. Some stainless-steel cookware are induction-capable, and some aren't.

### Gas

If you prefer cooking with gas, we get it. The flame makes it easier to judge the heat and to quickly move from a high setting to a low one.

Response time is particularly quick, especially when compared with a smoothtop. When you turn the knob from high to medium on a gas cooktop, the pot and the food in it experience that change almost immediately.

And with most gas burners, you can strike a match to light them when your power is out. Dinner by candlelight. Not so bad!

## Keep It Clean

Smoothtop cooktops are easy to clean if you follow some simple precautions. Wipe up sugary spills quickly so that they won't bond to the glass as they cool and harden. Wipe wet spills with a sponge, soft cloth, or paper towel. Stay away from scouring sponges, which can scratch the surface. Remove heavy, burned-on residue with a glass scraper made for this purpose or a razor blade (very carefully). Polish regularly with a cooktop cleanser such as Cerama Bryte or Cooktop Magic, which worked well in our tests. Be careful when moving cookware across the surface to avoid leaving scratches.





## Recommended Products

We test a cooktop's speed and simmering capabilities, and you'll find dozens of electric smoothtops and induction cooktops in our ratings. Recommended cooktops are top scorers and don't have brand-reliability problems based on our survey of thousands of readers. CR Best Buys are recommended cooktops that combine impressive performance and value.

### ELECTRIC INDUCTION

#### From Our Experts

*"Induction has the performance edge for electric cooktops. This model doesn't scrimp on power; it has four high-power elements. And while touch controls look sleek, I definitely find control knobs easier to use."*

—Tara Casaregola,  
Test Program Leader

96

OVERALL SCORE



**B3** Frigidaire FPIC3677RF  
36-INCH INDUCTION \$1,650  
frigidaire.com

### ELECTRIC SMOOTHTOP

94

OVERALL SCORE



**C1** GE JP5030SJSS  
30-INCH SMOOTHTOP  
\$980

This top-performer boasts fast heating and precise simmering. It has four elements; one is high-power and one is expandable. Touch controls provide a sleek look and make cleanup easier.  
ge.com

94

OVERALL SCORE



**C2** KitchenAid KECC604BBL  
30-INCH SMOOTHTOP  
\$900

Fast heating and precise simmering put this model ahead of the pack. It has four elements; two are high-power and one is expandable. High- and low-heat performance are excellent.  
kitchenaid.com

93

OVERALL SCORE



**D1** Samsung NZ36K7570RG/AA  
36-INCH SMOOTHTOP  
\$1,350

This smoothtop cooktop excels at simmering and delivering fast heat. It has five burners, including one that's high-power, and a bridge element for larger pans. It's WiFi-enabled for use with Samsung's "Smart Home" app.  
samsung.com

92

OVERALL SCORE



**D3** Jenn-Air JED4536GS  
36-INCH SMOOTHTOP  
\$2,200

Superb all-around performance helped send this 36-inch smoothtop to the front of the pack. It has five elements, including one that's expandable to accommodate large cookware. And it has a built-in downdraft vent.  
jenn-air.com



GAS

**89**  
OVERALL SCORE

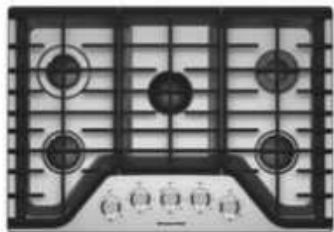


**E1** Samsung NA30K7750TS/AA

30-INCH GAS \$1,350

This top pick provides superb simmering and very good high-heat performance. One of its five burners is high-power. It comes with a griddle pan and is WiFi-enabled for use with Samsung's "Smart Home" app. [samsung.com](http://samsung.com)

**84**  
OVERALL SCORE



**E2** KitchenAid KCGS350ESS

30-INCH GAS \$1,000

This excellent 30-inch gas cooktop has five burners, including one high-power, and continuous grates. It wasn't the fastest of this group, but simmering was superb. It has a stainless steel surface and a pro-style look. [kitchenaid.com](http://kitchenaid.com)

**83**  
OVERALL SCORE



**E3** Whirlpool WCG97US0DS

30-INCH GAS \$900

Overall, this cooktop is excellent, providing good high-heat performance and excellent simmering. It has five burners, including one high-power. The grates are hinged at the back for easy cleaning. [whirlpool.com](http://whirlpool.com)

**82**  
OVERALL SCORE



**E4** Ikea Framtid 602.887.01 [ICS655DS]

30-INCH GAS \$700

**\$** CR BEST BUY

This Ikea cooktop is made by Whirlpool and similar to the Whirlpool cooktop tested (left), except this one doesn't have the hinged grates at the back of the cooktop. It has five burners, including one that is high-power and a stainless surface. [ikea.com](http://ikea.com)

**89**  
OVERALL SCORE



**F1** Samsung NA36K7750TG/AA

\$1,525

Overall, this cooktop is excellent, providing very good high-heat performance and excellent simmering. It has five burners, including one high-power, and comes with a griddle pan and wok ring. [samsung.com](http://samsung.com)

**From Our Experts**

*"This cooktop has a nice mix of high- and medium-power burners. I find medium-power burners are versatile enough for gentle heating or to bring a midsized saucepan of water to a boil, whereas the low-power burners on some cooktops struggle with that task."*

—Tara Casaregola, Test Program Leader

**84**  
OVERALL SCORE



**F3** Thermador SGSX365FS

36-INCH GAS \$1,900

[thermador.com](http://thermador.com)



Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results		Features				
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	High heat	Low heat	High-power elements	Medium-power elements	Low-power elements	Expandable elements	Touch controls
A 30-INCH INDUCTION COOKTOPS													
✓	1	Bosch 800 Series NIT8068SUC	100	\$1,700	↑	↑	↑	↑	4	0	0	•	•
✓	2	GE Cafe CHP9530	100	\$1,800	↑	↑	↑	↑	3	1	0	•	•
✓	3	Samsung NZ30K7880UG/AA	99	\$2,000	—	—	↑	↑	3	1	0	•	•
✓	4	Dacor Modernist DTI30M977BB	99	\$3,100	—	—	↑	↑	3	1	0	•	•
✓	5	Kenmore 43820	98	\$1,600	↑	↓	↑	↑	3	1	0	•	•
✓	6	Kenmore 43800	96	\$1,200	↑	↓	↑	↑	3	1	0	•	•
Ⓢ	7	Frigidaire FFIC3026TB	96	\$700	↑	↓	↑	↑	2	2	0	•	•
✓	8	Frigidaire FGIC3067MB	95	\$1,000	↑	↓	↑	↑	3	1	0	•	•
✓	9	Whirlpool GCI3061XB	94	\$1,305	↑	↓	↑	↑	2	0	2	•	•
✓	10	KitchenAid KICU500XB	94	\$1,485	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	2	0	•	•
B 36-INCH INDUCTION COOKTOPS													
✓	1	Bosch Benchmark Series NITP668SUC	99	\$2,800	↑	↑	↑	↑	5	0	0	•	•
✓	2	Samsung NZ36K7880UG	98	\$2,250	—	—	↑	↑	4	1	0	•	•
✓	3	Frigidaire FPIC3677RF	96	\$1,650	↑	↓	↑	↑	4	1	0	•	•
Ⓢ	4	Frigidaire FFIC3626TB	96	\$950	↑	↓	↑	↑	3	2	0	•	•
✓	5	Thermador CIT36XKB	93	\$5,000	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	1	1	•	•
✓	6	Jenn-Air JIC4536XS	87	\$2,100	↓	↓	↑	↑	5	0	0	•	•
C 30-INCH SMOOTHTOPS													
✓	1	GE JP5030SJSS	94	\$980	↑	↑	↑	↑	1	0	3	•	•
✓	2	KitchenAid KECC604BBL	94	\$900	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	0	2	•	•
✓	3	GE Profile PP9030SJSS	94	\$1,350	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	2	1	•	•
✓	4	Samsung NZ30K7570RG/AA	93	\$1,250	—	—	↑	↑	1	3	1	•	•
✓	5	KitchenAid KCED600GSS	92	\$1,350	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	0	2	•	•
✓	6	Kenmore Turbo-boil 45313	92	\$1,030	↑	↓	↑	↑	2	0	3	•	•
✓	7	Jenn-Air JEC4430BS	90	\$1,400	↓	↓	↑	↑	2	0	2	•	•
Ⓢ	8	GE JP3030SJSS	87	\$500	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	0	2	•	•
✓	9	Whirlpool G7CE3034XP	87	\$700	↑	↓	↑	↑	2	0	2	•	•
Ⓢ	10	Frigidaire FFEC3024LB	86	\$400	↑	↓	↑	↑	2	0	2	•	•
✓	11	Whirlpool Gold G9CE3065XB	85	\$990	↑	↓	↑	↑	2	0	2	•	•
✓	12	Whirlpool WCE55US0HB	66	\$650	↑	↓	↑	↓	1	1	2	•	•
D 36-INCH SMOOTHTOPS													
✓	1	Samsung NZ36K7570RG/AA	93	\$1,350	—	—	↑	↑	2	2	1	•	•
✓	2	KitchenAid KECC664BSS	93	\$1,080	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	1	1	•	•
✓	3	Jenn-Air JED4536GS	92	\$2,200	↓	↓	↑	↑	2	1	2	•	•
✓	4	LG LCE3610SB	91	\$1,000	—	—	↑	↑	2	1	1	•	•
✓	5	Viking VEC5366BSB	88	\$2,150	—	—	↑	↑	1	3	2	•	•
✓	6	Bosch Benchmark Series NETP668SUC	87	\$1,350	↑	↑	↑	↑	1	3	1	•	•
✓	7	GE JP5036DJBB	86	\$800	↑	↑	↑	↑	2	1	2	•	•
Ⓢ	8	Whirlpool WCE55US6HB	81	\$630	↑	↓	↑	↑	2	0	2	•	•
✓	9	Maytag MEC9536BS	81	\$800	↑	↓	↑	↑	2	0	3	•	•



Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results		Features				
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	High heat	Low heat	High-power burners	Medium-power burners	Low-power burners	Stainless steel	Continuous grates
E 30-INCH GAS COOKTOPS													
	1	Samsung NA30K7750TS/AA	89	\$1,350	—	—			1	3	1	•	•
	2	KitchenAid KCGS350ESS	84	\$1,000					1	3	1	•	•
	3	Whirlpool WCG97US0DS	83	\$900					1	3	1	•	•
	4	Ikea Framtid 602.887.01 [ICS655DS]	82	\$700					1	3	1	•	•
	5	GE Profile PGP7030SLSS	81	\$1,000					2	2	1	•	•
	6	GE JGP5030SLSS	76	\$900					2	2	1	•	•
	7	GE Cafe CGP9530SLSS	76	\$1,260					2	2	1	•	•
	8	Bosch 800 Series NGM8056UC	73	\$1,000	—	—			1	2	2	•	•
	9	GE PGP953SETSS	69	\$990					1	3	1	•	•
	10	Kenmore 32683	65	\$990					2	2	1	•	•
	11	KitchenAid KCGD500GSS	45	\$1,620					2	1	1	•	•
	12	Whirlpool WCG77US0HS	41	\$700					1	3	1	•	•
F 36-INCH GAS COOKTOPS													
	1	Samsung NA36K7750TG/AA	89	\$1,525	—	—			1	3	1	•	•
	2	Viking VGSU53616BSS	85	\$2,100	—	—			3	2	1	•	•
	3	Thermador SGSX365FS	84	\$1,900					3	2	0	•	•
	4	Kenmore 32713	81	\$1,100					2	2	1	•	•
	5	GE Cafe CGP650SETSS	79	\$1,440					1	3	1	•	•
	6	GE Profile PGP9036SLSS	78	\$1,260					2	2	1	•	•
	7	GE Cafe CGP9536SLSS	75	\$1,360					2	2	1	•	•
	8	Maytag MGC9536DS	75	\$720					2	2	1	•	•
	9	Wolf CG365P/S	71	\$2,000					2	3	0	•	•
	10	Whirlpool WCG97US6DS	67	\$1,000					2	2	1	•	•
	11	Frigidaire Professional FPGC3677RS	66	\$1,100					2	2	1	•	•
	12	Miele KM3474GSS	64	\$1,750					3	2	0	•	•
	13	Jenn-Air JGC3536GS	63	\$1,600					4	0	1	•	•
	14	KitchenAid KCGS556ESS	52	\$1,260					1	2	2	•	•
	15	LG LCG3611ST	50	\$1,080					2	2	1	•	•
G 36-INCH GAS RANGETOPS													
	1	Kenmore Pro Slide-in 34913	52	\$2,000					3	2	1	•	•

**HOW WE TEST: Overall score** combines test results with survey data for predicted reliability and owner satisfaction, and is based on a 100-point scale. **Predicted reliability** estimates the likelihood that newly purchased models from

a given brand, not under service contract, will break within the first five years. **Owner satisfaction** reflects the proportion of CR members who are extremely likely to recommend the cooktop they bought. In cases where we have

insufficient survey data to provide a brand level rating, indicated by a dash (—), we assume the model has average reliability and satisfaction. To test **High heat**, we time how long the highest-powered burner takes to bring a large pot of water to a

near-boil. For **Low heat**, we note how well the lowest-powered burner keeps a low temperature, as for melting chocolate, and how well the highest-power burner, set on low, holds tomato sauce below a boil. **Price** is approximate retail.



## WALL OVENS

# Easy Bake Ovens

Remodeling? This is your chance to swap your range for a cooktop-and-wall-oven combo—a choice that offers both design flexibility and convenience.

Unlike a range, a wall oven can go wherever you want it: at waist or eye level so that you won't have to bend to pull out heavy pans, or even under a counter. And now lower prices have made wall-oven and cooktop combinations more affordable, though most combos will still cost more than a stand-alone range. Use our ratings and reliability data as a guide as you shop, and remember that you don't necessarily have to choose the same brand for your wall oven and cooktop.

## What to Consider

*Review these basics before you start shopping.*

### Size

Wall ovens come in a range of widths: 24, 27, 30, and 36 inches. Consumer Reports tests 30-inch-wide wall ovens, the most popular size. You'll also find single- and double-oven styles. If you're replacing one, it's crucial that you measure the wall oven and the cabinet cutout.

### Fuel

The majority of wall ovens are electric; they usually have a larger capacity than similar gas models and don't require a gas connection. But remember that electric wall ovens need their own electrical circuit. And no matter how your new wall oven is fueled, be sure to have it professionally installed.

### Capacity

There was a time when choosing a wall oven over a range meant you had to settle for a small oven without a self-cleaning feature. No longer. Manufacturers are finding ways to increase capacity. Of the single wall ovens we tested, usable-capacity scores (which differ from the figure supplied by the manufacturer) ranged from fair to excellent. The smallest in our tests was about 2 cubic feet and the largest was more than 3 cubic feet.

### Features

A convection feature circulates heated air through the oven. That can speed cooking, but you may pay about \$250 more for the convenience compared with a non-convection model. Ovens that excelled at broiling produced well-seared, evenly cooked burgers in our tests. If you're an avid baker, look for high scores in our baking tests.



UPPER OVEN  
CONV BAKE CONV BROIL PURE CONV CONV ROAST  
BAKE BROIL PROSE SELF CLEAN  
START COOK STOP  
TIME TIME TIME  
CANCEL  
SECURE

TIMER 1 CLOCK TIMER 2

6:15

LOWER OVEN  
CONV BAKE CONV BROIL PURE CONV CONV ROAST  
BAKE BROIL PROSE SELF CLEAN  
START COOK STOP  
TIME TIME TIME  
CANCEL  
SECURE

1 2 3  
4 5 6  
7 8 9  
0 #





## Focus on Features

*These details may make your oven easier to use.*

### Touchpad Controls

It's easier to set and monitor precise temperatures with a digital display. Touch-sensitive controls are available on some models. You'll often find a control lockout that lets you disable those controls, an important safety feature in households with children.

### Temperature Probe

When you insert this electronic thermometer probe into your food, it displays the internal temperature on the oven's control panel. This allows you to quickly know whether the food is done—and cooked to a safe temperature—without even opening the oven door.

### Oven Window

One without a decorative grid allows a clearer view of what's inside so that you can judge progress with the door closed.

### Covered Element

A cover over the bottom baking element catches drips and spills. You won't have to reach around the element to wipe the bottom of the oven, making cleanup easier.

### Self-Cleaning Cycle

A special cycle removes spills and spatters inside. An automatic safety lock on high-temperature self-cleaning models prevents the door from being opened until the oven has cooled to a safe temperature. Some models have a countdown display that shows the amount of time left in the cycle.

### Variable Broil

Most electric ovens have this feature, which offers adjustable settings for food that needs slower or faster cooking.

## Recommended Products

Recommended wall ovens are top scoring and do not have brand reliability issues. CR Best Buys are recommended wall ovens that combine impressive performance and price. Ratings for double ovens are based on our tests of corresponding single oven models. Given that the prices vary significantly—from \$900 for a single oven to \$5,400 for a double oven, use our ratings to find out as much as you can before you buy.

