



Factors to Consider

When purchasing a new cooker

Fuel Supply

2

.....
Gas · Electric · Dual Fuel · Oil

Energy Efficiency

4

.....
Save Money · Save The Planet

Fitting

4

.....
Slot-in Cookers · Integrated ovens · Range Cookers

Size & Measuring

6

.....
Find the right cooker for your kitchen

Functions

7

.....
Double · Fan · Grills · Self-cleaning · Hobs

Additional Functions

10

.....
Controls & Timers · Cooker Hoods · Safety devices · Volume

Gas

If you are looking for a responsive cooker which heats up quickly, a gas fueled cooker is the ideal solution for you. The temperature of the zoned oven can be individually controlled, allowing you to cook a variety of dishes at different speeds. However, you will need to remember to preheat to ensure your food is sufficiently cooked all the way through.

Be sure to check your gas connection before you buy a cooker as some rural areas do not have the resources for mains gas. If you do have a mains gas supply, you will need to make sure it is 1.5 metres from where you plan to install your cooker.

LPG cylinders/bottles provide the perfect option if you want the advantages of a gas cooker but aren't within easy access of a mains gas supply. Make sure you check with your manufacturer before buying the cooker as some appliances are not designed for LPG use.

REMEMBER:



All gas appliances must be installed by a Gas Safe installer to ensure a correct installation is carried out for complete safety.



Electric

Electric cookers can take longer to heat up than gas. That said, for those with a fanned oven, preheating and cooking times will be much faster and the temperature is evenly distributed throughout the appliance. As the air circulates throughout the cooker, you are able to rustle up several strong-flavoured recipes without the flavours transferring from dish to dish.

Depending on your preferences and budget, there are three different hob types available for electric cookers:

- Solid plate (simple and affordable)
- Ceramic (excellent balance between safety, performance and cost)
- Induction (state-of-the-art cooking technology which gives precise control over the hob)



REMEMBER:

Electric cookers must be within easy reach of a suitable power socket and should be installed by a qualified electrician. It is also important to note that the electric supply must be checked as varying cooker designs, such as induction or ceramic, may need a different electric supply.



Dual Fuel

A dual fuel cooker combines the best of both worlds; the responsiveness of a gas hob with the faster uniform heat electric design. As one of the most popular choices, dual fuel lets you cook with total care on the hob and consistency in the oven, balancing time and heat for professional cooking at home.

REMEMBER:

Dual fuel cookers will need to be fitted by an expert Gas Safe Registered installer and the electric oven part of the design will also need to be hard-wired by a qualified electrician.

Oil

Oil is an all-round efficient option as it can fuel your home's central heating and hot water boiler as well as a cooker. They are a reliable design which will not let you down in the event of a power cut as most models work without the use of electricity, meaning you will become very popular during these cold winter months!

Thorough care of your oil cooker will mean very low emissions are produced and virtually no mess.

Features include:

- excellent cooking results
- larger design and more ovens than a conventional stove
- all year round warmth
- focal feature of kitchen and talking point amongst friends!

REMEMBER:

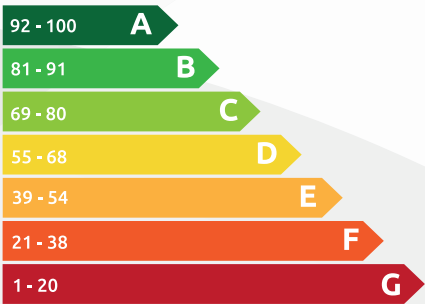
To fuel the cooker and boiler, the tank must be alongside your home and it is important to fill your oil tank up regularly to avoid running out of oil.



Energy Efficiency

Energy efficient designs are a great way of saving money on your fuel bills while helping the planet with a more environmentally friendly option. All quality cookers should be graded A+ - G depending on their energy consumption and usage. Gas ovens and cookers, grill compartments and ovens with an built-in microwave are not included in this testing.

Make sure you keep an eye out for cookers rated A+/A as these are the most efficient products on the market.



Fitting

Slot-in cookers

Advantages:

For those of you who have limited space available in your kitchen and don't want built-in units, slot-in cookers provide the most economic solution. These stylish free-standing designs are ideal if you are looking for:

- extra flexibility
- easy installation
- affordable investment

Disadvantages:

The downside of a slot-in appliance is that it is more on display compared with other integrated designs which are hidden into the room seamlessly.

