BUYERS GUIDE Freezers

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INTRODUCTION

Thinking about buying a new freezer? With all the options out there to choose from, it can be hard to know where to start. We've put together this in-depth buyers guide to cut through the jargon and help you find a great deal.

Whether you're curious about capacities or perplexed by prices, you've come to the right place. We have information on everything from types, styles, and features to energy efficiency and storing your freezer in the garage. What's more, it's all broken down into easy-to-digest sections. Finding your perfect freezer is easier than you might think – this guide will tell you everything you need to know.

Whether you're curious about capacities or perplexed by prices, you've come to the right place.





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TYPES OF FREEZERS

There's a wide variety of freezer styles and types on the market. Do you need a tall model that gives a lot of room without taking up much floor space? Or, would an undercounter version you can slide beneath your worktops be best? Is white okay, or would you like a more unusual colour?

We outline all your options in this guide, so that you can feel confident in your choice. Read on for more information on the dimensions and capacities of different types of freezers.

UNDERCOUNTER FREEZERS

Undercounter models are one of the most common types of freezer available. These are designed to slide comfortably under kitchen surfaces. Of course, you don't have to locate yours under one – pop it in the utility room if you want to save space in the kitchen.

Undercounter freezers tend to be smaller than other models. They usually come equipped with drawers or shelves, letting you pack in food but still keep everything organised.

TALL FREEZERS

Tall freezers are similar to undercounter models, but around double the height, with double the storage space.

Being bigger, they take up a lot more space than undercounter models. However, the footprint on the floor is the same. If you don't intend to put the freezer underneath a worktop, and there are no cabinets or other obstructions in the way, a tall model is a good option.



Tall models are perfect for larger households who want to keep the freezer in the kitchen.





CHEST FREEZERS

Chest freezers don't have drawers or compartments, so they offer loads of room for the size of the appliance. Pack in all your tasty goodies with room to spare.

They are available in a range of sizes, so you can find the perfect model to suit your needs. Normally, there's one large cavity with baskets at the top, so you can grab all your favourites quickly and easily.

For added safety, pick a model with a counterbalanced lid, since this won't close while you're rummaging around inside. Remember that as these models open at the top, they can't be put underneath a worktop and require a fair amount of space.

As chest freezers offer so much space, they can be a fantastic backup appliance, supporting a smaller kitchen freezer. If you purchase one that can operate in low temperatures, you can keep it in your garage or shed (provided wherever it's kept is dry).



As chest freezers open at the top, they can't be put underneath a worktop.







INTEGRATED/BUILT-IN AND FREESTANDING FREEZERS

If you like your appliances to go unnoticed, try installing an integrated (or 'built-in') freezer.

These models let you attach a cabinet door to the front, allowing your freezer to match the room perfectly.

In terms of size and layout, most integrated freezers are undercounter models. Some tall built-in freezers are also available.

Freezers that aren't built-in are known as freestanding models. This term includes tall, undercounter, and chest designs that can be moved around easily and don't have a cupboard door attached to the front.

Freezers that aren't built-in are known as freestanding models. This term includes tall, undercounter, and chest designs.





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MINI FREEZERS

If you don't tend to have much frozen produce in your home and just keep the bare essentials, a mini freezer might be just what you need.

These handy little appliances can sit on your worktop, so you don't have to do any bending down.

STYLES

White goods don't have to be white – freezers come in a range of colours and finishes.

Take your pick from classic white, stylish grey, or contemporary black. You'll also find premium stainless-steel finishes, as well as metallic effects, retro pastel shades, and more.

Some colours are very unusual, or only available from particular manufacturers. It's usually easiest – and cheapest – to go with a white or grey model.



White goods don't have to be white – freezers come in a range of colours and finishes.





SIZE AND CAPACITY



Freezers help you shop less, save money, and prepare food in advance – but only if you have enough storage space. They often differ in terms of their external dimensions and how much they can hold. We've put together some information to help you make the right choice.

CAPACITY VS. SIZE

It's important to remember that the external dimensions and internal capacity of a freezer are two different things.

Larger types of freezers typically offer a larger capacity. Some models have thinner walls and insulation, meaning you can fit in more food in without sacrificing extra space in your kitchen.

STORAGE CAPACITIES

The available storage space in a freezer is measured in litres.

A 50 litre freezer would probably be enough for individuals or couples, while a 100-200 litre freezer could store a week's worth of food for a small family – around five to ten bags of shopping. Medium-sized families may find a 150-300 litre freezer a better choice. A large household, or one that likes to bulk buy and freeze, would benefit from a 300+ litre freezer.

A 350 litre freezer, for example, would fit around 19 bags of frozen goods – perfect for a party, or to stock up on essentials. If you like to buy in bulk to make the best of deals and savings, a 500 litre chest freezer would hold up to 27 bags, so you'll never be short of meals.

There is also a difference between the gross capacity of a freezer (the total internal space, ignoring the compressor, drawers, etc.) and the net capacity, which represents the usable space. Even then, you'd never completely fill a freezer to the brim as you need some room to rummage around and find things.

Storage capacities are useful for comparison, as long as you're comparing like with like.



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TALL FREEZERS

If you have plenty of vertical height available, an upright freezer is ideal. Sometimes called tall freezers, these designs usually reach between shoulder and head height. They offer a large amount of storage, ranging from around 150-300 litres, and are perfect for medium to large households.

Most models are 60-70 cm wide, 60-65 cm deep and 130-190 cm high. If you choose one that's over 170 cm tall, it's worth checking how easily you can access the top drawer. Narrower models are available if you still want the freezer in the kitchen but don't have a lot of room for it. These measure around 55 cm wide.