89  
OVERALL SCORE



**A1** GE Cafe CT9070SHSS  
\$3,600

This French-door style oven is Excellent overall, with Excellent baking and self-cleaning performance and Very Good broiling and oven capacity scores. It has a convection mode and can be controlled wirelessly from a smartphone app.  
[ge.com](http://ge.com)

87  
OVERALL SCORE



**A2** KitchenAid KOSE500ESS  
\$2,300

Superb broiling, impressive baking, a large oven, and a good self-cleaning cycle help this 30-inch electric wall oven stand out. It has a temperature probe and five or more rack positions.  
[kitchenaid.com](http://kitchenaid.com)

82  
OVERALL SCORE



**B3** Jenn-Air JJW3830DS  
\$5,200

Excellent broiling and Very Good baking scores helped this double-oven impress our testers. The ovens have five rack positions, convection mode, temperature probes, and large windows. They can be controlled wirelessly via smartphone.  
[jennair.com](http://jennair.com)



Rec.	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results				Features			
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Baking	Broiling	Oven capacity	Self-cleaning	Width (in.)	Covered element	Convection mode	Temperature probe
A SINGLE ELECTRIC WALL OVENS														
	1	GE Cafe CT9070SHSS	89	\$3,600							30			
	2	KitchenAid KOSE500ESS	87	\$2,300							30			
	3	GE Profile PT9051SLSS	87	\$2,340							30			
	4	LG LWS3063	84	\$1,640							30			
	5	Maytag MEW9530FZ	83	\$1,300							30			
	6	Jenn-Air JJW3430DS	82	\$3,700							30			
	7	Frigidaire Gallery FGEW3065PW	81	\$1,450							30			
	8	Samsung NV51K7770SG/AA	81	\$2,600	-	-					30			
	9	GE JT5000SFSS	80	\$1,200							30			
	10	GE Profile PT9050SFSS	79	\$2,430							30			
	11	Whirlpool WOS92ECOAH	79	\$1,500							30			
	12	Kenmore 49513	79	\$1,350							30			
	13	Whirlpool WOS51ECOAS	77	\$900							30			
	14	Bosch 800 Series HBL8451UC	75	\$2,160							30			
	15	Electrolux EW30EW55PS	74	\$2,100							30			
	16	Electrolux EI30EW38TS	72	\$1,900							30			
	17	Kenmore Pro 41153	72	\$2,120							30			
	18	Kenmore Elite 48363	72	\$2,550							30			
	19	Bosch HBLP451RUC	71	\$3,100							30			
	20	Bosch HBL5351UC	65	\$1,620							30			
	21	Frigidaire Professional FPEW3077RF	60	\$1,900							30			
	22	Viking VESO5302SS	60	\$4,300							30			
	23	Miele PureLine H 6281 BP	60	\$2,600	-	-					30			
	24	Thermador ME301JS	59	\$2,700							30			
	25	Amana AWO6313SFS	56	\$990							30			
	26	Viking Professional VSOF730SS	53	\$5,250						NA	30			
	27	Frigidaire FFEW3026TD	52	\$950							30			
	28	GE JT3000SFSS	52	\$900							30			
	29	GE Profile Twin-Flex PT9200SLSS	50	\$2,700							30			
B DOUBLE ELECTRIC WALL OVENS														
	1	GE Cafe CT9570SLSS	89	\$5,400							30			
	2	KitchenAid KODE500ESS	87	\$3,500							30			
	3	Jenn-Air JJW3830DS	82	\$5,200							30			
	4	Samsung NV51K7770DG/AA	81	\$3,600	-	-					30			

**HOW WE TEST:** Overall Score combines test results with survey data for **Predicted reliability** and **Owner satisfaction**, and is based on a 100-point scale. **Predicted reliability** estimates the likelihood that newly purchased models from a given brand, not under service

contract, will break within the first five years. **Owner satisfaction** reflects the proportion of CR members who are extremely likely to recommend the wall oven they bought. In cases where we have insufficient survey data to provide a brand level rating, indicated by a dash (-), we assume

the model has average reliability and satisfaction. **Baking** reflects whether cakes and cookies baked on two racks were evenly browned. **Broiling** is based on even browning of a pan of burgers and high-heat searing ability. **Capacity** is our measurement of usable space. **Self-cleaning** is

a gauge of the oven self-cleaning cycle's effectiveness at removing a baked-on mixture of eggs, lard, cherry-pie filling, cheese, tomato puree, and tapioca. (All scores for double wall ovens are based on results from upper oven.) **Price** is approximate retail.



## RANGE HOODS

# Breathe Easy

Smoke, airborne grease, and cooking odors aren't features you want to include in your kitchen update. Choosing the right range hood can whisk those irritations away—and make a style statement, too.

It can be tempting to save space and cut costs by relying on the built-in ventilation of an over-the-counter microwave. But our past tests of range hoods have shown that if you care about venting smoke and fumes, you're better off with a separate range hood, especially if you cook on a higher-powered stove or cooktop. We no longer test range hoods, but our in-house appliance pros can guide you to a model that's effective and quiet, and enhances the look of your kitchen.







Viking



## What to Consider

*Before you start shopping, take a look at your space and measure your cooktop or range*

### Ducted or Duct-Free?

We don't recommend a ductless hood because it will take the smoke and odors and disperse them throughout the kitchen and the rest of the house. Venting the hood to the outside is better but more complicated.

### Size

This is when bigger is often better. Any hood you consider should be at least as wide as the cooking surface it will be installed above. And avoid downdraft hoods, which have been unimpressive performers in our past tests.

### Installation

Whether you opt for a hood or an over-the-range microwave oven, be sure it's installed according to the manufacturer's directions, usually 24 to 30 inches above the burners or elements. That gives you working room and helps to prevent steam from escaping to the sides. Vent outdoors using the largest-sized solid, smooth-walled metal ducting that fits. Keep duct runs short and minimize bends to maximize airflow. A wall or roof cap outside prevents backdrafts. Wash or replace the filters every one to three months, and more often if you cook frequently.



**Island Living**  
Keep kitchen sight lines open by choosing an island hood with a glass canopy.

## Focus on Features

*Select a model that's at least as wide as the cooking surface underneath. These are some range-hood features to keep in mind as you shop.*

### Airflow

Manufacturers tout the cubic feet per minute (CFM) of exhausted air. More airflow does mean faster ventilation, but it doesn't guarantee better smoke capture and removal in your kitchen.

### Fan Speed

We recommend a minimum of two speeds: a high-speed setting to use when cooking and a very low, very quiet setting to use after cooking to continue to ventilate

the space while eating. You don't need more than three set speeds. If the manufacturer provides more than three, we think the hood should have a variable-speed switch that the user can set to any speed desired.

### Thermostat Control

A built-in sensor automatically turns on the fan if the temperature below the hood gets too high. That feature is available mainly on over-the-range microwaves and is intended to protect the microwave electronics from being

damaged by high heat. But we don't recommend this feature because if you're cooking with oil and your pan catches fire, the exhaust fan will come on automatically, adding air to the fire, fanning it, and perhaps making matters worse.

### Exhaust Timer

This convenient feature turns off the fan after a period of time, so you can set it and forget it.



## On the Market

Range hoods come in several types. Here's a look at the best uses for each.

### Undercabinet

These mount under the bottom of a wall cabinet. Ductwork inside an adjoining wall, chase, soffit, or ceiling can send smoke and fumes to the outside. In a few models, a shallow hood slides out of the upper kitchen cabinet when you need it. Typical kitchen cabinets extend only about halfway across the stove, so that extension routes steam and smoke away from cabinet faces and back toward the suction end of the range hood. The design steals

cabinet space but might be the only choice for those who can't achieve the recommended stove-to-hood clearance with a standard design.

### Wall-Chimney

These work where there are no cabinets over the range, and they're mounted with exposed vent stacks on the wall to vent to the outside (shown below).

### Island

Mounted to and vented through ductwork in the ceiling, they lack adjacent walls or cabinets to help funnel

fumes, so they should be wider than the cooking surface.

### Downdraft

These try to reverse the direction of rising smoke and fumes, sending them through ducts running beneath the floor. Our past tests found that they were among the least effective at removing smoke and steam. Though they can be used anywhere in a kitchen, their main application is in islands where it might not be possible to route ductwork through the ceiling.

### Take It Outside

Ductless models direct steam, heat, and smoke away from the stovetop but back into the kitchen. Their filters can trap airborne oil and grease droplets, and reduce odors. They may be better than no ventilation at all, but it's still best to go with a model that will vent fumes outside.



WOLF



JENN-AIR

**Style Selection**  
Choose from a variety of looks, from simple undercabinet styles to custom or contemporary designs.





## DISHWASHERS

# Clean Machines

Good news! Even midpriced models now offer perks like stainless steel tubs and fold-down tines, plus better energy efficiency and water savings. Follow our guide to find the dishwasher that's right for you.

Breakfast cereal, powdered egg yolk, raspberry jam: What do these foods have in common? Their dried-on, baked-on, caked-on residue is a challenging adversary for just about any dishwasher, including the ones we evaluate in our labs. In our tests, we expect more of a dishwasher than you probably ever will. We load 10 place settings with a baked-on soil, then run them through a cycle using the high-temperature option (if it's available). Our listening panel evaluates the noise of each model. We also compare every machine's energy efficiency with government guidelines. Here, get a load of some of your options.

## What to Consider

*Focus on these details while you're shopping*

### Dimensions

Conventional dishwashers are intended for a space measuring 24x24 inches (WxD). Fitting in your new dishwasher could be a challenge if you've tiled the floor or redone your counters, which will change the height of the cavity. So measure your space and ask the seller for the full height range (and allow extra for the leveling feet).

### Style

Cabinet-front dishwashers accommodate a panel that blends in with your cabinets for an integrated, furniture-style look. Other options include stainless, black stainless, and the old standbys, black and white.

### Convenience Features

Many dishwashers—in all price ranges—have adjustable racks and lots of flatware slots. Some midpriced models have a third rack for large utensils or small cups. Many have fold-down tines to help fit large dishes, and racks that move up or down for oversized items.

### Controls

Some models have interactive touch controls, but the usual touchpads are fine if they're well-marked. If controls are hidden when the door is closed, look for cycle-time and other visible displays, otherwise it can be tough to tell whether a quiet machine is on.

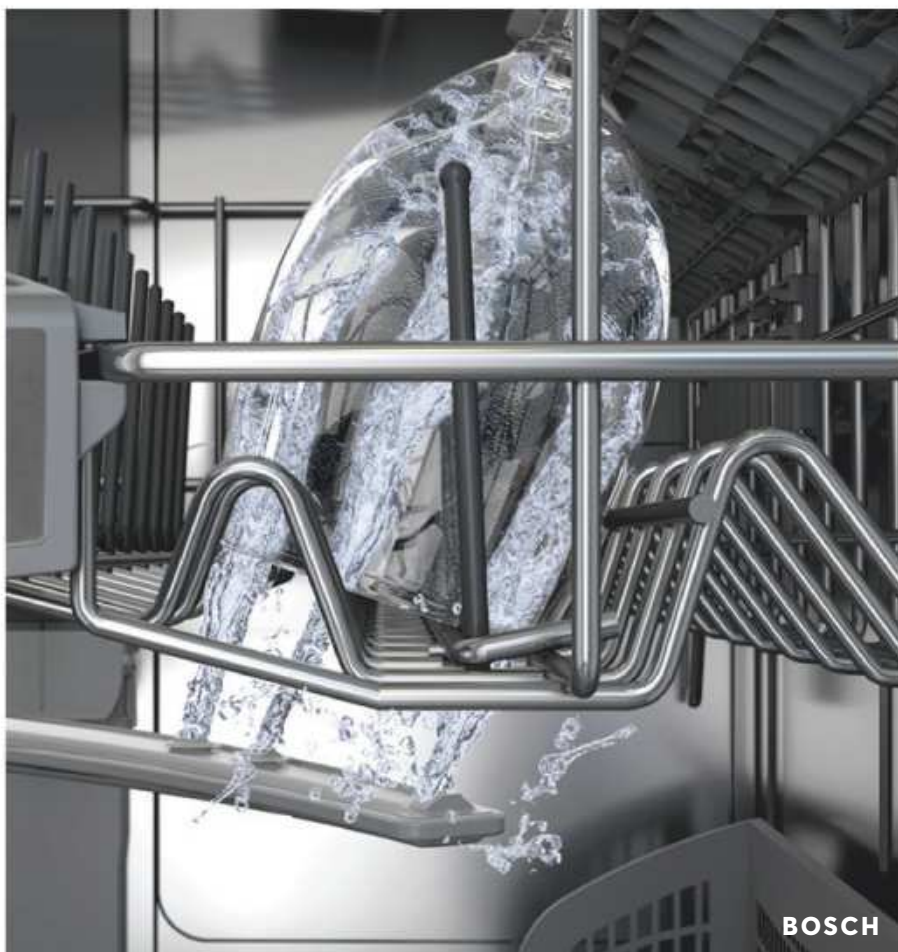
### Energy Efficiency

Dishwashers with the Energy Star label use about 12 percent less energy than standard models and save water, too. The most miserly used only 4 to 6 gallons of water in our tests, which included the high-temperature wash and heated dry options when available.









## Focus on Features

*Convenience features will make your dishwasher easier to load and to use. These are the best of the bunch.*

### Adjustable (or Extra) Racks and Loading Aids

Racks that move up and down, times you can adjust, and silverware and stemware holders let you reconfigure the interior of a dishwasher and organize its contents. Those features are handy when you cook for a crowd, allowing you to fit large and oddly shaped items. Certain models go an extra step with, for example, upper racks you can adjust single-handedly. Shop carefully and you're likely to get a third rack for large utensils and small cups (think espresso), and not just in premium models. A few models let you raise or lower parts of a rack to fit slightly taller items.

### Soil Sensors

These adjust the cycle time and water use to the load's soil level, reducing energy demand and water use for cleaner loads.

### Rinse/Hold Cycle

It lets you rinse dirty dishes when you're not quite ready to start a full cycle rather than letting stubborn messes become even more recalcitrant. This perk can reduce odors and prevent soil from setting while you stack up enough dirty dishes for a full load. Some models have a half-load option, a handy cycle if you're a single person (or don't use many dishes) and rarely have a full load.

### Wash Zones

Some newer models designate a certain part of the dishwasher for heavily soiled items needing a special cycle. These zones don't always run for the whole cycle. In our lab tests, they seem to work as promised.

### Filters

These keep wash water free of food that could be redeposited on clean dishes. There are two types: self-cleaning and manual. With

self-cleaning filters, a grinder pulverizes debris and flushes it down the drain. That's convenient but can be noisy. Some models have a filter without a grinder. They're quieter, but you need to clean the filter periodically to avoid smells, a job that takes a few minutes. Refer to your owner's manual to see which type you have.

### Special Wash Cycles

Most dishwashers come with at least three cycles: light, normal, and heavy (for pots and pans), with many newer models also including "quick" or "express" cycles that clean lightly soiled loads in as little as 20 minutes. Some offer single-rack, pot-scrubber, soak/scrub, steam clean, china/crystal, or sanitizing cycles as well. The three basic cycles should be enough for most chores, even for baked-on food. A sanitizing option that raises the water temperature above the typical 140° F doesn't necessarily deliver better cleaning for dishes;

if it lasts long enough, it's meant to disinfect the dishwasher's interior.

### Stainless Steel Tub

Usually available in midpriced and higher-end models, stainless steel tends to resist staining better than light-colored plastic does. Gray-speckled plastic tubs help camouflage stains and trim the overall cost. Any plastic tub should last longer than most people keep a dishwasher. Some newer models have hybrid stainless/plastic tubs.

### Heated Dry

Dishwashers usually dry after a cycle using drainage and the residual heat in the tub. Some models will either heat the water further during the final rinse (to warm up the stainless tub) or use a heating element, perhaps coupled with a fan to circulate the air.

### Hidden Touchpad Controls

Controls mounted along the top edge of the door (hidden when the





## On the Market

*Aside from how they perform in our tests, dishwashers differ in type, features, and—of course—cost*

### Budget Dishwashers

In general, if you opt for a model at a modest price, you'll get more performance than glitz and fewer convenience features. Budget models usually cost up to \$500. Some clean almost as well as premium-priced dishwashers, and you may still get adjustable racks and a soil sensor. These models tend to be noisier than upscale versions.

### High-End Dishwashers

At roughly \$1,000 plus, premium models tend to be quieter and have ample flatware slots, folding tines, and other flexible-loading features. Fully integrated panel readiness and a cycle-time display add style and

convenience. Most high-end dishwashers have a stainless steel tub, which resists stains better than plastic does.

### Dishwasher Drawers

They usually include two small, stacked drawers that you can use simultaneously or separately.

Compared with dishwashers that have doors, the drawers are easier to load.

But they can be expensive, and the models we've tested haven't performed as well overall as budget priced conventional dishwashers. The capacity of each drawer is relatively small, but two will hold 10 place settings.

door is closed) are strictly about style. The downside: You usually can't see cycle progress at a glance. Partly hidden controls are a good compromise. You'll know when the machine is running and sometimes the remaining cycle time. Some models have only an indicator light that tells you when the dishwasher is on.

### Quiet Performance

Some dishwashers sound like an airplane landing, which can be annoying when wash cycles range from 90 minutes to about 3 hours. (By the way, we found no correlation between time and performance.) A caveat: Manufacturers might display a decibel rating, but they average the sound level of an entire cycle (including the silent dry cycle), which can be a bit misleading.





# Best Dishwasher Detergents

Not all products are up to the task of getting dishes clean



Let's hear it for the underdogs of the dishwasher detergent world, the scrappy fighters that clean to the end. Cascade and Finish are the top-selling brands. But Consumer Reports' tests found that two warehouse brands are even better, and Seventh Generation is an impressive contender. Our tests of more than 30 dishwasher detergents—single-dose pacs, powders, and gels—reveal a wide range of performance, not to mention a wide range of prices, from 5 cents to 41 cents per load. "The best-performing detergent pacs clean better than the best powders and gels," says Joe Pacella, the engineer who oversees Consumer Reports' dishwasher detergent tests. "That's because more pacs contain a pretreat solution, degreaser, bleach, or rinse-aid to boost cleaning."

## Lab Tested for Your Kitchen

Imagine that you have a houseful of dinner guests, and the evening ends with plates covered in a sticky sauce and pots coated with stuck-on food. Welcome to our dishwasher detergent lab.

Our testers load four identical dishwashers with glasses, bowls, clear glass plates coated with a mix of baked-on foods, and two stainless pots with baked-on mac and cheese. We run the dishwashers using the normal wash cycle.

When the cycle is complete, we use a scanner to determine precisely how clean each dish is and inspect each item. We repeat this test two more times. We also examine how well each dishwasher detergent helps dishes resist food deposits, water spots, white film, and discoloration of aluminum.

## Detergents That Cleaned Up in CR's Tests

**Kirkland Signature Premium Dishwasher Pacs** from Costco is the best dishwasher detergent we tested. It's tough on food messes, resists food deposits, and prevents water spots and white film. **Member's Mark Ultimate Clean Dishwasher Pacs** from Sam's Club aced most tests, but we found that it had a harder time fending off food deposits.

Both are among the least expensive pacs in our tests (about 10 cents per load), and their performance and price make them CR Best Buys. Pacs, by the way, are also known as packets, tabs, and tablets.

Those two warehouse brands perform slightly better than **Finish Quantum Max Powerball**, **Finish Powerball Tabs**, and **Cascade Complete ActionPacs with Dawn**, all of which score high enough to make our recommended list, among others.

**Seventh Generation Ultra Power Plus Packs**, a detergent with environmentally friendly claims that costs 26 cents per load, comes close to making the recommended list. It did a great job in every test except for cleaning our pots, so if you use this brand, consider washing your pots by hand. **Seventh Generation Powder** performs similarly and makes our list of recommended powders, joining **Cascade Complete Powder**. Both cost about 20 cents per load.

The worst we tested? **Cascade Complete Gel with Dawn**. It left food on dishes and on the pots. Food deposits and water spots were also problematic. If you prefer a gel, try **Palmolive Eco+**. It does an impressive job overall but is so-so for pots. That said, at just 7 cents per load it's a CR Best Buy.

## BEST DISHWASHER DETERGENTS



85  
OVERALL SCORE

**Kirkland Signature Premium Dishwasher Pacs**  
\$0.11 per load



69  
OVERALL SCORE

**Palmolive Eco+**  
\$0.07 per load



79  
OVERALL SCORE

**Cascade Complete Powder**  
\$0.21 per load

## WORST DETERGENT



19  
OVERALL SCORE

**Cascade Complete Gel with Dawn**  
\$0.11 per load



# How to Load a Dishwasher

*Even the best machines that Consumer Reports tests can't overcome improper loading*

Dishwashers that make our list of top models picks deliver sparkling results every time. But even the best of the bunch won't get the job done if they're loaded improperly. Chances are you're doing at least one thing wrong—perhaps cramming in too many dishes or putting silverware and large platters in the wrong place. Although it always pays to check the owner's manual for any special instructions, the following steps on how to load a dishwasher will deliver the best results in most machines.