REMEMBER:

To avoid any potential heat damage to your kitchen, it is recommended that you leave a gap of at least 5cm around your free-standing cooker.



TOP TIP:

Once you have purchased a new cooker, switch the oven on with nothing inside for an hour or two so your food doesn't taste funny when you use it for the first time!

Integrated ovens

Advantages:

If you are looking for a sleek and stylish cooker, integrated ovens are proving to be more and more popular with homeowners. The built-in design of integrated ovens means appliances can be installed behind cupboard doors in your kitchen, ensuring a neater appearance and providing more room to get creative! An additional advantage of having built-in ovens and hobs is that it is significantly easier to mix and match electricity and gas supplies.

Disadvantages:

The major disadvantage of integrated ovens is that once they're put in position they're difficult to remove, making tasks such as cleaning or fixing leaks rather challenging.



Range Cookers

Advantages:

Available with more cooking hobs, zones and cavities than a standard oven, range cookers are an ideal choice for larger families looking to cook several different dishes at the same time. Modern designs combine state-of-the-art technology with user-friendly features, so you will have no problem creating your favourite dishes.

Depending on the design, benefits can include:

- Choice of gas, electric or dual fuel supply with the option of a gas, ceramic or induction hob
- Larger oven (double oven if you prefer)
- Fan/fan assisted
- Rapid response for instant heat-up times
- One or two high-powered grills
- Slow cooking cavities
- Built-in storage drawer
- Griddles, hot plates and wok burner
- Conventional
- Multifunction - defrost, rotisserie, fan grill

Disadvantages:

Modern range cookers can be rather expensive so make sure you do your research before committing to any purchases. It is also worth noting that induction hobs are significantly more expensive than gas hobs so be sure to check what your property requires before investing in anything.





Size & Measuring

The design of the cooker you are looking to buy will depend on the size and style of your kitchen and how much space is on offer. Before you begin your search for your new cooker, you must measure the space in your property where you are planning to put it so there is easy access to the fuel source and room for it to fit in comfortably.

Things to consider:

- Leave enough room between the cooker and countertop
- Make sure there is space for the cooker door to open
- Check for any obstructions in the allocated space, such as gas pipes or wiring
- There must be a small gap left either side of the cooker to allow air to circulate

Integrated cookers:

Typically, there are two standard widths: 50cm (slimline) and 60cm (regular), although this can differ depending on the brand. All cookers are designed in line with the standard size of a kitchen unit, measuring approximately 90cm high and 60cm deep (there are some exceptions to this rule).

Range cookers:

These are free-standing appliances and can be much larger than regular cookers ranging between 70cm and 150cm wide, so measure the depth of the available space to ensure the appliance will fit in easily.

Functions

If you enjoy creating flavoursome dishes for family and friends, or fancy yourself as the next Mary Berry with your tasty baked treats, there are plenty of cooker functions available to suit your preferences...

Double ovens

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- These give you much more flexibility, allowing you to cook separate dishes in the bottom and top ovens at the same time
- The bottom is usually a full-sized multifunction or fan oven and the top is a conventional oven with a grill at the top, providing you with extra capacity as well as the option to set each oven to a different temperature



Fan ovens

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- The fan operates with a circular heating element around it in the rear wall of the oven ensuring the temperature is even throughout the appliance
- With high-end ovens you have the option to cook foods with strong flavours at the same time without the ruining their taste as the circulating air breaks up odours and fat particles
- The oven heats up very quickly which reduces cooking times and saves energy



Multifunction

- Most multifunction ovens combine a fan and conventional oven together with grill and fan/grill roasting. This gives complete flexibility of cooking using different heating elements and a fan to ensure the food is cooked at an even temperature.
- There are also other cooking modes available, including bottom heat only (to crisp your pies), top heat only (for browning), rotisserie or a defrost setting.



