



Factors to Consider

When purchasing a new fridge freezer

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Type

Fridge freezer combinations have been around for a long time now, freeing up space by combining two functions in one appliance. If you haven't got room for a separate fridge and freezer - and let's face it, who does? - then you'll need to establish which type of fridge freezer you should get, combining the two stacked on top of one another.

50/50, 60/40 or 70/30? - Getting the split between the fridge and freezer right will depend on which you use more. If you like the even split then go for a 50/50, but if you're keener on refrigerating or freezing items you can find a 60/40 split. 70/30 usually refers to a large fridge with a small freezer space, a more common set up if you have a dedicated freezer elsewhere in the home.

Top or Bottom?

Regardless of what split you choose there will be one portion of your fridge freezer which is less easy to access. If you choose a unit with the fridge at the bottom you're going to have to stoop for items like butter, with the salad or vegetables you keep in the drawers at the very lowest level. Most people opt for the freezer on the bottom as it's less frequently used, but there are some people who prefer easier access to their frozen goods.

Think about American Fridge Freezers

Even American fridge freezers will have a choice over the split, but given that these appliances are larger by definition it might not matter all that much in the end about the split. The side by side split on these fridge freezers are becoming more common, even in standard versions of the appliance.



Features

While you essentially only need your fridge freezer to chill and freeze, there are actually plenty of other features on offer depending on how much you want to get out of your appliance.

Flexibility & Practicality

Most fridge freezers will have adjustable spaces so that you can organise your shelves to suit your needs. By moving fridge shelves you can fit larger items or stand up any taller items, ensuring you have the space for the things you need to keep fresh. Check out the door storage too, this can sometimes be adjusted and you can plan out how you'll keep smaller items such as jar along with your large items without wasting space. If you can adapt the space around your needs it might be worth the extra cost. Other practical features include the ability to remove glass shelves, which stop liquids falling to the bottom of the unit, allowing you to clean them easily.

Transparent chiller compartments also allow you to see what ingredients you've got and the same goes for your freezer shelves - good for a quick peek to avoid disturbing foods or having to keep the door open too long.

Lighting & Controls

Many fridge freezers now use an LED or LCD display to let you know the temperature and overall status of the appliance, the touch controls also make it easy to keep the optimum temperature from outside.

The same energy efficient technology is also used inside with LED lighting offering even better illumination than standard lighting.



Temperature

The temperature of your fridge freezer can make a huge difference to how long your food lasts. A steady, optimum level of humidity will keep salads crisper and prevent bacteria and odors from building.

- Most appliances will now refrigerate evenly to avoid warm air disturbing food at the top of your fridge.
- If you have ever had issues with frost at the back of your fridge, check for an auto-defrost function which will dispel this problem on any new appliance.
- For the ultimate control you can get a fridge freezer with flexible zones, switching from fridge and freezer functions depending on the type of food you wish to preserve.
- If you've just got in from doing your shopping and need a quick freeze or chill you can find appliances with just such a function, rapidly keeping your groceries in check.

As previously mentioned, most appliances now allow you to view the temperature from the outside on a display and have compressors which are more reliable than ever. Even the most basic fridge freezer should have good temperature control to protect your food and prevent energy wastage, but for additional controls you're bound to pay a higher price.

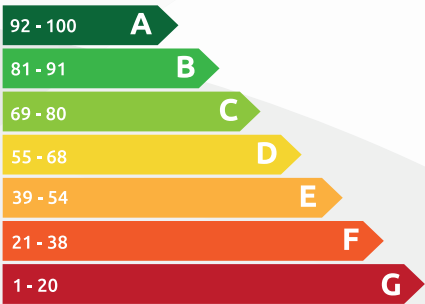
Think about placement

Where you decide to place your fridge freezer can impact on the temperature and performance. If you expose it to lots of sunlight - in full view of a window - it will have to work harder to keep the temperature down during the day, while in the shade it will have a much easier time.

Energy Efficiency

Fridge freezers are subject to the same energy efficiency rating as all other appliances, ranging for A+++ to G, although since 2012 no new appliances below the A+ level can be created. However, you might find the odd A or B rated appliance if a company is selling through old stock.