## Step 1 Top Rack

Place cups, glasses, and small bowls in the top rack. We recommend scraping off big chunks of leftover food, but prerinsing isn't necessary with today's dishwashers. Avoid overcrowding, which increases the risk of breakage and prevents the flow of water and detergent. Dishwasher-safe plastics also belong on the top rack, away from the heating element to prevent warping.

## Step 2 Silverware

Load forks and spoons with the handles facing down. Place knives with their handles up to avoid cutting yourself as you remove them. If your dishwasher has an open basket, mix spoons, forks, and knives to prevent them from nesting.

## Step 3 Larger Items

Put plates, serving bowls, and other larger items on the bottom rack. Oversized items, such as platters and dishwasher-safe cutting boards, should go toward the sides and back so that they don't block water and detergent. Place items with baked-on food

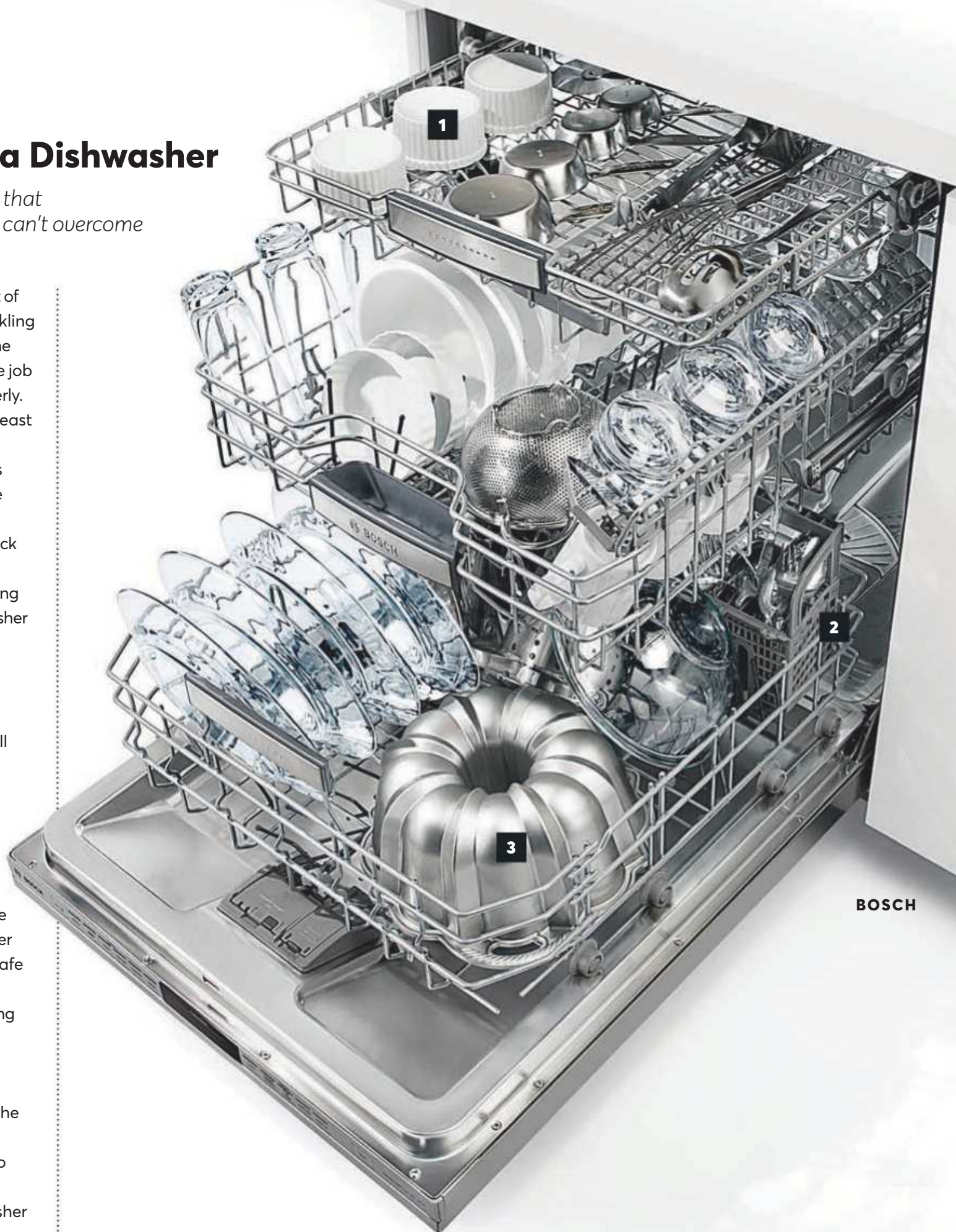
facedown and toward the spray arm. Pots and pans made of aluminum or stainless steel can usually go in a dishwasher. Look for a dishwasher-safe indication on the bottom of the cookware. Otherwise, check the owner's manual or manufacturer's website for specific instructions.

## Other Considerations

Dishwasher no-nos include large

kitchen knives (because the heat and chemicals can take a toll), plus anything made of brass, bronze, wood, or china with gold leaf. We also recommend washing nonstick pans by hand, though some manufacturers say they're dishwasher-safe. Once you've loaded the dishwasher correctly, it's a good idea to run water in the kitchen sink until it gets hot. This will keep the wash cycle from

starting with cold water. You always want to use a top-rated dishwasher detergent. Our current picks include a half-dozen single-dose detergents (led by a Cascade pac) as well as a handful of powders and gels. And last, keep the rinse-aid dispenser filled for fast, streak-free drying.



**BOSCH**



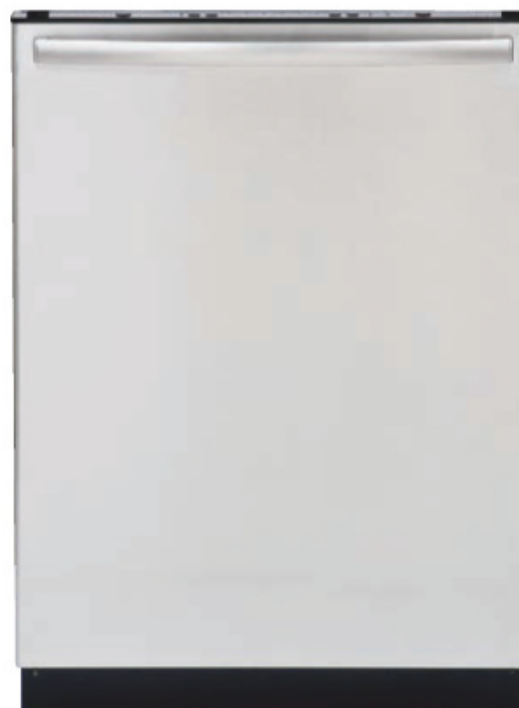
## ✓ Recommended Products

Almost all of the models we tested clean well, are easy to load, and come in a stainless finish. They also use far less water and energy than washing by hand. The picks included here are excellent overall performers, and most have a timed-start feature, a heavy-duty or pots-and-pans cycle, and self-cleaning filters. The ratings rank models by overall performance.

### From Our Experts

*“I’ve recommended this model to several friends and family members, because besides being excellent at washing, its overall reliability and owner satisfaction are excellent. The combination of these three attributes, and the great price, make this top-rated Bosch my pick for anyone.”*

—Larry Ciufu, Senior Test Project Leader



**88**

OVERALL SCORE

**A1** Bosch Ascenta SHX3AR7[5]UC

**CYCLE TIME/WATER USAGE:** 95 MIN./4 GAL. \$540

**\$ CR BEST BUY**  
bosch-home.com



**85**

OVERALL SCORE

**A2** Bosch 300 DLX Series SHS863WD5N

**CYCLE TIME/WATER USAGE:** 150 MIN./4 GAL. \$770

This model is half the price of many other recommended dishwashers, and with its 95-minute normal cycle, it’s also quicker than most. Wash performance and energy efficiency are excellent.  
bosch-home.com



**83**

OVERALL SCORE

**A5** KitchenAid KDTM354DSS

**CYCLE TIME/WATER USAGE:** 125 MIN./4 GAL. \$900

This model aced CR’s tests for cleaning, drying, and energy use. It’s relatively quiet. And though the normal cycle wash time clocks in at 125 minutes, that’s still faster than most of its competitors. It earns top scores for energy and water use.  
kitchenaid.com



**81**

OVERALL SCORE

**A7** Kenmore 14573

**CYCLE TIME/WATER USAGE:** 145 MIN./5 GAL. \$650

This Kenmore dishwasher is one of the best performers among budget washers and earns Excellent ratings on CR’s tests for washing, drying, and energy and water use. It also scores well for its quiet operation. It lacks adjustable tines, however, and comes up short on silverware space, even with a third rack.  
kenmore.com



**81**

OVERALL SCORE

**A10** Whirlpool WDF540PADM

**CYCLE TIME/WATER USAGE:** 115 MIN./5 GAL. \$520

**\$ CR BEST BUY**

This stripped-down model offers a lot of value. It scores Excellent in our washing and drying tests and has one of the shortest cycle times of any washer CR has tested. And on surveys, CR members give Whirlpool dishwashers top marks for reliability. Although some models at this price have a stainless steel interior, which resists staining, this one is plastic.  
whirlpool.com



Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results				Features					
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Washing	Drying	Energy use	Noise	Cycle time (min.)	Ample flatware slots	Adjustable upper rack	Interior material	Self-cleaning filter	WiFi
	1	<b>Bosch</b> Ascenta SHX3AR75UC	88	\$540							95			stainless steel and plastic		
	2	<b>Bosch</b> 300 DLX Series SHS863WD5N	85	\$770							150			stainless steel		
	3	<b>Bosch</b> 100 Series SHXM4AY55N	84	\$680							150			plastic		
	4	<b>Bosch</b> Benchmark SHX89PW55N	84	\$1,700							155			stainless steel		
	5	<b>KitchenAid</b> KDTM354DSS	83	\$900							125			stainless steel		
	6	<b>Bosch</b> 300 Series SHEM63W55N	82	\$720							155			stainless steel		
	7	<b>Kenmore</b> 14573	81	\$650							145			stainless steel		
	8	<b>Kenmore</b> 14543	81	\$700							145			stainless steel		
	9	<b>Kenmore</b> Elite 12793	81	\$1,335							145			stainless steel		
	10	<b>Whirlpool</b> WDF540PADM	81	\$520							115			plastic		
	11	<b>Kenmore</b> 14523	80	\$650							150			stainless steel		
	12	<b>KitchenAid</b> KDTM704ESS	80	\$1,645							110			stainless steel		
	13	<b>Bosch</b> 800 Series SHPM78W55N	79	\$855							160			stainless steel		
	14	<b>Ikea</b> Renlig IUD8555DX [20288920]	78	\$800							145			stainless steel		
	15	<b>Kenmore</b> Elite 14793	78	\$900							145			stainless steel		
	16	<b>KitchenAid</b> KDTM404ESS	78	\$1,215							110			stainless steel		
	17	<b>Bosch</b> 800 Series SHXM98W75N	78	\$1,080							160			stainless steel		
	18	<b>Kenmore</b> Elite 14753	78	\$700							145			stainless steel		
	19	<b>Whirlpool</b> WDT720PADM	78	\$495							155			plastic		
	20	<b>GE</b> Profile PDF820SSJSS	77	\$1,015							150			stainless steel		
	21	<b>Kenmore</b> 13223	77	\$500							160			stainless steel		
	22	<b>Miele</b> Futura Crystal G6665SCVISF	76	\$1,600							140			stainless steel		
	23	<b>Bosch</b> 500 Series SHPM65W55N	76	\$810							160			stainless steel		
	24	<b>Kenmore</b> 13473	76	\$450							160			plastic		
	25	<b>GE</b> Profile PDT855SSJSS	76	\$1,350							155			stainless steel		
	26	<b>Bertazzoni</b> DW24XT	75	\$1,065	—	—					135			stainless steel		
	27	<b>Equator</b> ST6501	75	\$660	—	—					135			stainless steel		
	28	<b>Amana</b> ADB1700ADS	75	\$440							145			stainless steel		
	29	<b>Thor</b> Kitchen HDW2401SS	75	\$700	—	—					130			stainless steel		
	30	<b>KitchenAid</b> KDPE204GPS	74	\$810							135			stainless steel		
	31	<b>KitchenAid</b> KDPE234GPS	74	\$700							135			stainless steel		
	32	<b>KitchenAid</b> KDTE304GPS	74	\$960							135			stainless steel		
	33	<b>Kucht</b> K6502D	74	\$800	—	—					140			stainless steel		
	34	<b>Miele</b> Dimension G6785SCVISF	74	\$1,700							145			stainless steel		



Ratings > Dishwashers

Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results				Features					
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Washing	Drying	Energy use	Noise	Cycle time (min.)	Ample flatware slots	Adjustable upper rack	Interior material	Self-cleaning filter	WiFi
	35	Maytag MDB8979SFZ	73	\$810	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	155	●	●	stainless steel	●	
	36	Blomberg DWT25502SS	73	\$500	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	110	●	●	stainless steel		
	37	Beko DUT25400X	73	\$540	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	110	●	●	stainless steel		
	38	Whirlpool WDT730PAHZ	73	\$450	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	140	●	●	stainless steel and plastic		
	39	GE GDT545PSJSS	72	\$500	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	150	●	●	plastic		
	40	Blomberg DWT56502SS	71	\$630	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	110	●	●	stainless steel		
	41	Beko DDT25400X	71	\$540	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	110	●	●	stainless steel		
	42	Whirlpool WDF330PAHS	71	\$435	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	110			plastic		
	43	GE GDT635HSJSS	71	\$695	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	155	●	●	stainless steel and plastic		
	44	LG LDT7808BM	70	\$1,000	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	145	●	●	stainless steel		●
	45	Whirlpool WDT970SAHZ	70	\$650	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	145	●	●	stainless steel		
	46	Kenmore Elite 14815	70	\$1,050	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	120	●	●	stainless steel	●	
	47	Samsung DW80K7050US	70	\$700	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	130	●	●	stainless steel		
	48	Kenmore Elite 14673	70	\$700	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	135	●	●	stainless steel		●
	49	Bosch 800 Series SHEM78WH5N	68	\$1,185	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	165	●	●	stainless steel		●
	50	Ikea Renlig IUD7555DS [90292264]	68	\$500	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	160	●	●	stainless steel		
	51	Miele Futura Lumen G6885SCVIK2O	68	\$2,000	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	170	●	●	stainless steel		
	52	Dacor Renaissance RDW24S	68	\$1,650	—	—	↑	↓	↑	↓	150			stainless steel		
	53	Samsung DW80M9550US	67	\$785	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	135	●	●	stainless steel		
	54	Viking RVDW103SS	67	\$1,000	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	110	●	●	stainless steel		
	55	Asko XXL Series D5656XXLHS	67	\$1,065	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	145		●	stainless steel		
	56	Maytag MDB8959SFZ	67	\$650	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	170	●	●	stainless steel	●	
	57	Ikea Renlig IUD7555DS [288921]	66	\$350	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	115	●		plastic		
	58	Whirlpool WDF130PAHW	66	\$245	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	160			plastic		
	59	Frigidaire FFBD2406NW	66	\$290	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	125			plastic	●	
	60	GE GDT655SSJSS	65	\$600	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	155	●	●	stainless steel		
	61	GE GDT695SSJSS	65	\$830	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	155	●	●	stainless steel		
	62	KitchenAid KDPE334GPS	65	\$900	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	160	●	●	stainless steel		
	63	Jenn-Air TriFecta JDB9000CWS	64	\$800	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	140	●	●	stainless steel		
	64	LG Signature LUDP8997SN	64	\$1,500	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	130	●	●	stainless steel		
	65	LG LDP6797ST	64	\$700	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	130	●	●	stainless steel		
	66	Kenmore 13803	64	\$300	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	115			plastic		
	67	Frigidaire FFID2426TS	63	\$440	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	130			plastic		
	68	Samsung DW80M9960US	62	\$950	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	130	●	●	stainless steel		●

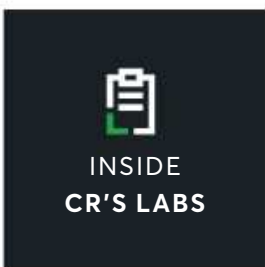
Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results				Features					
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Washing	Drying	Energy use	Noise	Cycle time (min.)	Ample flatware slots	Adjustable upper rack	Interior material	Self-cleaning filter	WiFi
	69	<b>Samsung</b> Chef Collection DW80M9990US	62	\$1,300	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	130	●	●	stainless steel		●
	70	<b>Jenn-Air</b> TriFecta JDB9800CWS	61	\$1,440	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	155	●	●	stainless steel		
	71	<b>Amana</b> ADB1500ADS	61	\$550	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	140			plastic		
	72	<b>Asko</b> XXL Series D5636XXLSHI	60	\$1,300	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	115	●		stainless steel		
	73	<b>Fagor</b> LFA75IT	57	\$700	—	—	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	135	●	●	stainless steel		
	74	<b>Samsung</b> DW80M2020US	57	\$475	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	130	●	●	stainless steel and plastic		
	75	<b>LG</b> LDF5545ST	57	\$550	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	200	●	●	stainless steel		
	76	<b>GE</b> GDF510PSJSS	57	\$520	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	205	●		plastic		
	77	<b>Frigidaire</b> Gallery FGID2479SF	56	\$700	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	195	●	●	stainless steel		
	78	<b>LG</b> LDT5665ST	56	\$630	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	130	●	●	stainless steel		
	79	<b>Electrolux</b> IQ Touch EI24ID81SS	51	\$910	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	190	●	●	stainless steel		
	80	<b>Blomberg</b> DWT59500SS	50	\$1,000	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	140	●	●	stainless steel		
	81	<b>Beko</b> DDT29430X	50	\$1,000	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	140	●	●	stainless steel		
	82	<b>Viking</b> Professional VDW302SS	47	\$1,300	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	140	●	●	stainless steel		
	83	<b>Electrolux</b> IQ-Touch EI24ID50QS	46	\$850	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	120	●	●	stainless steel		
	84	<b>Frigidaire</b> FBD2400KS	37	\$250	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	90			plastic		

**HOW WE RATE DISHWASHERS:** **Overall Score** combines performance test results with survey data for predicted reliability and owner satisfaction, and is based on a 100-point scale. **Predicted reliability** estimates the likelihood that newly purchased models from a given brand, not under service contract, will break

within the first five years. **Owner satisfaction** reflects the proportion of CR members who are extremely likely to recommend the dishwasher they bought to friends and family. In cases where we have insufficient data to provide a brand-level rating, as indicated by a gray dash (—), we assume the model has average

reliability and satisfaction. To score **Washing** performance, we run the normal or equivalent cycle to clean a full load with 10 place settings. (More information below.) **Drying** performance is our assessment of how thoroughly a dishwasher dries plastic cups—a tough task—using our test cycle and a rinse aid, which

improves drying. **Energy** and **Water use** is based on our test cycle. A panel of testers judge **Noise** levels by listening to each machine through its entire cycle. **Cycle time**, rounded to the nearest 5 minutes, is based on running the normal or equivalent cycle to clean a full load. **Price** is approximate retail.