Grills

- Many grill designs feature variable controls so you can set the correct cooking temperature for your dish
- To control the cooking on fixed grills, the grill pan must be raised or lowered to the required position
- High speed grills heat up much quicker and speed up cooking time while saving energy in the process



Self-cleaning

Keeping your oven in a clean and hygienic condition after use is extremely important but can be rather time consuming. There are two self-cleaning liners available to make this job a little easier:

1. Easy-clean enamel oven liners

- This provides a smooth coating which is resistant to chipping and burned-on grease, requiring much less effort to wipe down
- It is considered the cheapest option available as manual cleaning is still required

2. Catalytic oven liners

- This is a specially treated coating which absorbs any grease or food residue when the oven reaches 200°C making it much easier to wipe down
- If you don't cook over this temperature, it is advised that you should turn your oven up for an hour every few months to keep the liners in top working order



Hobs

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1. Gas Hobs

- The flame on the gas burner hob allows for easy temperature control as the heat is visible
- Some auto ignition hobs have the advantage of reignition if the burner is blown out
- Others have flame failure safety devices so the gas supply switches off if the flame on the burner extinguishes

2. Electric sealed plates

- These plates deliver on both style and practicality, providing a traditional look while evenly distributing heat across the bottom of a saucepan. They can accommodate any type of flat base saucepan and are ideally suited to cast iron cookware
- Proving to be a cost-effective option, all heat is conducted into the pans and some designs have red spots which provide more power than standard plates

3. Ceramic hobs

- This easy to clean design is operated using finger touch controls on a glass surface
- Some designs feature sensors or timers which will turn down or switch off the heat automatically so you don't need to go back to the hob
- All hobs have heat lights to show you when its cool enough to touch

4. Induction hobs

- This cooking method provides instant, precise and evenly-distributed heat
- Although it is more expensive to buy, an induction hob is quicker and more controllable than gas and cheaper to run than other electric hobs



Additional Functions

There are a wide selection of additional functions and accessories available which have been designed to bring functionality, style and enjoyment to the kitchen. There are plenty of user-friendly functions and accessories to make cooking even easier, including:

- cooker hoods
- splashbacks
- hob lids
- timers

Electronic controls and timers

- These provide greater accuracy and maintain an even temperature, perfect for all those budding bakers out there!
- The functions on some ovens have been preselected to save time and energy
- Most ovens will feature a digital clock and timer so you can keep track of your cooking timings to ensure nothing is under/overcooked
- An auto-timer allows you to set the oven to start and finish at pre-set times
- A double oven timer must be the same time setting for both ovens. Only the main oven is programmable so the appliance will switch off automatically when the correct cooking time is over and the food ready to be served

INSTALLATION:

Ducted or extraction hoods must be mounted on an external wall which, unless there is already ducting in place, requires professional installation. Recirculation hoods operate in the same way as extraction hoods except the air is neutralised through filters (which can be cleaned or replaced) allowing clean air to be passed back into the kitchen.



INSTALLATION:

Recirculation hoods are fitted on internal walls and can usually be fitted yourself.

Cooker hoods

Not only do cooker hoods create a sleek, sophisticated look, they also help to keep your kitchen cooler and neutralise or remove cooking odours and smoke. They are available in a variety of sizes and finishes to complement the design of your cooker.

Styles include:

- visor hoods
- telescopic hoods
- canopy hoods
- integrated hoods
- chimney hoods
- island hoods

Flame failure safety devices for gas appliances

If you decide to opt for a gas cooker, make sure you search for a cooker with a flame failure cut-off safety device (FFD) which will automatically switch off the gas supply if the flame is blown out. When the FFD activates, the flow of gas to the hob should stop to prevent an excessive build-up of gas until it is reset manually.

Volume and capacity

Oven capacity gives a good indication of how much food an oven can hold so you can work out whether you will have enough space to rustle up your favourite dishes. The inside of the oven is measured in litres so you can work out what size you will need judging by the amount of food you regularly cook; this is particularly helpful for larger families who will need require a much bigger cooker.

REMEMBER:

The cooker may be able to hold a certain amount of food but other factors such as the number of shelves and shape of the oven must be taken into consideration as this may restrict the capacity.



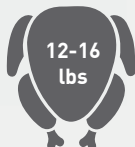
(3.5-5.5 kg)



8-10 People



45-59 litres



(5.5-7 kg)



10-15 People



60-65 litres



(7-9 kg)



15-25 People



70+ litres