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



How Is The Rating Worked Out?

The EU regulations dictate that the energy efficiency rating of fridge freezers is down to both the internal capacity of the unit and how well it holds and maintains the right temperature (when the temperature outside is 25°C).

Does The Rating Matter?

You'd be surprised at how little difference there is in terms of savings on your energy bills at the top end of the spectrum. It can be a matter of a few pounds here and there annually between A+ and A++ for example, so don't get too caught up on it, it just means they run more efficiently than older models if they're rated A+ or above. The jump in price for a better rated unit isn't always worth that extra cost.



Think about holiday settings

If you're going away for more than a few days and won't be keeping food in your fridge then an appliance with a holiday setting will help you save more and lower energy wastage. You simply select the holiday setting once you've cleared the fridge to keep the most economical temperature while the freezer remains unchanged.

Fitting

It's no good choosing any old fridge freezer for your kitchen, you'll need to ensure that it fits, both in terms of it's placement and it's aesthetics. Some people prefer to have their fridge freezer in a utility room if they're short on space, but this can make transporting foods a little trickier. Obviously this appliance can be fitted anywhere there is an adequate power outlet so the choice is yours.

Integrated

To give a more complete look to any kitchen there is always the option of having an integrated fridge freezer, creating a uniform look. However, you'll need to do this as part of your kitchen overhaul as it will be easier to do at this point. Beware that repairs will also be more difficult once your appliance is installed and damage might be caused to your units if you have a fault which a repairman needs access for.

Freestanding

A lot of people prefer the classic look of a freestanding fridge freezer, especially since there aren't as many distracting dials or buttons. You'll be able to move the unit around if you ever change your layout and any ice dispensing machines will be easy to use.

Free Fitting With Delivery

Most delivery services will also include the setup of your unit but check this out beforehand as some companies may not offer this service or may charge extra. If you're installing the unit yourself you should read through any instructions and warnings carefully first, don't simply plug in and load up as it will need time to reach the right temperature.

Colours

You might not think of colour as important, but consider how the appliance will fit in with the rest of your kitchen if you are having a freestanding unit. White units are less popular now while silver, black or grey appliances lend themselves better to neutral tones. This decision will also factor into where the appliance is finally installed, helping to create the ideal kitchen or utility setup.

Think about safety

As mentioned already, not all units will be installed by the delivery team. Fridge freezers contain gases which need to be handled with care, you must never lie the appliance on it's side or carry it horizontally. The appliance should stay upright but can be tilted slightly to maneuver it through a doorway or to transport it on a dolly.





Think about slimline Fridge Freezers...

As with most appliances these days you can usually get a slimline version to help you save on energy as well as space. If you're not big on stocking up with food or you live by yourself then a slim fridge freezer can free up extra space and will mean you don't waste electricity on empty space.



Size & Measuring

Kitchens can be tricky at the best of times, so trying to fit a large appliance like a fridge freezer can be difficult. Ideally you should measure up the space you intend to fit your appliance into, leaving a little breathing room around the edges and back. Consider also how the doors will open, a narrow kitchen can present access problems.

Capacity

It will be up to you to decide which capacity works best for your household. A full family might need a larger unit to keep all of the necessary essentials on hand, while households with only one or two people might be able to manage with less capacity. In the end your shopping habits might dictate how much space you need regardless of how many people will use it.

Height, Width & Depth

The dimensions of fridge freezers can vary wildly, hence why it's so important to measure your space first.

- From being short enough to fit under your countertop to a whopping 2 metres plus, heights should factor heavily if you have low ceilings or fixed counters.
- The widths available range from 50cm to 65cm, but remember you'll need a little bit more space either side to prevent blocking the hinges of the doors.
- Measuring height and depth isn't enough, you need to know your fridge freezer will sit back in line with your worktops and units without protruding and obstructing.

Focal Point

If you have a large, spacious kitchen then you might like to select a more extravagant fridge freezer and use it as a focal point. American fridge freezers are perfect for this because of their huge chests and extra gadgets - but be warned that these will cost significantly more to run.