We spend 28 hours evaluating each dishwasher. Our engineers smear a mix of cola, flour, shortening, cocoa, and powdered egg yolk on white ceramic dishes. They bake on the mess in an oven, allow the dishes to cool, and photograph them. Testers then load each machine with 10 place settings of dishes, glasses, and flatware, and run it on the normal cycle. The "before" and "after" versions are compared to determine the dishwasher's cleaning score.



CR test engineer  
Larry Ciufa



## MICROWAVES

# Quick Cuisine

Today's microwave ovens do far more than reheat leftovers or pop corn: Certain models can serve as bona fide second ovens, offering convection baking and browning, among other functions.

Whether you love to cook, rush to pull dinner together, or live on reheated coffee and frozen pizza, a microwave has become a kitchen essential. Defrosting and reheating are common uses, but some of our tested microwaves don't do either very well. In fact, our tests of small (compact), midsize, and large countertop, over-the-range, and built-in models found big differences in overall performance. You can see the results in our ratings on page 97.

## What to Consider

*Before you shop, decide whether an under-counter, over-the-range, or countertop model will suit your needs best*

### Budget

Countertop microwaves usually cost less than the other types, and midsize models start around \$70. Over-the-range microwaves, or OTRs, can be had for less than \$200, but most we tested cost \$400 and up. Models designed only to be built into cabinetry or a wall begin at \$400, but kits are available for certain countertop models that give you a built-in for less.

### Space and Location

Think about where the microwave works best for you, and your available space. Countertop models obviously eat up counter space. For example, the top-rated midsize model is 20 inches wide and 16 inches deep. The best large microwave we tested is 24 inches wide and 20 inches deep. You'll want to factor in height as well.

### Type

Countertop models are the most widely sold. Over-the-range models are just that: They're installed over the range. The built-in category includes models designed only to be built in—either surrounded by cabinetry or recessed into the wall. Microwave drawers fall in this group and can be placed under the countertop or below a wall oven. And certain countertop models can be converted to built-ins with a kit.



SETUP HELP  
CONTROL LOCK

SENSOR POPCORN  
MICRO WARM  
SENSOR REHEAT  
DEFROST  
SENSOR COOK  
REHEAT

OPEN  
CLOSE

5:37

START COOKING  
STOP CLEAR

1 2 3 4 5  
6 7 8 9 0

POWER LEVEL  
TIME 0:00

SENSOR COOK  
1. Fresh vegetables, such as green beans, carrots, and broccoli  
2. Fresh vegetables, such as green beans, carrots, and broccoli  
3. Fresh vegetables, such as green beans, carrots, and broccoli  
4. Frozen proteins  
5. Ground proteins  
6. Ground meats  
7. Ground poultry  
8. Frozen poultry  
9. Frozen seafood  
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11. Frozen seafood  
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99. Frozen seafood  
100. Frozen seafood

dacor



## Focus on Features

More options may sound appealing, but think about what you'll really use before you pay more for them. Here's what to consider.

### Turntables and Trays

They keep food moving for uniform heating. Most microwaves have a turntable that rotates food. Instead of a turntable, some have a rectangular tray that slides from side to side (which might work better for large casseroles or platters).

### Quick Keys

A 1-minute or 30-second key requires just a tap to extend the preset cooking time, maintaining whatever power level was selected. It also allows quick adjustments to your previous settings—pushing the button more than once multiplies the time extension.

### Racks

These let you speed things up, cooking multiple dishes simultaneously.

They may also be used to improve convection cooking by allowing heat beneath the cooking dish. But you could have trouble fitting even a coffee mug in certain models unless you remove the rack, so check when shopping.

### Shortcut Keys

They take the guesswork out of cooking popular foods such as popcorn and frozen vegetables, and certain models have shortcuts for oatmeal, pasta, stew, and grits.

### Convection Cooking, Grilling, and Browning

These features offer the appeal of a second oven in your kitchen. But none of the tested models consistently provided the results you'd get from a regular oven or a grill.

### Child Lock

If there are children in the house, a lockout function helps to keep them safe.



## On the Market

Base your choice on your space and cooking style

Depending on your kitchen, you can choose from countertop, over-the-range, and built-in microwaves. Note that the size of the unit doesn't always translate to usable cooking space. Our research shows that usable capacity for tested microwaves is about 50 to 60 percent of what manufacturers claim. More watts usually means more cooking power, but differences of 100 watts or so don't matter much. Prices, usable capacity, and watts below are based on our tested models.

### Countertop Microwaves

This basic style boasts appealing pricing and easy installation: Just plug into an ordinary outlet—one dedicated to the microwave, or it might trip the circuit breaker. They eat up counter space, so note the microwave's dimensions, choosing the largest capacity for the



WHIRLPOOL



AMANA

available space. Also check the instructions for the recommended clearance around the machine. A stainless finish is common, and convection is becoming more common.

**PRICE** \$50 to \$150 for small/compact, \$70 to \$500 for midsized, and \$70 to \$620 for large.

**USABLE CAPACITY** Most tested models in this category have usable capacity that's about 50 to 60 percent of what manufacturers claim. Usable capacity ranges are 0.4 to 0.5 cubic feet for small/compact, 0.5 to 0.8 cubic feet for midsized, and 0.7 to 1.5 cubic feet for large.

**WATTS** 700 to 950 for small/compact, 800 to 1,200 for midsized, and 950 to 1,250 for large.

### Over-the-Range Microwaves

Known as OTRs, these models free up counter space. But although they can be vented to the outside, don't expect an OTR to vent as well as a range hood. Installation might require an electrician.

**PRICE** \$130 to \$1,200.

**USABLE CAPACITY** Most (75 percent) tested OTR models have usable capacity that's about 50 to

60 percent of what manufacturers claim. Usable capacity ranges from 0.6 to 1.0 cubic feet.

**WATTS** 850 to 1,100.

### Built-In Microwaves

This category includes models designed only to be built in—surrounded by cabinetry or built into a wall. Microwave drawers, for example, can be placed under the countertop or can be installed below a wall oven. The look is sleek and integrated. Certain countertop microwaves can be built in with a kit. Information below is for models designed only to be built in, not for countertop models with optional built-in kits.

**PRICE** \$380 to \$1,100.

**USABLE CAPACITY** We haven't tested enough built-ins to determine percentage of usable capacity compared with manufacturers' claims; Usable capacity ranges from 0.9 to 1.1 cubic feet.

**WATTS** 1,000 to 1,100.

## Keep It Clean

**STEP 1** Use a sponge and hot, soapy water to clean the oven inside and out. A credit card helps to scrape off stuck-on food without scratching surfaces.

**STEP 2** If your microwave has removable parts (a turntable, shelf, or rack), remove them for a thorough hand-washing in the sink.

**STEP 3** Sanitize by placing a bowl of water with a few tablespoons of lemon juice in the oven and running it on high for a few minutes. You want it to get good and hot so that steam fills the cavity. Then wipe the inside of the microwave with a cloth, using the condensation to deliver a deep clean.





## ✓ Recommended Products

Most models did a respectable job of basic microwaving tasks, such as defrosting meats, reheating leftovers, and making popcorn. You'll probably pay more for an oven with a larger capacity, stainless steel finish, lots of presets, and additional functions such as convection and speed cooking.

### OVER-THE-RANGE

**87**  
OVERALL SCORE



**A1** Whirlpool WMH75021HZ

\$370

Our top-rated model earns Excellent scores for heating evenness, defrosting, and ease of use—and it's very quiet. The turntable can be turned off as you wish, and it fits a 9x15-inch baking dish. Predicted reliability was Very Good, and owner satisfaction was Good. [whirlpool.com](http://whirlpool.com)

**83**  
OVERALL SCORE



**A2** KitchenAid KMHS120ESS

\$585

This solid performer is excellent at evenly heating food and defrosting. It's also easy to use and very quiet. Venting is Good, as were reliability and owner satisfaction. It has a sensor and a wire rack for cooking two foods at once. [kitchenaid.com](http://kitchenaid.com)

**82**  
OVERALL SCORE



**A3** GE JVM3160RFSS

\$250

**\$** CR BEST BUY

This GE is superb at defrosting, very good at evenly heating food, and vents well. It doesn't have a sensor to detect when food is done, but if you prefer picking a set cooking time, this model is fine. Predicted reliability and owner satisfaction scores were good. [ge.com](http://ge.com)

### MIDSIZED COUNTERTOP

**82**  
OVERALL SCORE



**B1** LG NeoChef LMC1275SB

\$160

**\$** CR BEST BUY

Excellent overall, this model offers superb heating evenness and defrosting. It heats very quickly and is quiet when set to high. It boasts 0.8 cubic feet of usable capacity, and touch pad controls, but it has no sensor. [lg.com](http://lg.com)

**81**  
OVERALL SCORE



**B2** Panasonic Genius Prestige NN-SD681S

\$180

**\$** CR BEST BUY

This excellent all-around performer impressed our testers during defrosting tests. Heating evenness is Very Good, but it's somewhat noisy when set to high. It has a usable capacity of 0.7 cubic feet, and boasts a sensor and a dial and buttons for controls. [panasonic.com](http://panasonic.com)

**88**  
OVERALL SCORE



**C1** Panasonic NN-SE785S

\$290

The top-rated Panasonic is excellent at evenly heating food, very good at defrosting, fast at heating water, and very quiet when set on high. It's easy to use and has a sensor, which measures the steam that food emits and shuts off the microwave when cooking is done. [panasonic.com](http://panasonic.com)

**85**  
OVERALL SCORE



**C2** GE Profile JES2251SJ[SS]

\$280

With 1.5 cubic feet of usable capacity, this roomy GE offers excellent overall performance. Highlights include excellent heating evenness, fast heating, and very good defrosting. It's easy to use and relatively quiet when set on high. It offers a sensor and touchpad controls. [ge.com](http://ge.com)

### LARGE COUNTERTOP

Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results						Features					
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Heating evenness	Defrosting evenness	Speed of heating	Microwaving noise	Ease of use	Venting (airflow)	Usable capacity (cu. ft.)	Claimed capacity (cu. ft.)	Watts	Detailed prompts	Convection mode	Sensor
A OVER-THE-RANGE MICROWAVES																		
	1	Whirlpool WMH75021HZ	87	\$370									0.9	2.1	1,100			
	2	KitchenAid KMHS120ESS	83	\$585									1.0	2.0	1,000			
	3	GE JVM3160RFSS	82	\$250									0.9	1.6	1,000			
	4	LG LMV2031ST	81	\$350									0.9	2.0	1,000			
	5	Frigidaire Professional FPBM3077RF	81	\$560									0.9	1.8	1,050			
	6	LG LMH2235ST	81	\$400									0.9	2.2	1,000			
	7	Kenmore 83337	81	\$300									0.8	1.7	1,000			
	8	Kenmore Elite 80373	80	\$440									0.9	1.8	1,050			
	9	Insignia NS-OTR16SS8	79	\$200	—	—							0.8	1.6	1,000			
	10	Kenmore 87583	79	\$400									0.9	2.2	1,000			
	11	Whirlpool WML55011HS	78	\$405									0.6	1.1	1,000			
	12	Kenmore 80353	77	\$360									0.9	2.1	1,100			
	13	Kenmore Pro 89393	76	\$620									0.9	1.8	1,050			
	14	Frigidaire FFMV1645TD	76	\$320									0.8	1.6	1,000			
	15	Frigidaire Gallery FGMV176NTD	76	\$350									0.8	1.7	1,000			
	16	GE JVM6175DKWW	75	\$250									0.7	1.7	1,000			
	17	Frigidaire FFMV1745T	74	\$280									0.8	1.7	1,000			
	18	Whirlpool WMH78019HZ	73	\$570									0.9	1.9	1,100			
	19	LG LMV1762SB	73	\$220									0.8	1.7	1,000			
	20	Ikea Lagan IMH160FW [70336457]	73	\$150									0.9	1.7	900			
	21	KitchenAid KMHC319ESS	72	\$600									1.0	1.9	1,000			
	22	Kenmore 80323	72	\$190									0.8	1.6	1,000			
	23	Whirlpool WMH32519F	71	\$340									0.9	1.9	1,000			
	24	Bosch HMV8053U	70	\$630									0.9	1.8	1,000			
	25	Kenmore 80339	70	\$210									0.8	1.7	1,000			
	26	Electrolux IQ-Touch EI30BM60MS	70	\$640									0.9	1.8	1,050			
	27	LG LMV1831ST	69	\$250									0.8	1.8	1,000			
	28	Whirlpool UMV1160CS	69	\$230									0.8	1.6	1,000			
	29	Dacor Discovery PCOR30S	68	\$1,100	—	—							0.7	1.1	850			
	30	GE Profile Advantium PSA9120SFSS	68	\$1,200									0.8	1.7	925			
	31	GE PVM9179SKSS	67	\$585									0.8	1.7	950			
	32	GE Adora DVM7195SKSS (Home Depot Exclusive)	66	\$360									0.9	1.9	1,000			
	33	LG LSMC3089BD	66	\$720									0.8	1.7	950			
	34	Samsung ME20H705MSS	65	\$270									1.0	2.0	1,000			
	35	Kenmore Elite 80363	65	\$500									0.7	1.5	900			
	36	Amana AMV2307PFS	64	\$130									0.9	1.6	1,000			
	37	Maytag UMV1160CS	64	\$200									0.8	1.6	1,000			



Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results						Features						
					Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Heating evenness	Defrosting evenness	Speed of heating	Microwaving noise	Ease of use	Venting (airflow)	Usable capacity (cu. ft.)	Claimed capacity (cu. ft.)	Watts	Detailed prompts	Convection mode	Sensor	Stainless/SS-look option
A OVER-THE-RANGE MICROWAVES <i>Continued</i>																			
	38	LG LMV1683[ST]	63	\$250	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	0.7	1.6	1,000	•			
	39	Samsung ME21H706MQS	63	\$400	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	1.0	2.1	1,000	•			•
	40	GE Café CVM9215SLSS	60	\$670	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	0.9	2.1	1,000	•			•
	41	Samsung ME21F707MJT	60	\$370	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	0.9	2.1	1,000	•			•
	42	Samsung ME21M706BAS	59	\$350	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	0.9	2.1	1,000	•			•
	43	Samsung Chef Collection ME21H9900AS	58	\$540	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	1.0	2.1	1,000	•			•
	44	Samsung ME18H704SFS	56	\$240	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	0.9	1.8	1,000				•
	45	Magic Chef MCO160UBF	56	\$250	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	0.7	1.6	1,000	•			

Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Test Results					Features								
					Heating evenness	Defrosting evenness	Speed of heating	Microwaving noise	Ease of use	Usable capacity (cu. ft.)	Claimed capacity (cu. ft.)	Watts	Detailed prompts	Convection mode	Sensor	Stainless/SS-look option		
B MIDSIZED COUNTERTOP MICROWAVES																		
Ⓢ	1	LG NeoChef LMC1275SB	82	\$160	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	0.8	1.2	1,200						
Ⓢ	2	Panasonic Genius Prestige NN-SD681S	81	\$180	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	0.7	1.2	1,200					•	
Ⓢ	3	Panasonic NN-SA651S	80	\$200	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	0.7	1.2	1,200						•
	4	General GEW1000E	79	\$310	↑	NA	↑	↑	↑	0.8	1.0	1,000						•
	5	Summit SCM1000SS	75	\$250	↑	NA	↑	↑	↑	0.8	1.0	1,000						•
	6	Frigidaire FFCM1134L[S]	71	\$120	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	0.5	1.1	1,100						•
	7	Westinghouse WCM11100SSB	69	\$105	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	0.7	1.1	1,000						•
	8	Samsung MG11H2020CT	68	\$160	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	0.7	1.1	1,000						•
	9	Samsung MC12J8035CT	67	\$500	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	0.8	1.2	900		•				•
	10	Danby DMW111KBLDB	66	\$90	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	0.6	1.1	1,000						•
	11	Magic Chef MCM1110ST	65	\$80	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	0.6	1.1	1,000						•
	12	GE JES1145SHSS	65	\$115	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	0.6	1.1	950						•
	13	Sharp R331ZS	64	\$125	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	0.7	1.1	1,000						•
	14	Breville Quick Touch BMO734XL	64	\$250	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	0.7	1.2	1,100	•			•		•
	15	Cuisinart CMW-200	63	\$250	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	0.7	1.2	1,000		•				•

Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Test Results					Features								
					Heating evenness	Defrosting evenness	Speed of heating	Microwaving noise	Ease of use	Usable capacity (cu. ft.)	Claimed capacity (cu. ft.)	Watts	Detailed prompts	Convection mode	Sensor	Stainless/SS-look option		
C LARGE COUNTERTOP MICROWAVES																		
✓	1	Panasonic NN-SE785S	88	\$290	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	0.9	1.6	1,250	•				•	•
✓	2	GE Profile JES2251SJ[SS]	85	\$280	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	1.5	2.2	1,200	•				•	•
✓	3	Panasonic NN-SD975S	83	\$250	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	1.5	2.2	1,250	•				•	•
✓	4	GE JES2051SN[SS]	83	\$250	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	1.2	2.0	1,200	•				•	•
✓	5	Panasonic NN-SN966S	82	\$250	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	1.4	2.2	1,250					•	•
✓	6	Panasonic NN-SD945S	81	\$215	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	1.4	2.2	1,250	•				•	•

Recommended	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Test Results					Features						
					Heating evenness	Defrosting evenness	Speed of heating	Microwaving noise	Ease of use	Usable capacity (cu. ft.)	Claimed capacity (cu. ft.)	Watts	Detailed prompts	Convection mode	Sensor	Stainless/SS-look option
C LARGE COUNTERTOP MICROWAVES <i>Continued</i>																
	7	Panasonic NN-SD745S	77	\$195	↓	↑	↑↑	↑	↑↑	0.9	1.6	1,250	•	•	•	
	8	Kenmore Elite 79393	76	\$250	↑	↑	↑↑	↑	↑	1.4	2.2	1,250			•	•
	9	Panasonic NN-SN736B	76	\$165	↑	↑	↑↑	↑	↑	0.9	1.6	1,250			•	
	10	LG LCRT2010[ST]	76	\$200	↑	↑	↑↑	↑	↑↑	1.2	2.0	1,200	•		•	•
	11	LG LMC1575	74	\$200	↑	↑↑	↑↑	↑	↑	0.8	1.5	1,200			•	•
	12	GE JES1656SRSS	74	\$150	↑	↓	↑↑	↑↑	↑	0.9	1.6	1,150	•		•	•
	13	Whirlpool WMC50522AWS	74	\$270	↓	↓	↑↑	↑	↑↑	1.3	2.2	1,200			•	•
	14	Frigidaire FFCE2278L[S]	74	\$190	↑	↑↑	↑↑	↓	↓	1.3	2.2	1,200	•		•	•
	15	GE Profile PES7227SLSS	72	\$350	↓	↓	↑	↑↑	↑	1.3	2.2	1,100			•	•
	16	Electrolux EI24MO45IB	72	\$530	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	1.2	2.0	1,100	•		•	
	17	Frigidaire Gallery FGMO205K[F]	72	\$320	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	1.2	2.0	1,200	•		•	•
	18	GE Café CEB1599SJSS	69	\$620	↓	↑	↑	↑↑	↑	0.8	1.5	1,000		•	•	•
	19	GE Profile PEB9159SJSS	69	\$610	↓	↑	↑	↑↑	↑	0.8	1.5	1,000		•	•	•
	20	Farberware Smart Sensor Cooking FMO16AHTBSA	68	\$200	↓	↑	↑	↑↑	↑↑	0.9	1.6	1,300			•	•
	21	Sharp R651ZS	68	\$180	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	1.3	2.2	1,100			•	•
	22	Oster OGYZ1602B	68	\$110	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	0.9	1.6	1,100				•
	23	Danby DMW14SA1BDB	68	\$150	↓	↓	↑	↑↑	↑↑	0.7	1.4	1,100			•	
	24	Whirlpool WMC30516A[S]	67	\$210	↓	↓	↑↑	↑	↑	0.9	1.6	1,200			•	•
	25	Insignia NS-MW16SS8 (Best Buy Exclusive)	67	\$150	↓	↑↑	↓	↑↑	↑↑	0.9	1.6	1,250	•		•	•
	26	Frigidaire FFCE1439LB	66	\$150	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	0.7	1.4	1,100			•	
	27	Magic Chef MCD1811ST	66	\$140	↓	↑	↑	↑↑	↑	1.1	1.8	1,100				•
	28	Kenmore 76983	66	\$130	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑↑	0.9	1.6	1,100			•	•
	29	Samsung MG14H3020CN	66	\$230	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	0.9	1.4	950		•		•
	30	Panasonic NN-SU 656B	66	\$100	↓	↑↑	↑	↑↑	↑	0.7	1.3	1,100			•	
	31	Sharp SMC1655BS	62	\$150	↓	↓	↑	↑↑	↑↑	0.9	1.6	1,100			•	•
D BUILT-IN COUNTERTOP MICROWAVES																
	1	Sharp SMD3070AS	65	\$1,100	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	1.1	1.2	1,000	•		•	•
	2	Sharp Carousel R-1214	64	\$380	↑↑	↓	↑	↑	↑↑	0.9	1.5	1,100	•		•	•

All-Access or Digital members can find the latest ratings at [CR.org/microwaves1218](https://www.consumerreports.org/microwaves1218).

**HOW WE TEST:** The **Overall Score** for over-the-range models combines lab test results with survey data for predicted reliability and owner satisfaction, and is based on a 100-point scale. **Predicted reliability** estimates the likelihood that newly purchased models from a given brand, not under service contract, will break within the first five years. **Owner satisfaction** is based on the proportion of CR members who

are extremely likely to recommend the microwave they bought. In cases where we have insufficient survey data to provide a brand-level rating, which we indicate by a dash (—), we assume the model has average reliability and satisfaction. The **Overall Score** for countertop models is based on lab test results only. Price is approximate retail. **Heating evenness** reflects how evenly a model reheated a dish of cold mashed

potatoes. **Defrosting evenness** is based on how well the auto-defrost program defrosted a pound of frozen ground beef. **Speed of heating** is based on the temperature rise of water that's heated. **Noise** reflects how quiet the appliance is while it's on high. **Ease of use** includes how easy it is to set the microwave without referring to the instructions. **Venting** (airflow) is based on the volume of air drawn in by the

internal fan on the highest setting of an over-the-range model. **Usable capacity** is the usable space based on our measurements and excludes the corner spaces for models with rotating turntables. Note that most over-the-range models allow you to turn off the rotation to fit large dishes. With the rotation off, measured capacity approximates claimed capacity.



## CABINETS

# Planning Storage

The right cabinets are an essential part of a kitchen that's both efficient and beautiful. Learn how to shop for storage that fits your budget and your needs, without sacrificing quality or style.

Cabinets can be your biggest expense when remodeling, accounting for up to 40 percent of your budget. Not only that, they help set the style of your space and can mean the difference between an efficient work area and a cluttered mess, and you'll have them for years. So it's important to make the right choice. Consumer Reports doesn't test cabinets at this time, but our in-house experts can help guide your shopping decisions. Here's what you need to know.





## What to Consider

*Before you start shopping, think about your resources, your wants, and your needs*

### 1. Budget

Cabinets fall into three categories: stock, semi-custom, and custom. Stock cabinets start around \$70 per linear foot. (A typical kitchen has 25 to 30 linear feet of cabinets.) Home centers sell them fully assembled. Stores like Ikea offer flat-pack versions that need to be put together on site. Semi-custom cabinets, which range from \$150 to \$250 per linear foot, come in more configurations, so they'll fit your kitchen more precisely. Custom cabinets can cost \$500 or more per linear foot. They're crafted to your specs and can include personalized features.

### 2. Style

The big decision is between framed and frameless. Framed cabinets consist of a box and face frame to which doors and drawers are attached. Frameless cabinets, often referred to as European-style, eliminate the face frame; doors and drawers are attached directly to the cabinet box. That provides great accessibility and a more contemporary look. On the downside, the absence of a face frame can compromise rigidity. Some manufacturers compensate by using a thicker box—say, ¾-inch plywood instead of ½-inch particleboard. For the European look in a framed cabinet, opt for a full-overlay door, which covers the face frame.

### 3. Storage Features

Accessories (see "Organized Inside and Out," at right) can improve cabinet functionality, but they will also increase the cost by 20 percent or more. You'll save money by keeping features to the essential.



## Organized Inside and Out

Working in a clutter-free kitchen is easier and more enjoyable. Before you order your cabinets, start by making a list of all of the items you plan to store, including pots and pans, utensils, dinnerware, dry goods, and even dish towels. Make sure you'll have easy-to-access spots for everything, plus a bit of room to grow. Here are some popular storage

- options to consider as you plan your layout:
  - Drawer dividers** for corralling small items such as cooking utensils and flatware.
  - Pantry cabinets** that feature rollout trays and adjustable door racks.
  - Slide-out wastebaskets** to keep trash easily accessible but neatly out of sight.
  - Message-center cabinets** that include shallow storage for small items like extra keys, as well as integrated dry-erase message boards or bulletin boards.
  - Toe-kick cabinets** that are installed between





#### Details Count

Extras like glass doors and chunky hardware add a high-end look at any price.

## On the Market

Cabinets can vary greatly in price. Here's an overview of the three main types you'll find at stores.

### Basic

Often called stock, they're inexpensive, off-the-shelf cabinets. Some are fully assembled; others will need to be assembled on site. Many are frameless, meaning the door has no lip or "reveal" around it.

**PROS** They're a money-saving choice if you aren't too picky about style options or don't demand a perfect fit. More of them have better drawers, solid-wood doors, and other once-pricey features. And we found basic cabinet models that held up better than some more expensive ones.

**CONS** Many basic boxes are thinly veneered particleboard rather than higher-quality plywood. Style and trim options, sizes, and organizing accessories are still limited. Figure on an hour or more of assembly time for each set of cabinets.

### Midlevel

These semi-custom models are a sound choice for most kitchens. Many are made with face-frame construction, where a solid-wood frame is visible around the door and drawers.

**PROS** Midlevel models offer many made-to-order custom options regarding size, materials, finish,

crown moldings and other trim, and accessories such as range-hood covers. That can make them the best value overall because you'll get the look you want without a custom price.

**CONS** As with basic cabinets, features and quality can vary considerably. Boxes may be veneered particleboard rather than higher-quality plywood.

### Premium

Short of custom made-to-order cabinets, these semi-custom models offer the most style and storage options.

**PROS** They generally come with plywood boxes and other premium materials and hardware options. Widths may come in ¼-inch increments rather than the typical 3 inches, so they can fit your space perfectly.

**CONS** Though generally less expensive than fully made-to-order custom units, models with the most features and of highest quality can cost as much as some full-custom units. So get a price from a local cabinetmaker before you place an order.

PHOTOS, CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: SCOTT FRANCES/OTTO; ALEX HAYDEN; BARRY CALHOUN (2); KIM SMITH; CHIPPER HATTER

the floor and the base of a cabinet, perfect for holding shallow items such as cookie sheets, trays, and place mats.

**Lift cabinets** with spring-loaded shelves that swing up and out to provide easy access to mixers and food processors, then tuck away when they're not in use.

**Cubby units** that are installed underneath wall cabinets to hold wine or water bottles.

**Vertical dividers** that neatly shelve cookie sheets and trays on their sides. They can be a good way to fill gaps between stock cabinets.







## Focus on Features

What separates a well-made cabinet from a cheap imitation? Here are the features to look for—and what to avoid.

### 1. Drawers

Well-built drawers are critical because drawers get the most use. The best ones have solid-wood sides, dovetail joinery, and a plywood bottom that fits grooves on four sides. Avoid stapled particleboard.

### 2. Hardware

Full-extension drawer guides are better than integrated side rails or undermounted double-roller designs. Some premium cabinet models have a “soft close” feature that stops them from slamming shut. Many models allow you to upgrade the drawer guides as well. As for door hinges, in past tests we didn’t find any significant differences among the different types.

### 3. Shelves

Look for  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch plywood. Lesser-quality  $\frac{5}{8}$ - or  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch particleboard may sag.

### 4. Doors

Most manufacturers offer a similar range of options for all of their price levels. Look for a solid-wood frame surrounding solid wood or plywood panels.

### 5. Mounting Strips

Ask the contractor to use  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch hardwood strips or metal strips with bolt holes. Thinner wood, medium-density fiberboard, or particleboard can be a safety concern with heavily loaded wall cabinets.

## Pick a Winning Finish

Even budget cabinets can make a bold statement if you choose your finish carefully. Hint: For the most modern and personal look, mix two or more.

The finish you choose for your cabinets can set the tone for your entire kitchen. Options include clean and modern looks for contemporary kitchens; deep, rich woods for traditional elegance; and distressed finishes for a vintage effect.

The right choice for your kitchen depends on your personal style—and your lifestyle. “The white kitchen is a true classic,” says Susan Serra, a certified kitchen designer, certified aging-in-place specialist, and author of *The Kitchen Designer* blog. “And it’s popular today as an easy look that can be used to interpret any kitchen-design theme.”

If you prefer a more natural look, consider a finish that reveals the wood grain of the cabinet

rather than obscuring it. Glazed finishes, for example, add soft, translucent color on top of the wood but allow the beauty of the grain to show through. But that finish often comes at a premium price. For those in the market for something a bit more modern, matte and high-gloss finishes are available in almost every color, not to mention trendy metallics, black, and white.

If you can’t choose just one finish, create a layered look by combining two or more. To complement a natural-wood finish, for example, add an accent cabinet in an opaque color such as pale yellow or blue, or in a neutral. Or go bold in one area, such as on the base of the island.

## Get the Installation Right



A good, safe installation can prevent boxes from warping, ensure that doors sit flush, and even keep wall cabinets from falling. When installers come to give an estimate, have a plan handy. That way they can account for the height and type of the new wall cabinets, the soffits, the location of electrical outlets and plumbing, and other variables. Make sure the estimate

includes the removal and disposal of your existing cabinets and any other demolition that’s necessary prior to installation.

Before hiring an installer, talk with suppliers and, if possible, at least three former customers to find out how the work has held up. Ask for copies of the installer’s insurance certificates as well. Certification in kitchen and bath remodeling from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry is a plus; it indicates a high level of professionalism.

For safety’s sake, shore up the wall mountings. And be certain the installer reinforces the mounting strips well if they’re made of thin particleboard. (See “Focus on Features,” at left, for more information on mounting strips.)



**TIP**

Glass doors add a light, stylish look, but place them judiciously. If your cabinet interiors are less than pristine, use them only for display or choose frosted panes.



## Fake a Custom Look

*If you're buying budget-friendly stock or semi-custom cabinets, you don't have to settle for the ordinary. Decorative design elements can give even basic stock cabinets a more personalized look in an array of styles, including country, modern, and traditional.*

**Accent doors**, available in a variety of styles—textured or colored, frosted glass, or stainless steel—can enhance visual interest or create an industrial look, suggests Janet Vanderlugt, kitchens manager for Ikea.

**Moldings**, which range from simple to ornate, can be added to the top, bottom, or edge of cabinets as a finishing touch, or along the bottom of wall cabinets to conceal undercabinet lighting. Just be sure that the style you choose suits your cabinets and your home; consider matching them to existing moldings or trim.

**"Legs" (or feet)** added to the base of built-in cabinets create the trendy look of freestanding furniture. You can find decorative trim pieces, such as moldings, corbels, corner details, onlays, and turnings, for a great price in local lumber stores and home centers.



## COUNTERTOPS

# Counter Intuitive

New surfacing can update the look of your kitchen almost instantly. Here's how to pick a material that offers a style you love plus easy-care durability.

Quartz continues to impress our testers on every front. The man-made stone offers an increasingly realistic look, mimicking materials such as marble, granite, concrete, and more, with easier maintenance and greater durability. To test countertop options for durability, we stained, sliced, scratched, scorched, and nicked 14 materials. We rate materials because we've found little variation among brands. It's important to note that in some instances, a particular finish can also affect a material's performance. So you'll see certain materials listed more than once in our ratings, on page 111.

## What to Consider

*Take these points into account before you begin the shopping process*

### Sample Size

Tiny swatches or pictures can't give you a sense of how the material will look on your counters. So ask for as large a sample as the retailer can get. For natural stone, such as granite or marble, be sure to see the actual slab that would top your counters before installation; natural stone can vary significantly from store samples.

### Mixing Styles

Varying countertop materials looks dynamic and could save you money. For example, you could choose a more durable material for heavily used areas and something less durable as an accent.

### New (and Old) Materials

Laminate, for example, looks better than you may remember, and it's durable and budget-friendly.

### Resale Value

Tile's easily stained grout lines, for example, can raise a red flag for buyers. Stone counters tend to impress potential buyers and could raise the selling price.

### Measurements

If the installer does the measuring, he or she is responsible for any mistakes. Also make sure the contract includes fees for sink and faucet cutouts, thickness of counter, edge treatment, and backsplash treatment.







EASED PROFILE



BEVEL PROFILE



BULLNOSE PROFILE



SHORT OGEE PROFILE



## Focus on Features

*Small decisions can make the difference in looks and performance*

### Edge

The edge treatment you choose will affect the look of your counters. Trimming laminate counters with wood can create a higher-end look and prevent chipping. For stone counters, rounded edges are less likely to chip. Straight and beveled edges give a more modern look, and an S-shaped curve called an ogee offers stone or solid surfacing a more traditional feel. Some add to the cost, so check with the supplier first.

### Finish

Quartz and granite are sold with a polished (glossy) or honed (matte) finish. In our tests, both were about the same at fighting stains that were allowed to dry overnight. Less common are leather and pebbled finishes. Granites with proprietary sealers, such as Stonemark, performed no better than regular granite. Matte and grain finishes help conceal scratches in stainless steel better than polished finishes do, but expect fingerprints. Quartz

performed similarly regardless of the finish, but butcher block and concrete counters performed differently in our tests depending on the sealer used.

### Seams

The joints between two slabs of stone or pieces of material can make or break the look of the countertop. They should be almost invisible in solid-surfacing and stainless steel countertops. For other countertop materials, seams that are 1/16 inch or less are

standard. Wide joints can trap food and grime, and are a telltale sign of sloppy installation.

### Sink

Top-mounted sinks, also called drop-ins, sit on top of the counter. Undermount sinks are installed under the countertop and require a waterproof countertop material, such as quartz, stainless steel, solid surfacing, or concrete. Stainless steel and solid surfacing can be used for the countertop and sink.





**Light Effect**

Pale-colored countertops will reflect light, making any space feel brighter.

**TIP**

Most 'white' stone and quartz are actually gray. Before you order your counters, hold a sample of your cabinet finish against the surfacing to make sure that the colors work together.

## The Worst Stains for Every Surface

You might expect mustard and grape juice to be in a lineup of the worst countertop stain offenders. But of the 20 household products in our stain tests, food coloring and permanent marker proved to be the toughest to wash away. Many things stained bamboo, which is no surprise given its dismal Overall Score. And almost as many items stained limestone and butcher block with an oil-rubbed finish. Here's what left visible marks on other countertop materials:

**BAMBOO (beeswax/mineral oil finish)** Beet juice, coffee, crayon, drain cleaner, food coloring, pencil, permanent marker, rust, and tea.

**CONCRETE (with penetrating sealer)** Food coloring, hot oil, permanent marker, and shoe polish.

**MARBLE** Food coloring and shoe polish.

**RECYCLED GLASS** Food coloring.

**STAINLESS STEEL** Drain cleaner and tarnish remover.

**TILE** Food coloring, crayon, ink, permanent marker, and rust.



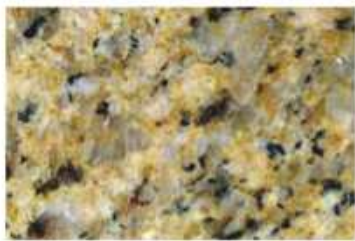


**84**  
OVERALL SCORE

**1** Quartz

\$20 TO \$60 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

**PROS** It mimics the look of stone yet needs less maintenance. A combination of mineral, color, and resin, quartz stands up well to cuts, abrasion, and heat. It comes in vibrant colors and patterns that look like granite and marble.  
**CONS** Edges and corners can chip, and you'll need a pro to repair them.



**81**  
OVERALL SCORE

**2** Granite

\$20 TO \$60 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

**PROS** Each slab of this natural material is unique; rare colors and veining cost more. Heat, cuts, and scratches didn't harm granite in our tests. Polished and matte finishes resisted most stains when properly sealed.  
**CONS** Needs periodic resealing. Chips must be professionally repaired.



**69**  
OVERALL SCORE

**3** Recycled Glass

\$25 TO \$100 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

**PROS** Available in many colors, with large or fine particles. Most resisted stains, cuts, scratches, and heat.  
**CONS** It's the only material for which we found a difference among brands. Cosentino's Eco counters were the only ones that developed a thin crack during our heat tests.



**67**  
OVERALL SCORE

**5** Tile (Ceramic and Porcelain)

\$5 TO \$20 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

**PROS** Tile is water-resistant, heat-resistant, and ideal for use near stoves. It comes in many colors, sizes, and patterns, including wood-look planks.  
**CONS** It chips. The grout between tiles can stain even when it's sealed, and it can mildew. Thinner grout lines and darker grout might help somewhat.



**53**  
OVERALL SCORE

**7** Solid Surfacing

\$15 TO \$50 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

**PROS** Available in a range of colors and patterns, it can be used for counters, sink, and backsplash. Color won't vary much from sample to slab. It resists most stains. Small nicks and scratches can be repaired.  
**CONS** It scratches and cuts easily, so a cutting board is a must.



**46**  
OVERALL SCORE

**8** Soapstone

\$20 TO \$70 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

**PROS** Best for adding the beauty of stone to a low-traffic kitchen. It withstands heat very well; small scratches can be repaired. Slabs vary, so buy from a stone yard.  
**CONS** It is easy to slice, nick, and scratch. Stain resistance is fair. It must be rubbed with mineral oil periodically.



**39**  
OVERALL SCORE

**11** Stainless Steel

\$20 TO \$60 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

**PROS** It repels stains and heat, and doesn't rust or discolor. Counters can include an integral sink for a seamless appearance.  
**CONS** It shows fingerprints, and it dents and scratches easily. Matte and grain finishes hide damage better. Stainless steel can look cold and clinical.



**37**  
OVERALL SCORE

**12** Butcher Block (varnished)

\$20 TO \$60 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

**PROS** It creates a warm, natural look in any kitchen. It's useful for food preparation and is easy to install and repair.  
**CONS** It might need periodic sealing or refinishing to remove cuts, dings, and scratches. Its finish affects performance. Varnish improves stain resistance, and penetrating oils decrease it.



**14**  
OVERALL SCORE

**15** Marble

\$25 TO \$75 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

**PROS** Marble is best for a classic look in low-traffic areas, such as a baking zone. Choose from many natural colors.  
**CONS** It's more porous than granite, so it's not as stain-resistant. It also scratches easily, can chip, isn't very heat-resistant, and needs to be resealed regularly to help ward off stains.

PHOTOS: COURTESY GEOS (RECYCLED GLASS IN OCEAN SHELL); COURTESY CORIAN (SOLID SURFACING IN ELDERBERRY)



**68**  
OVERALL SCORE

**4** Laminate

\$5 TO \$25 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

**PROS** It's inexpensive, easy to install, and so much better-looking than you probably remember, thanks to new printing technology and decorative edges. Stains and heat didn't damage the laminates we tested.

**CONS** Cutting directly on laminate damages it, so use a cutting board.



**39**  
OVERALL SCORE

**10** Concrete (topical sealer)

\$25 TO \$75 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

**PROS** It can be dyed or textured.

**CONS** It may crack. Durability depends on the fabricator's skill and the sealers used. Topical sealers resist stains but not heat and aren't ideal for kitchens. Penetrating sealers resist heat but not stains and must be reapplied regularly.



**10**  
OVERALL SCORE

**16** Bamboo

\$20 TO \$60 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

**PROS** Available in several styles, including a parquet pattern.

**CONS** Bamboo is easily stained, scorched, sliced, and nicked. The maker might warn against using it around a sink because moisture can warp the material. And it might darken over time.

Rank	Material	Overall Score	Price	Test Results				
				Stains	Cutting	Heat	Abrasion	Impact
1	Quartz (engineered stone)	84	\$20-\$60	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓
2	Granite	81	\$20-\$60	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓
3	Recycled Glass (penetrating sealer) <sup>1</sup>	69	\$25-\$100	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓
4	Laminate	68	\$5-\$25	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑
5	Tile (ceramic and porcelain)	67	\$5-\$20	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓
6	Ultracompact (Dekton) <sup>2</sup>	63	\$50-\$100	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓
7	Solid Surfacing	53	\$15-\$50	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑
8	Soapstone (mineral oil finish)	46	\$20-\$70	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓
9	Concrete (penetrating sealer)	40	\$25-\$75	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓
10	Concrete (topical sealer)	39	\$25-\$75	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓
11	Stainless Steel	39	\$20-\$60	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓
12	Butcher Block (varnished)	37	\$20-\$60	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓
13	Limestone	27	\$25-\$75	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓
14	Butcher Block (oil finish)	24	\$20-\$60	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓
15	Marble	14	\$25-\$75	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
16	Bamboo (beeswax/mineral oil finish)	10	\$20-\$60	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

<sup>1</sup> Unlike other brands, Cosentino's Eco line of recycled counters developed a thin crack during our heat tests and was excluded from the ratings. The other recycled-glass products tested were 3-cm thick. <sup>2</sup> Cosentino's Dekton was tested. In our impact tests, pieces of the edges chipped off, and the Dekton cracked into two pieces on samples that were the manufacturer-recommended thickness of 2 cm.

**HOW WE TEST:** Experts at our National Testing and Research Center tested 14 materials in countertops to see which ones perform best. **Stains** shows resistance to 20 common foods and household products.

**Cutting** reflects resistance to damage from weighted chef's and serrated knives used in slicing and chopping motions. **Heat** gauges how well materials resisted damage and discoloration from a pot filled with oil heated to 400° F. **Abrasion**

is resistance to damage from a weighted sanding block. **Impact** reflects the ability to withstand blunt and pointed weights dropped from up to 3½ feet. **Price** is the typical range per square foot, for the material only.



## SINKS

# Covering All the Basins

Cast iron, acrylic, stainless steel—our tough tests show that all materials stand up well to kitchen use and abuse. But stainless is still the top pick.

For months we stained, scoured, dropped heavy objects, and put hot pots in 18 double-bowl sinks. We compared thick stainless steel with thinner versions, and heavy cast iron with lightweight acrylic and fireclay. We found that the manufacturer matters less than the material, so we have arranged our ratings by material. Here's what else you need to know before you choose a new sink (or sinks) for your space.

## What to Consider

*Keep these points in mind before you shop*

### Mounting Holes

Most drop-in kitchen sinks come with mounting holes drilled for faucets. If you're buying a new faucet for an existing sink or vice versa, you'll need to match the hardware to the number and spacing of the holes in the sink. You can install a base plate to cover an extra hole in the sink or countertop, but don't attempt to drill new holes in an existing countertop—you could ruin it.

### Faucet

Replacing a faucet and sink together is easier because the faucet can be mounted in the sink or counter before the sink is put into place. Most kitchen faucets come with a lifetime warranty that covers leaks and stains. But if you have a problem, the manufacturer will give you just the replacement part. It will be up to you to install it.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES









ROHL

## On the Market

*Match the style of sink to your space, needs, and budget*

### Farmhouse

Also known as apron-front sinks, farmhouse sinks usually have a deep single bowl with a faucet installed in the countertop or wall. This stylish choice can provide a traditional or country kitchen look, and stainless steel versions can work well with modern designs. But they're expensive and require a special cabinet, which water can drip on and damage.

### Top-Mount

Sometimes called drop-in or self-rimming, the sink is dropped in above the counter with the lip overlapping the countertop. Top-mount sinks work with any countertop material and are relatively simple to install, so they're a good choice for a tight budget. But a top-mount sink can detract from the look of a beautiful countertop, and grime can build up around the lip of the sink.

### Double-Bowl

Double-bowl sinks have a partition that separates them into two sections. A rectangular shape is most common, but D-shaped sinks with a curved back are available. Double-bowl sinks are handy because they let you do two tasks—soaking and rinsing—at the same time. Note that the narrower sections of a double-bowl sink might not fit large pots, cookie sheets, or roasting pans.

### Undermount

Rather than being lowered onto the counter, undermounted sinks are raised into place from below. They provide a sleek look and easier cleanup because they sit slightly below the surface of the counter, so you can wipe spills and crumbs from the countertop directly into the sink, and there's no lip or crevice to catch dirt. But undermounted sinks are more expensive to buy and install, and they should be used with a waterproof countertop, never with wood counters.

### Trough

These are best for use as prep or bar sinks. They're narrow and long, from 8 to 14 inches wide and up to 50 inches long. Trough sinks are expensive and more fun than functional.

Rank	Material	Overall Score	Price	Resists					
				Stains	Abrasion	Sharp impact	Blunt impact	Heat	Noise
1	Stainless steel	83	\$100–\$600	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️
2	Solid surfacing	80	\$150–\$650	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️
3	Enameled steel	77	\$100–\$400	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️
4	Enameled cast iron	74	\$100–\$500	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️
5	Acrylic	71	\$50–\$250	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️
6	Fireclay	66	\$250–\$1,100	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️

**HOW WE TEST: Overall Score** summarizes performance in all tests. **Stains** shows resistance to 15 common foods and cleaning products. **Abrasion** reflects resistance to damage from nylon and metal scouring pads. **Impact** shows resistance to damage from sharp and blunt objects dropped from up to 20 inches. **Heat** gauges resistance to damage from a pot filled with oil and heated to 400° F. **Noise** is based on sound transmission from a stream of water and the impact of a sharp metal object. Our tests for sink and countertop materials are different, which is why the scores of materials may vary. **Price** is approximate retail.



## Materials Matter

You might not cook every day, but is there ever a day when you don't use your sink? We subjected more than 20 double-bowl sinks from major manufacturers to a barrage of hot pots, scouring pads, dropped weights, and stains. Here, the results of our tests:

### 1. Enamel

These sinks, sold in two versions (enameled cast iron and lighter, less expensive enameled steel), are available in many colors and are easy to clean. Our hot-pot test didn't damage them, but when we dropped a 5-pound weight—similar to dropping a heavy pot—enameled steel sinks chipped or cracked. Enameled cast iron chipped when we dropped a sharp, light object—similar to a knife—on them. Damaged enamel can cause the metal underneath to rust. Acrylic sinks might look like enamel, but they scratch more easily and heat can be damaging.

dropped weights and running water. We found that the gauge had little to do with performance, and sinks with sound-absorbing pads on the exterior bottom and sides were quieter than those with a spray coating. Those with matte finishes showed fewer scratches than their polished counterparts.

### 3. Solid Surfacing

Made of polyester or acrylic resin combined with mineral fillers, solid-surface sinks can be combined with counters made of the same material for a seamless look. In our tests, high heat and dropping a sharp, light object—similar to a knife—damaged them.

### 2. Stainless

More people buy stainless steel kitchen sinks than any other type. We tested 18- to 23-gauge sinks; the lower the gauge, the thicker the steel. We also listened to the noise made by





## FAUCETS

# Water Works

Even the most basic faucets now feature drip-free performance and durable finishes. Spend a little more and you get extra perks, such as hands-free operation and commercial styling.

If you're remodeling or upgrading your kitchen, a new faucet can be an important part of its fresh look and function. You'll find a wide variety to choose from, at all price levels, most with lifetime warranties (for the original buyer) that cover defects and even finishes. Faucets have become so reliable, we found few performance differences among brands. That's why we no longer rate faucets. This expert guide can help you navigate the different options on the market.

### GOOD TO KNOW

#### **Don't Be a Drip**

The average household's leaky faucets can account for more than 10,000 gallons of water wasted every year, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Modern faucets use ceramic discs that turn off when the ports are closed, making them far less leak-prone. Ceramic discs, once a feature of only high-end faucets, have merged into the mainstream. So consider replacing your faucet, if only in the interest of saving water.





AMERICAN STANDARD



## On the Market

There are two main types of faucets. If you are replacing an older faucet, your choice may be limited to the configuration of your current sink and/or counter. But if you're buying a new sink and faucet, consider the pros and cons of each type.

### Single-Handle

Move the handle to one side or the other for hot or cold water, or midway to mix.

**PROS** They're easier to use and install, and they take up less space on the countertop than two-handle faucets.

**CONS** Temperature selection might not be precise.

### Two-Handle

This traditional setup has separate hot and cold handles to the left and right of the faucet.

**PROS** Two handles could allow for slightly more precise temperature adjustments than a single-handle faucet.

**CONS** Two handles are more difficult to use than one, and twisting the handle usually requires free hands—you can't just use your wrist or forearm to maneuver the handle.

### Pullout and Pull-Down

The spout pulls out or down from the single-handle faucet head on a hose; a counterweight helps the hose and spout to retract neatly.

**PROS** A pullout spout comes in handy when rinsing vegetables or the sink itself. The hose should be long enough to reach all corners of the sink.

**CONS** If you have a small sink, you might not need this feature.

### Hands-Free

The best models have an activator on the front of the faucet, so it's easy to locate. Look for the option of switching to manual operation by simply sliding a movable panel to cover the sensor. Less common are foot-pedal-activated models like those used in restaurants.

**PROS** Convenience and cleanliness. Water is activated by a movement sensor or foot pedal, so if your hands are full, or dirty, you don't have to touch the fixture.

**CONS** Some designs hide the activator toward the bottom or back of the faucet, making it difficult to find when your hands are full or messy. Others require

you to tap the faucet to get water flowing, then you'll have to wash the spot you touched.

### Pot-Filler

Common in restaurant kitchens, pot-filler faucets now come scaled for use in the home. A deck- or wall-mounted pot-filler is installed near the stove and has articulated arms to fold away when not in use.

**PROS** Convenience: You no longer have to lug heavy pots across the kitchen from the faucet to the range.

**CONS** Must be connected to a water source behind the cooktop. Unless you're a serious cook, you might not use this faucet much.



## Focus on Features

In the illustration below we highlight single-handle pullout faucets, a very widely used style that combines a spray head and spout for convenience and flexibility. But our findings are applicable to other faucet styles, too. Here's what else to consider when shopping for a new faucet.

### 1. Handle Style

Single-handle faucets are easier to use and install. A sprayer can be part of the faucet spout or part of the faucet deck. The handles on two-handle styles are part of the base plate or are separately mounted, and the sprayer is usually separate.

### 2. Spout Shape

Though faucets with a straight spout are often inexpensive, they're compact, so you might need to swivel the faucet to one side to fit a big pot under it. Gooseneck faucets provide more clearance but can cause splashing in a shallow sink. Whatever you choose, make sure the faucet head swivels far enough to reach into all corners of the sink, especially if you have a wide or double-bowl sink.

### 3. Pullout Spout

The spout pulls out of the single-handle faucet head on a hose; a counterweight helps the hose and spout retract neatly. A pullout spout comes in handy when rinsing vegetables and cleaning the sink. Note that the hose should be long enough to reach all corners of the sink.

### 4. Spray/Stream Selector

Finger-friendly buttons on the side of the spray head let you switch between spray and stream

functions. The buttons should stay in the mode you set even after you turn the water off and on.

### 5. Finish

Tough finishes are common on all but the cheapest kitchen faucets. Physical vapor deposition (PVD) is the best. The process involves bombarding the faucet with charged metal atoms that bond to the surface, producing a variety of metallic finishes. PVD finishes resisted our attempts at scratching them, but corrosives such as drain cleaner can stain them slightly. Chrome—another widely used finish—is quite durable, but a heavy-duty scouring pad can scratch it. Without the PVD finish, bronze abraded easily.

### 6. Mounting Holes

Most drop-in sinks come with mounting holes drilled for faucets. If you're keeping your sink, you'll need to match what you have or get a base plate to cover any extra holes. The base plate might come with the faucet and can be used to cover holes in your countertop if that's where your faucet will be installed. Do not drill additional holes in an existing sink or countertop.

### Bar

Many high-end kitchen designs are including smaller, secondary sinks that can free up space at your main sink and make prep such as washing vegetables easier, especially if more than one cook is in the kitchen. Smaller bar faucets are made for these sinks and often come in styles that match the main faucet.

**PROS** Can be connected directly to an instant hot water dispenser or to a cold filtered water dispenser. Can make it easier for two cooks to work in the space together.

**CONS** If counter space is at a premium, it might not make sense to give any up to a second sink.





# Floor Show

The right material underfoot can set the style of your kitchen, help link it to adjoining spaces, and simplify cleanup. Here's how to choose.

All flooring looks great out of the box, but the true test is what happens once life takes over. Good news: Our tests revealed a variety of options that pair stain resistance with lasting style, many with the warm look of wood that so many shoppers want. In fact, you may be surprised at how fresh some durable "old" materials—like laminate and vinyl—look now. Use this guide to make the right choice for your life, your home, and your budget.

## What to Consider

*These factors can help you make the right choice*

### Traffic

In busy areas, choose a product that aced our foot-traffic tests. For less busy areas, consider one of the top engineered-wood or bamboo floors for their easy installations and natural veneers.

### Setting

Before you buy, pick up samples of materials you're considering. Compare them side by side where they will be installed.

### Certification

Vinyl floors with the industry's FloorScore certification emit relatively low levels of volatile organic compounds, substances linked to health problems and pollution. For wood flooring, certification by the Forest Stewardship Council and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative offers some assurance that it comes from responsibly managed forests. Check packaging for product and manufacturer certification.

### Measurements

To determine how much flooring you'll need, calculate the room's square footage by multiplying its length times its width. (Divide an irregularly shaped room into smaller rectangles, calculate the square footage of each, then add them together.) Then buy 7 to 10 percent extra to allow for mistakes, bad samples, and waste.

### Consistency

Variations can occur from one batch of wood flooring to the next, so buy all of the flooring you'll need at one time, plus a little extra for future repairs. For the most natural look, pull boards from multiple packages when installing.







## On the Market

Consider the pros and cons of each material we test

### Solid Wood and Bamboo

**BEST FOR** natural warmth. Solid flooring can usually be sanded and refinished several times. **BUT** both tend to dent easily, a problem for busy kitchens. Several changed color under ultraviolet light, and some can be damaged by water. Both are somewhat challenging to install. **PRICE** \$5 to \$10 per square foot.\*

### Engineered Wood and Bamboo

**BEST FOR** a warm look and easy installation. This veneer over substrate can usually be nailed, stapled, or glued in place, or "floated" without fasteners or glue. Many can be refinished once. **BUT** they show wear and dent easily, and some can be damaged by moisture. **PRICE** \$3 to \$9 per square foot.\*

### Vinyl

**BEST FOR** practicality and easy installation. Many products resist damage from moisture, dents, stains, and sun (and some from foot traffic). **BUT** even the best still look like vinyl up close. And scratches deeper than the decorative layer will show the color of the vinyl below. **PRICE** \$2 to \$6 per square foot.\*

### Ceramic Tile

**BEST FOR** projects with a bigger budget, though newer floating varieties are more affordable. There is a wide variety of colors and sizes, and ceramic tile tends to resist wear. **BUT** most can't be floated and are difficult to install. Dropped items can crack it, and grout will stain. Fixing a broken tile can be tricky. **PRICE** \$5 to \$15 per square foot.\*

### Linoleum

**BEST FOR** those who want a sustainable, resilient surface and lots of style choices. **BUT** Vinyl tiles offer more choices and better performance overall. **PRICE** \$4 to \$9 per square foot.\*

### Laminate

**BEST FOR** toughness, lots of styles, and easy installation. It can resemble a variety of natural materials and can usually be floated. The best products wear well, and most resist stains and sunlight. **BUT** most dent relatively easily, and laminate can't be refinished. **PRICE** \$3 to \$7 per square foot.\*



## Recommended Products

Top performers usually resisted wear, scratches, and color change better than others of their type. But dents were a challenge for most. Here, we focus on top picks with specific strengths, value, or both.

### ENGINEERED WOOD



62

OVERALL SCORE

**B1** Harris Wood Traditions SpringLoc Red Oak Bridle HE2505OK48

\$5.50 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

Toughness against scratching and staining with resistance to color change from sunlight made this oak product a top pick. It did dent easily. [harriswoodfloors.com](http://harriswoodfloors.com)

### PORCELAIN TILE



94

OVERALL SCORE

**D2** SnapStone Beige 11-001-02-01

\$8.00 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

Do-it-yourself floating installation and resistance to all but denting are the chief attractions of this tile. The 12-inch square tiles we installed were impervious to foot traffic, scratches, staining, and color change from sunlight. [snapstone.com](http://snapstone.com)

## PREFINISHED SOLID WOOD AND BAMBOO



**75**  
OVERALL SCORE

**A1** Lumber Liquidators Builder's Pride Select Pewter Gray Maple 10040807

\$4.50 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

**Ⓢ** CR BEST BUY

This solid wood showed Excellent resistance to foot traffic and stains, and held up very well against scratches.

[lumberliquidators.com](http://lumberliquidators.com)



**71**  
OVERALL SCORE

**A2** Armstrong Paragon Original Ember SAKP59L401

\$7 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

With Excellent resistance to wear from foot traffic, this prefinished solid wood also did well at resisting color change from ultraviolet (UV) rays: It won't fade as much as others might in sunny areas.

[armstrong.com](http://armstrong.com)



**68**  
OVERALL SCORE

**A3** Teragren Portfolio Naturals Wheat TPF-PORTTG-WHT

\$7.50 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

Exceptional resistance to scratching and staining, and a finish that withstands foot traffic better than most other solid-wood floors are chief strengths of this solid-bamboo flooring.

[teragren.com](http://teragren.com)

## VINYL



**97**  
OVERALL SCORE

**C1** Armstrong Vivero D10 Homespun Harmony Rugged Brown U1042

\$4.00 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

This sturdy vinyl comes in planks, and can be floated or glued down. And, it boasts excellent resistance to foot traffic, scratching, and denting.

[armstrong.com](http://armstrong.com)



**94**  
OVERALL SCORE

**C2** Congoleum DuraCeramic Sierra Slate SI74 Golden Greige

\$5 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

Excellent resistance to foot traffic, scratches, stains, spills, and color change, and good resistance to dents make this a durable choice.

[congolem.com](http://congolem.com)



**92**  
OVERALL SCORE

**C3** Tarkett Nafco PermaStone Collection Natural Slate Sand Stone NS-660

\$4.70 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

This glue-down vinyl was stellar in resistance to wear from foot traffic, scratches, and color change.

[tarkett.com](http://tarkett.com)

## LAMINATE



**95**  
OVERALL SCORE

**E1** Pergo Outlast+ Vintage Pewter Oak LF000848 (Home Depot)

\$3.00 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

**Ⓢ** CR BEST BUY

Superb resistance to wear from foot traffic, scratches, staining, and color change from sunlight helped put this flooring at the top of the pack.

[homedepot.com](http://homedepot.com)



**91**  
OVERALL SCORE

**E2** Home Legend Textured Oak Angona HL1224 (Home Depot)

\$2.80 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

**Ⓢ** CR BEST BUY

This flooring earned an Excellent score for its resistance to foot traffic, scratches, and UV exposure. But, its dent resistance was just Fair.

[homedepot.com](http://homedepot.com)



**81**  
OVERALL SCORE

**E3** Lumber Liquidators Dream Home Boardwalk Oak 10043317

\$2.50 PER SQUARE FOOT\*

**Ⓢ** CR BEST BUY

This laminate flooring can be floated without glue or fasteners. It offers superb resistance to foot traffic, stains, and color change from sun exposure.

[lumberliquidators.com](http://lumberliquidators.com)



Rec.	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Test results					Features			
					Resists foot traffic	Resists scratches	Resists stains	Resists dents	Resists sunlight (UV)	Installation	Light shades	Medium shades	Dark shades
A PREFINISHED SOLID WOOD FLOORING													
\$	1	<b>Lumber Liquidators</b> Builder's Pride Select Pewter Gray Maple 10040807	75	\$4.50	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	Nail down or glue			
✓	2	<b>Armstrong</b> Paragon Original Ember SAKP59L401	71	\$7.00	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	Nail down			
✓	3	<b>Teragren</b> Portfolio Naturals Wheat TPF-PORTTG-WHT	68	\$7.50	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	Floating			
	4	<b>Lumber Liquidators</b> Bellawood Natural Hickory 10034423	58	\$6.50	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	Nail down, glue or floating			
	5	<b>Heritage Mill</b> Brushed Vintage Hickory Pewter PF9759 (Home Depot)	56	\$6.00	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	Nail down			
	6	<b>Bruce</b> Hickory Country Natural AHS601 (Home Depot)	49	\$4.00	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	Nail down			
	7	<b>Armstrong</b> American Scrape Oak Brown Bear SAS503	48	\$7.00	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	Nail down			
	8	<b>Cali Bamboo</b> Fossilized Antique Java 7003001000	48	\$5.50	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	Glue down, Nail down or Floating			
	9	<b>Mullican</b> St. Andrews Solid Oak Strip 10930	47	\$6.00	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	Nail down			
	10	<b>Mohawk</b> Raymore Oak Gunstock HCC58-50 (Home Depot)	45	\$6.00	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	Nail down or staple			
	11	<b>Shaw</b> Epic Plus Sequoia Hickory 5 SW539 Pacific Crest 02000	43	\$7.50	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	Nail, staple, glue or float			
	12	<b>Lumber Liquidators</b> Bellawood Natural Red Oak 10034544	41	\$5.50	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	Nail down or glue			
B ENGINEERED WOOD FLOORING													
✓	1	<b>Harris Wood</b> Traditions SpringLoc Red Oak Bridle HE2505OK48	62	\$5.50	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	Floating or glue down			
	2	<b>Heritage Mill</b> Scraped Oak Amaretto PF9773 (Home Depot)	53	\$4.30	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	Nail down, staple, glue or floating			
	3	<b>Mohawk</b> Oak Gunstock HGO43-50 109933	51	\$2.80	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	Floating or glue down			
	4	<b>Home Legend</b> Hand Scraped Oak Gunstock Click-Lock HL16 (Home Depot)	51	\$3.40	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	Floating or Glue down			
	5	<b>Mannington</b> American Hardwoods American Oak Plank Natural AMP05NAL1	48	\$4.00	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	Glue down, Staple, Nail or Floating			
	6	<b>Home Legend</b> Strand Woven Toast Bamboo HL40H (Home Depot)	48	\$3.00	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	Floating or Glue down			
	7	<b>Armstrong</b> TimberBrushed Deep Etched Buffalo Creek Hickory EAHTB75L404	47	\$5.50	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	Floating or Glue down			
	8	<b>Lumber Liquidators</b> Morning Star Ultra Elk Creek Bamboo 10041030	45	\$3.60	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	Floating, Glue down or Nail			
	9	<b>Style Selections</b> (Lowe's) Autumn Hickory ESSH541	38	\$3.00	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	Floating or Glue down			
	10	<b>Pergo</b> Max Heritage Hickory PUH25-13	37	\$4.00	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	Floating or Glue down			
C VINYL FLOORING													
✓	1	<b>Armstrong</b> Vivero D10 Homespun Harmony Rugged Brown U1042	97	\$4.00	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	Floating or full spread adhesive			
✓	2	<b>Congoleum</b> DuraCeramic Sierra Slate SI74 Golden Greige	94	\$5.00	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	Glue down			
✓	3	<b>Tarkett</b> NAFCO PermaStone Collection Natural Slate Sand Stone NS-660	92	\$4.70	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	Glue down			
✓	4	<b>Armstrong</b> Alterna Mesa Stone Canyon Sun D4112	85	\$5.50	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	Glue down			
\$	5	<b>Shaw</b> Matrix Regency Gunstock Oak LX90100706 (Lowe's)	79	\$2.00	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	Floating			
	6	<b>Mohawk</b> Woodlands Vintage Charm MHKIV039392	71	\$3.00	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	Floating			
	7	<b>Armstrong</b> LUXE Plank Timber Bay Barnyard Gray A6861	65	\$5.50	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	Floating			
	8	<b>Lumber Liquidators</b> Coreluxe XD Driftwood Hickory 10040085	65	\$2.80	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	Floating or Glue down			
	9	<b>Stainmaster</b> Washed Oak 737998 (Lowe's)	59	\$2.50	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	Floating			
	10	<b>Shaw</b> Floorte PRO Paramount 512G Plus 510SA Ginger Oak 00802	55	\$3.20	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	Floating or glue down			

**ALERT** Prefinished solid-wood, vinyl, and tile flooring are better choices when it comes to formaldehyde emissions. Just be sure to use glues that don't contain the gas when installing those materials. Engineered-wood and laminate flooring products are made with glues and resins that can emit formaldehyde.

Rec.	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Test results					Features			
					Resists foot traffic	Resists scratches	Resists stains	Resists dents	Resists sunlight (UV)	Installation	Light shades	Medium shades	Dark shades
C VINYL FLOORING <i>Continued</i>													
	11	<b>LifeProof</b> Nashville Oak I106514L (Home Depot)	53	\$3.00	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	Floating	•	•	•
	12	<b>TrafficMaster</b> Allure Ultra Vintage Oak Cinnamon 517115 (Home Depot)	53	\$3.00	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	Floating	•	•	•
	13	<b>Home Legend</b> Oak Graphite HLVT3024 (Home Depot)	53	\$2.80	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	Floating			•
	14	<b>Shaw</b> Floorte Austin Kirby HD82500603 (Home Depot)	51	\$3.50	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	Floating	•	•	•
	15	<b>Tarkett</b> FiberFloor Lifetime Berkshires Oak Harbour Brown 38163 <sup>2</sup>	50	\$2.00	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	Floating or full spread adhesive	•	•	•
	16	<b>Mannington</b> Black Mountain Oak Fireside 080171 <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup>	46	\$1.50	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	Loose lay or glue down (permanent or releasable bond)		•	•
	17	<b>SmartCore by Natural Floors</b> Canberra Acacia 50SLV503 (Lowe's)	42	\$2.80	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	Floating	•	•	•
D PORCELAIN TILE FLOORING													
\$	1	<b>Lumber Liquidators</b> Avella Brazilian Cherry 10043950	95	\$3.00	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	Thinset		•	•
✓	2	<b>SnapStone</b> Beige 11-001-02-01	94	\$8.00	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	Floating	•	•	•
\$	3	<b>Style Selections</b> (Lowe's) Natural Timber Ash 553878	88	\$4.00	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	Thinset	•	•	
	4	<b>Torino</b> Rustic Sequoia Sierra Brown 10109109	78	\$9.00	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	Thinset or float	•	•	
	5	<b>Dal-Tile</b> Forest Park Timberland FP97	76	\$7.00	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	Thinset	•	•	•
	6	<b>Marazzi</b> Montagna Saddle ULG56241P (Home Depot)	65	\$2.00	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	Thinset			•
E LAMINATE FLOORING													
\$	1	<b>Pergo</b> Outlast+ Vintage Pewter Oak LF000848 (Home Depot)	95	\$3.00	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	Floating		•	
\$	2	<b>Home Legend</b> Textured Oak Angona HL1224 (Home Depot)	91	\$2.80	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	Floating	•	•	•
\$	3	<b>Lumber Liquidators</b> Dream Home Boardwalk Oak 10043317	81	\$2.50	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	Floating		•	•
✓	4	<b>Pergo</b> TimberCraft West Lake Oak LF000893 864889 (Lowe's)	79	\$3.00	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	Floating	•	•	•
\$	5	<b>Pergo</b> Max Premier Heathered Oak 672976 (Lowe's)	75	\$2.50	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	Floating		•	•
✓	6	<b>Armstrong</b> Coastal Living L3051 White Wash Walnut	75	\$3.50	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	Floating	•	•	•
	7	<b>Armstrong</b> Architectural Remnants Woodland Reclaim Old Original L3102	62	\$5.00	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	Floating	•	•	•
	8	<b>Home Decorators Collection</b> Distressed Brown Hickory 34074SQ (Home Depot)	60	\$2.00	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	Floating		•	•
	9	<b>Allen + Roth</b> Handscraped Driftwood Oak D2669 (Lowe's)	60	\$2.30	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	Floating	•		
	10	<b>Style Selections</b> (Lowe's) Barrel Hickory Handscraped AR300 658101	60	\$1.50	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	Floating	•	•	•
	11	<b>Shaw</b> Repel Harbour Towne SA589 Sable Hickory 07013	59	\$3.00	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	Floating	•	•	•
	12	<b>Style Selections</b> (Lowe's) Tavern Oak 528976	53	\$1.00	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	Floating	•	•	
	13	<b>Mannington</b> Restoration Collection Chateau Sunset 22300	52	\$4.30	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	Floating	•	•	•
	14	<b>TrafficMaster</b> Handscraped Saratoga Hickory 34089 (Home Depot)	52	\$1.10	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	Floating			•
	15	<b>Shaw</b> Timberline SL247 Sawmill Hickory 255	50	\$5.00	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	Floating		•	

<sup>1</sup> Bamboo product. <sup>2</sup> Square feet per box is not applicable because this product is sold in sheets. <sup>3</sup> Loose-lay installation; requires some adhesive or tape at edges and seams. Can also be glued down.

**HOW WE TEST:** To check for resistance to foot traffic, we use an abrasion machine to see how quickly surface wear becomes noticeable. For scratches, we drag a sharp, progressively heavier rig across the flooring until a scratch is visible.

We leave mustard and five other common household substances overnight on each floor, try to clean them off, then check for staining. To test for denting, we drop sharp and blunt objects from different heights onto each floor.

We measure color change after more than 300 hours of high ultraviolet-light levels. And to measure moisture resistance, we leave a damp sponge on the flooring overnight and soak additional samples for a longer exposure.

None of the flooring in the ratings swelled or warped, and none was notably slippery, which is why neither of these characteristics is in the ratings. Price per square foot is approximate retail. Square feet per box is as claimed.



## PAINT

# Strokes of Brilliance

Our top-rated interior products offer one-coat coverage and easy-to-clean durability, so your paint job will go faster and last longer. And our expert tips will help you get a new look you love, with less hassle.

Walk into any home center or paint store and you'll see just how confusing it can be to buy a can of paint. So we've tested 17 interior paints in a variety of finishes to help you find the best one for the job and your budget. Keep in mind that it always makes sense to buy the highest-quality paint you can afford. That said, price doesn't always guarantee performance. Check our ratings on page 131 before you buy.

## What to Consider

*Take your time deciding on new paint. You'll probably live with the finish for years.*

### Color

Look at the biggest paint chips a store offers. A store's lighting affects your impression of a color, so step outside to get another look in natural light. Once home, place the chips on walls next to the trim, and look at them at different times throughout the day as the natural light changes. Do this over the course of several days, omitting colors that aren't working. Keep in mind that with indoor projects, color tends to intensify over large areas, so it's generally better to go too light than too dark in a given shade.

### Finish

Flat paint has a non-reflective finish, and matte is low luster. Satin and eggshell are easier to clean than flat or matte, with satin being slightly shinier than eggshell. Semigloss is the most lustrous, and typically resists stains better than other finishes.

### Location

Once you've narrowed your choices, buy small cans for testing. For interior projects, paint sample colors on large sheets of heavy paper so that you can move them from place to place without having to paint the walls. Live with them for at least a few days. Observe the effects of changing light on the color throughout the day, both natural light and light provided by bulbs.





## Focus on Features

The features most important to you will depend on the job at hand. Most of the time and expense of painting goes into the prep work, so get a coating that can last longer even if it costs a few dollars more per gallon. Here are the features we consider when testing paints:



### Hiding Ability

If you're changing your wall color from dark to light, you'll need a paint that's good at hiding. The best-hiding paints, those scoring Very Good or Excellent in our test, cover all but the darkest colors with only one coat.

### Resistance to Sticking

Some interior paints never seem to dry completely. They can make a window difficult to open or cause items to stick to a shelf.

### Mildew Resistance

That's especially important in a kitchen or bathroom, where higher levels of moisture and humidity can encourage mildew growth.

### Surface Smoothness

Interior paint should dry smooth, without showing brush or roller marks or leaving a grainy surface.

### Stain Resistance

Satin and semigloss finishes generally are better than flat paints at resisting stains.

### Change in Gloss

Some paints dull, become shinier, or even change color when cleaned aggressively. Semigloss paints are the most likely to change, so consider that when using it on surfaces such as handrails and doors that will need frequent cleaning.

### Scrubbing Resistance

This is very desirable for paints in rooms with lots of activity—like kitchens—that may need frequent and rigorous cleaning.



## 4 Easy Fixes for Interior Painting Mistakes

*CR's paint pros tell you how to fix flubs without much fuss*

Enrique de Paz has tested paints in Consumer Reports' lab for 12 years, and applies his knowledge when painting his home and as a volunteer who helps paint and fix homes in need. "From what I've seen, spreading the paint too thin so it doesn't cover well is the mistake most folks make," says de Paz. "To prevent

this, make sure that when you paint the saturated roller covers an area as tall and as wide as the length of your arm." Here, more fixes for common mistakes.

### Missed Spots

**THE GOOF** Blame poor lighting, fatigue, distraction, or spreading paint too thin for this common problem.



**THE FIX** After the paint dries—usually in about 4 hours—use leftover paint to touch up the missed spots with a brush or roller. Flare out the paint along the outside edges to blend the touch-up into the painted wall. If you do it before the paint dries completely, you'll mess up the paint surrounding the spot.

### Paint Runs

**THE GOOF** Perhaps you're using a long-napped roller, loading too much paint on the roller or brush, or not spreading the paint well.

**THE FIX** Once the paint dries,

use fine sandpaper to remove the run, then retouch with a brush, feathering the edges.

### Roller Marks

**THE GOOF** Using a cheap roller with obvious seams.

**THE FIX** Synthetic short-napped roller covers (¼ inch) work best on most walls, ceilings, and trim. Use longer-nap roller covers for textured walls or walls that have a very uneven surface. Rollers with steel frames and lots of tines are sturdier and stiffer than ones with just caps on the ends, and those sealed ends keep the paint on the roller

cover. Before using a new roller cover, use a piece of tape to remove loose lint.

### Uneven Lines

**THE GOOF** Even our top paints won't look their best if the surface isn't well-prepped.

**THE FIX** Taping. FrogTape Delicate Surface leaves a very sharp line and was easy to remove in our tests. And use a sash brush with a tapered tip. It has a narrow tip that gives you better control. Carefully remove the tape as soon as possible after painting so the paint doesn't dry and stick to it.

## How to Check for Lead Paint

If your house was built after 1978, you're in the clear. The heavy metal was no longer used in household paint after that year. But the Environmental Protection Agency estimates that about 87 percent of houses built before 1940 contain lead paint. Lead can damage the developing nervous systems of children and has been linked to heart problems in adults. But lead in paint doesn't pose a direct danger unless it's deteriorating or will be scraped or sanded. If you're planning to hire a painting contractor, a 2008 EPA rule requires that they be certified in lead-safe work practices. Ask to see their accreditation and find out what steps they plan to take. Plan to do it yourself? Test for lead with an EPA-recognized test kit: 3M Lead-Check Swabs and ESCA Tech's D Lead. Or go to the EPA website to find a certified pro.



## ✓ Recommended Products

These are high-scoring paints that did well overall in our tough performance tests. Among them, CR Best Buys offer the best blend of performance and low price.

**83**  
OVERALL SCORE



**From Our Experts**  
*“All three of the Behr paints aced most of our tests and rated Excellent. Of them, the Behr Premium Plus Enamel at \$28 is also a Best Buy. Whatever paint you chose, stick to the satin or semigloss finish for kitchens because stains will wipe off easily.”*  
 —Enrique de Paz,  
 Test Program Leader

**2** Behr Premium Plus Enamel  
 \$28 (HOME DEPOT)  
 \$ CR BEST BUY  
[homedepot.com](http://homedepot.com)

**86**  
OVERALL SCORE



**1** Behr Marquee  
 \$43 (HOME DEPOT)

Our top-rated paint is self-priming, superb at hiding old paint, and impressive at resisting stains, but not as smooth as some, leaving a slightly grainy finish. It withstands scrubbing, but aggressive cleaning will change the sheen. The paint has low levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), some of the noxious chemicals that can make paint smell. VOCs can cause headaches and dizziness, and they're linked to pollution, smog, and respiratory problems.  
[homedepot.com](http://homedepot.com)

**81**  
OVERALL SCORE



**3** Behr Premium Plus Ultra  
 \$36 (HOME DEPOT)

The Behr Premium Plus Ultra interior paint from Home Depot is self-priming and superb at hiding old paint, and left a smooth finish without visible signs of roller and brush marks. It was impressive at resisting stains and withstands scrubbing, and aggressive cleaning didn't change the sheen much. Behr says the paint has low levels of VOCs.  
[homedepot.com](http://homedepot.com)

**78**  
OVERALL SCORE



**4** Benjamin Moore Aura  
 \$70 (LOWE'S)

Pricier than some, this self-priming paint was excellent at hiding, and once dry, roller and brush marks weren't visible. It was impressive at resisting stains, and withstood aggressive scrubbing, although some of the paint wore away after many aggressive cleanings. Benjamin Moore says this paint has low levels of VOCs.  
[benjaminmoore.com](http://benjaminmoore.com)

Recommended	Rank	Brand & Product	Overall Score	Price	Test Results					Specs			Features	
					Hiding	Staining	Gloss change	Scrubbing	Surface smoothness	Resists mildew	Resists sticking	Resists fading	Self-priming	Claims zero VOCs
✓	1	Behr Marquee (Home Depot)	86	\$43	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•	•	•	•
Ⓢ	2	Behr Premium Plus (Home Depot)	83	\$28	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•	•	•	•
✓	3	Behr Premium Plus Ultra (Home Depot)	81	\$36	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•	•	•	•
	4	Benjamin Moore Aura	78	\$70	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•	•	•	•
	5	Clark+Kensington Enamel (Ace)	77	\$32	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•	•	•	•
	6	HGTV Home by Sherwin-Williams Infinity (Lowe's)	76	\$47	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•	•	•	•
	7	PPG Diamond (Home Depot)	70	\$26	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•	•	•	•
	8	Valspar Signature (Lowe's)	69	\$34	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•	•	•	•
	9	Valspar Optimus (Ace)	68	\$47	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•	•	•	•
	10	Benjamin Moore Regal Select	67	\$54	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•	•	•	•
	11	Ace Royal Interiors	64	\$27	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•	•	•	•
	12	Sherwin-Williams Emerald	64	\$65	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•	•	•	•
	13	Sherwin-Williams Duration Home	63	\$61	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•	•	•	•
	14	Glidden High Endurance (Walmart)	62	\$23	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•	•	•	•
	15	HGTV Home by Sherwin-Williams Showcase	61	\$34	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•	•	•	•
	16	Glidden Premium (Home Depot)	58	\$25	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•	•	•	•
	17	Color Place Interior (Walmart)	51	\$17	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•	•	•	•

**HOW WE TEST:** The **Overall Score** comprises Hiding, Staining, Gloss change, Scrubbing, Surface smoothness, and Resists mildew, sticking, and fading. Self-priming and Claims zero VOCs are according

to manufacturers' claims. Results are based on white and medium-tint bases. **Hiding** is a measure of how well a paint covers a contrasting color mainly with one coat. **Staining** is resistance to water- and oil-based

stains. **Gloss change** is appearance after rough cleaning. Scrubbing is the ability to resist an abrasive cleaner. **Surface smoothness** is the absence of brush and roller marks when paint is dry. **Resists mildew**

is the ability to inhibit mildew growth. **Resists sticking** is the ability to resist tackiness when dry. **Resists fading** is resistance to loss of color from sun exposure. **Price** is approximate retail per gallon.

## On the Market

We generally test most lines from major brands, and we've found that some of the best-performing paints aren't always the most expensive. Here are the types of paints to consider:

### Flat and Matte

These finishes hide imperfections well but are the least stain-resistant, so they're better for low-traffic areas.

### Eggshell and Satin

Use them on smooth, well-prepped walls because their shine can accentuate imperfections. These paints are ideal for kitchens. Some might change sheen when scrubbed.

### Semigloss

Shinier still, these paints are formulated to stand up to stains. They're generally the easiest to clean, but some tend to dull when scrubbed. They're ideal for very smooth kitchen walls.



## APPLIANCE STORES

# Where to Shop and Save

Some retailers offer great selection, attractive prices, and helpful service, and others fall short. Our exclusive survey reveals the winners and losers.

If you need to replace an appliance, you can't go wrong by shopping at Abt Electronics and Appliances or at amazon.com. Both retailers got high marks from more than 42,000 Consumer Reports' members who told us about their experiences buying more than 62,000 major and small appliances from chain and independent retailers and manufacturers across the country.

ONCE AGAIN, we found that the biggest stores weren't necessarily the best. Abt, for example, has one store in suburban Chicago but ships across the country. It topped our ratings of major appliance retailers for the eighth year in a row. Not to be outdone, it was the 12th year that Amazon was among the top small appliance sellers.

### Where the Buyers Are

While most appliance purchases are still made in walk-in stores, online purchases are growing. Forty-three percent of small appliance purchases are made online, a significant increase over three years ago, when 25 percent of small appliances were bought online. For major appliances, the increase was more modest: 14 percent of major appliances are bought online, up from 11 percent three years ago.

Furthermore, more than three out of five small appliance purchases made online were made at amazon.com. Lowe's tops large appliance sales, accounting for about a quarter of all major appliance purchases.

### The Shopping Process

Even though most appliances are purchased at a walk-in store, four out of five major and small appliance shoppers use the internet to check reviews. About 70 percent of appliance shoppers visit a retailer's website before making a purchase at its store or website.

Alternatively, 36 percent of shoppers who buy a major appliance online and 11 percent of online small appliance shoppers check out products at a walk-in store first, a practice called show-rooming. Almost half the shoppers who buy their appliances at costco.com and about 40 percent of those who buy their appliances from the websites of Lowe's, Home Depot, or Best Buy visit a physical showroom first. For small appliances, shoppers buying online at Target, Costco, Bed Bath & Beyond, and Williams-Sonoma are the most likely to visit a store beforehand.





### It Pays to Haggle

Most appliance shoppers say they don't attempt to negotiate a better price. But most shoppers who try it end up getting a lower price. Thirty percent of major appliance shoppers haggled for a better price, and those who succeeded ended up saving a median of \$98. Only a small percentage of small appliance shoppers tried to get a lower price. Those who triumphed ended up saving a median of \$40.

The most common tactic used by successful hagglers was just asking for a better price upfront. Referring to prices offered by other retailers was also helpful. Online shoppers who tried to haggle were almost as successful at getting a discount as in-store shoppers.

### Shopping Gripes

We asked members to name a retailer where they shopped but did not purchase what they were looking for. They told us about the gripes they have with that retailer, and the most commonly reported complaint is high prices. Many shoppers also complained of out-of-stock products, a lack of brand or model choices, and limited display models. In-store shoppers also cited lack of sales help or salespeople who did not seem knowledgeable about the products.



### Warranties and Service

One out of every five major appliance shoppers buys an extended warranty or service contract, and only 3 percent of small appliance buyers do the same. Once again our survey shows that P.C. Richard & Son is the pushiest retailer when it comes to pressuring shoppers into an extended warranty to cover a

major appliance. Sears was also found to be pushier than most other retailers.

Keep in mind that if you are considering a warranty, the period of coverage may differ from retailer to retailer—so the cost of the warranties may vary. Overall, the median price paid for a major appliance extended warranty or service contract in our survey was \$126.

## How to Make Kitchen Appliances Last Longer

*Appliances suffer from misuse and lack of maintenance. Here's what to do to get the most out of your machines.*

Keeping an appliance in good running order doesn't require a lot of effort if you take the time to clean it periodically. Here are some simple maintenance tips from CR's experts.

### Refrigerators

Don't pack it too full—so that air can circulate freely and the compressor doesn't have to work overtime. Clean the compressor

coils every few months. Check the manual for the coils' location, then vacuum with the brush attachment. Wipe door gaskets with mild detergent and water, not bleach. Clean stainless steel with dish soap, water, and a sponge, or use a cleaner recommended by the manufacturer.

### Dishwashers

When loading, make sure the

silverware and dishes won't catch and damage the spray arms. If your dishwasher has a manual-clean filter, clean it according to the manufacturer's instructions. Wipe down the door gasket from time to time.

### Ranges

On a smoothtop, place heavy pots and pans gently and never drag them from one element

to another. For gas cooktop burners, clean food particles from between the slots in the burner head to ensure an even flame, and use a needle or straight pin to carefully clean a clogged burner ignition port. Keep the oven free of food buildup by periodically using the self-cleaning feature or cleaning manually, per the manufacturer's instructions.

**GOOD TO KNOW**

**Ways to Save**

Look for big discounts on large appliances on three-day holiday weekends, in November, and even right after the year-end holidays. If you can't wait to replace your appliance, you can still save. Scour the websites of manufacturers and retailers for special offers, rebates, and discounts on overstocked items. The offers typically apply to specific models purchased within certain time frames, and if there's a rebate, you'll need to mail it in or submit it online by the deadline that's spelled out.

**RATINGS GUIDE:** Reader Score represents overall satisfaction with the retail experience. A score of 100 means all respondents are completely satisfied; 80, "very satisfied," on average; 60, "somewhat satisfied." Differences of fewer than 5 points aren't meaningful. Other attributes under Survey Results reflect average scores on a scale from "very poor" to "excellent." Ratings are based on CR members who may not be representative of the general U.S. population. Dashes ("—") indicate insufficient sample sizes to provide a rating or that an attribute is not applicable to a retailer.

Retailer	Reader Score	Survey Results								
		Price paid	Selection	Service	In-store atmosphere	Website usability	Shipping/Delivery	Installation	Haul-away	
MAJOR APPLIANCES										
Abt Electronics and Appliances	93	↑	↑↑	↑	↑↑	↑↑	↑↑	↑↑	↑↑	↑↑
Amazon.com	92	↑	↑	—	—	↑↑	↑	—	—	
Costco	91	↑↑	↓	↓	—	↑	↑	↑	↑↑	
Nebraska Furniture Mart	91	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	
R.C. Willey Home Furnishings	91	↑	↑	↑	↑	—	↑	↑	↑	
Warner's Stellan Appliance	90	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	
Independents	90	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	
Spencer's TV & Appliance	89	↑	↑	↑	↑	—	↑	↑	↑	
Albert Lee Appliance Co.	88	↓	↑	↑	↑	—	↑	—	—	
Ferguson	88	↓	↑	↑	↑	—	—	—	—	
Grand Appliance & TV	88	↓	↑	↑	↑	—	↑	↑	↑	
Manufacturers' websites	87	↑	↓	—	—	↓	↑	—	—	
Sears Hometown Stores	86	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	
Bray & Scarff	85	↓	↓	↑	↑	—	↑	—	—	
Lowe's	85	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	
Best Buy	85	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	
P.C. Richard & Son	84	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	
BrandsMart USA	84	↑	↑	↓	—	—	—	—	—	
Home Depot	84	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	
Pacific Sales	83	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	
Sears	82	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	
Menards	80	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	—	—	—	
SMALL APPLIANCES										
Abt Electronics and Appliances	93	↑	↑	↑	—	↑	↑	—	—	
Amazon.com	93	↑	↑	↓	—	↑↑	↑↑	—	—	
Williams-Sonoma	91	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	—	—	
QVC.com	91	↑	↓	↑	—	↑	↑	—	—	
Costco	91	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	—	—	
Manufacturers' websites	90	↓	↑	↑	—	↑	↑	—	—	
Independents	89	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	—	—	
Bed Bath & Beyond	88	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	—	—	
Kohl's	87	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	—	—	
BJ's	87	↑	↓	—	↓	—	—	—	—	
Macy's	86	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	—	—	
Sam's Club	86	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	—	—	—	
Sears Hometown Stores	86	↓	↓	↓	↓	—	—	—	—	
Best Buy	85	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	—	—	
P.C. Richard & Son	84	↓	↓	↓	↓	—	—	—	—	
Target	83	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	—	—	
Lowe's	83	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	—	—	—	
Home Depot	83	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	—	—	
Menards	82	↓	↓	↓	↓	—	—	—	—	
Sears	81	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	—	—	
Kmart	81	↓	↓	—	↓	—	—	—	—	
Walmart	80	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	—	—	





**DESIGN NOTES**

**Update**

5 Top, deVOL Kitchens, [devolkitchens.co.uk](http://devolkitchens.co.uk)

**Better, and Bigger**

8-11 Kate Roos Design, [kateroosdesign.com](http://kateroosdesign.com)

**Fast Face-Lift**

12-15 Amy Hughes, [salvagestylenj.com](http://salvagestylenj.com); Nest Studio, [neststudiocollection.com](http://neststudiocollection.com)

**Remodeling Secrets of the Pros**

16-19 Leslie Sachs, Breathing Room Design, [breathingrm.com](http://breathingrm.com)  
 21 Clockwise from left: Christine Donner Kitchen Design, Inc., [donnerkitchens.com](http://donnerkitchens.com); Janet Hamilton, Paint It Like New Inc., [paintitlikew.com](http://paintitlikew.com); Sarah Trumbore, [ststudioinc.com](http://ststudioinc.com); Lake Flato, [lakeflato.com](http://lakeflato.com)

**Clearing the Clutter**

22 Aimee Griffin, LIVWEL Design, [livwel.net](http://livwel.net)  
 24 Emily Tucker, [etuckerdesign.com](http://etuckerdesign.com)  
 25 Top right, Lotte Kragh, Abita Studio Architecture, [abitastudio.com](http://abitastudio.com). Middle row from left: Julie Deuble,

Sierra Construction, [jdeuble.houzz.com](http://jdeuble.houzz.com); Joanna Goodman, Christopher Architects, [christopherai.com](http://christopherai.com); Jim McVeigh, KSI Kitchen & Bath, [ksikitchens.com](http://ksikitchens.com). Bottom right, Pamela Dailey Design, [pameladailey.com](http://pameladailey.com)  
 26 Meredith McBride Kipp, [mcbridekipp.com](http://mcbridekipp.com) and Jennifer Vreeland, [jvdesignstyle.com](http://jvdesignstyle.com)  
 27 Studio Dearborn, [studiodearborn.com](http://studiodearborn.com)

**Weekend Makeovers**

28 Lucas Studio, Inc., [lucasstudioinc.com](http://lucasstudioinc.com)  
 29 Kureck Jones, [kureckjones.com](http://kureckjones.com)  
 30 Mary Clark, [shopoutpost.com](http://shopoutpost.com)  
 31 Bottom, Martha O'Hara Interiors, [oharainteriors.com](http://oharainteriors.com)

**BUYING GUIDE**

**Refrigerators**

35 GE, [geappliances.com](http://geappliances.com)

**Ranges**

53 Thermador, [thermador.com](http://thermador.com)

**Cooktops**

67 LG, [lg.com](http://lg.com)

**Wall Ovens**

75 Dacor, [dacor.com](http://dacor.com)

**Range Hoods**

80 Teresa Cain of Interior Solutions Design Group, [interiorsolutionsdesigngroup.com](http://interiorsolutionsdesigngroup.com)  
 71 Right, Joanna Goodman of Christopher Architecture & Interiors, [christopherai.com](http://christopherai.com)

**Dishwashers**

83 KitchenAid, [kitchenaid.com](http://kitchenaid.com)

**Microwaves**

93 Dacor, [dacor.com](http://dacor.com)

**Cabinets**

101 Sophie Burke Design, [sophieburkedesign.com](http://sophieburkedesign.com)  
 102 Top left, Liselotte Kragh of Abita Studio, [abitastudio.com](http://abitastudio.com)  
 102-103 Middle, Kelly Deck Design, [kellydeck.com](http://kellydeck.com)  
 103 Bottom from left, Merillat, [merillat.com](http://merillat.com); Lynda Fisher, The Countertop Shoppe, [mycountertopshoppe.com](http://mycountertopshoppe.com); Julie Deuble of Sierra Unlimited Construction, [houzz.com/pro/jdeuble](http://houzz.com/pro/jdeuble); Troico, [troico.ca](http://troico.ca)  
 105 Top, Anna Burke Interiors, [annaburkeinteriors.com](http://annaburkeinteriors.com); bottom, Matthew Rhodes of Rhodes Creations, [rhodescreations.com](http://rhodescreations.com)

**Countertops**

108 Right, Kate Roos Design, [kateroosdesign.com](http://kateroosdesign.com)  
 110 3. GEOS, [eos-surfaces.com](http://eos-surfaces.com), Recycled Glass in Ocean Shell; 7. Corian, [corian.com](http://corian.com), Solid Surfacing in Elderberry

**Sinks**

115 Clockwise from top: Kohler, [kohler.com](http://kohler.com); BLANCO, 518169 1-3/4 Quatrus Bowl, [blanco-germany.com](http://blanco-germany.com); Wilsonart ADA Kitchen Solid Surface Sink, [wilsonart.com](http://wilsonart.com)

**Faucets**

118-119 Think Chic Interiors Interior Design, [thinkchicinteriors.com](http://thinkchicinteriors.com)

**Paint**

128-129 Leah Muller Interiors, [leahmullerinteriors.com](http://leahmullerinteriors.com)

**Cover**

Keough Stearns Interiors, [keoughstearnsinteriors.com](http://keoughstearnsinteriors.com); Veronica Campbell, Deane Inc., [deaneinc.com](http://deaneinc.com)

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