Although they can have a generous capacity, upright freezers take up a relatively small amount of floor space, so they're easier to fit into your kitchen. If you have an upright fridge, you can easily find a freezer of similar size to install next to it. Some manufacturers even offer matching pairs.



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CHEST FREEZERS

Chest freezers are ideal for large households who like to have plenty of frozen food.

They are horizontal, top-loading models, available in a range of capacities from under 100 litres up to a whopping 500 litres.

Chest freezers don't have any drawers, so offer a lot more usable space than upright freezers, and can easily hold big or awkwardly shaped items such as frozen turkeys.

Some chest freezers have storage baskets to hold smaller items that you regularly use, like frozen chips or ice cream. They are suspended over the main compartment which helps to keep your freezer organised and your favourite items within easy reach.



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UNDERCOUNTER FREEZERS

Undercounter freezers are ideal if you don't have much room in your kitchen or utility room.

They save space by fitting underneath your counter tops. This means every model is under 90 cm high, but it's still a good idea to measure the space you have just in case. Most models are 60 cm wide and 50-60 cm deep, but compact versions are available at less than 55 cm wide and 50 cm deep.

This type of freezer has a smaller capacity, usually between 50 and 100 litres. They don't hold as much as an upright or chest freezer but are ideal for smaller houses, couples, or people who live on their own. **MINI FREEZERS**

Mini freezers are perfect for storing a few frozen essentials, such as ready meals.

Sometimes called table top freezers, they are miniature versions kept on a work surface in your kitchen or bar.

Capacity wise, these models can hold between 30-40 litres of food and usually come in at around 50 cm high, 45-50 cm wide and 45-50 cm deep.

Not many brands produce this style of freezer, so you may have to shop around.

Undercounter freezers are ideal if you don't have much room in your kitchen or utility room.

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FREEZER STORAGE



The layout inside your freezer will affect how you organise your food. Going for a model with conveniently arranged compartments and drawers can make day-to-day life a little easier, allowing you to fit more into the space and find things more easily.

Keep reading to learn what storage options you can expect from your new freezer.

DRAWERS

You'll usually find sliding drawers dividing up the space inside undercounter and tall freezers. While most undercounter designs have three to four separate drawers, tall freezers commonly have six to eight. Some designs substitute one or two of the drawers for compartments covered by a flap instead.

Freezer drawers are typically made from transparent plastic. This helps you find specific items quickly and saves you the hassle of rummaging around.

Drawers tend to fill the full width of the internal space in the freezer, although the height of each drawer might vary. Some models have an extra deep one at the bottom to fit in those awkward items.

Dividing the space up in this way helps to keep the freezer cold. The separate enclosures prevent the warm air from reaching your food while the door is open, so the compressor won't have to work as hard.

SHELVES AND COMPARTMENTS

Many freezers have shelf-like compartments covered by a plastic drop-down flap. While they still help you categorise foods by type, you'll have to reach right in to grab items at the back.

Undercounter and tall designs often have one or more of these, in addition to drawers.

Some mini freezers only have shelves- like those you'd find in a fridge.



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CHEST FREEZERS

A chest freezer won't have drawers or shelves, but one big compartment instead. This maximises the space and means you're less restricted with the shapes and sizes of what you store, but can make it more difficult to find things.

A few models have separators to help organise your food, but they can be hard to find so you'll have to shop around. Likewise, counter-balanced lids are more common. These lids fix open once lifted, meaning that your hands are free to browse.

If your chest freezer is a manually defrosting model, you'll want one with a front drainage system. Any water left over from defrosting can be drained out easily, making the freezer easier to maintain and more energy efficient.

A chest freezer won't have drawers or shelves, but one big compartment instead.

BASKETS

Some chest freezers have a basket or two sitting in the top of the compartment.

These help you keep bags of frozen peas and homemade ice lollies upright, as well as stopping small or frequently used items getting lost.

Baskets are found in other types of freezer too. It's not very common nowadays, but they can be used as a type of sliding drawer, sometimes with a plastic front.

ICE CUBE TRAYS

If you like cool drinks on hot days, an ice cube tray can be a useful feature to look for in a freezer.

Keep an eye out for tall and undercounter freezers that have a separate ice cube compartment, which is a shallow full-width shelf at the top, or an ice cube tray in one of the drawers.







FEATURES TO KEEP FOOD FRESH



Freezing your favourite foods is a convenient way to lock in freshness, flavour, and nutrients. You can also save money by freezing leftovers or buying in bulk. But, did you know that not all freezers are equally good at storing food?

Modern freezers often have features that ensure your food remains safe to eat for the longest possible time – while retaining valuable vitamins. Find out what to look for below.



FAST FREEZE SETTINGS

Fast or quick freeze functions are designed to lock in vitamins and nutrients more effectively, so you can be sure the fresh food you freeze will retain its goodness. The fast freeze setting is particularly useful when you want to freeze large amounts of fresh food in one go.

The temperature in the freezer compartment drops when the function is enabled, freezing your food much more quickly. Some models can switch this setting off automatically, so you don't need to worry about forgetting.

When fresh food is frozen quickly, smaller ice crystals form than if the food was frozen without the function enabled. This means that when you come to defrost your food at a later date, it will be of a much higher quality.

Fast freezing can also help food retain its original, delicious texture. So, you can freeze anything from meat to bread without worrying about how well they will defrost.



Fast freezing can also help food retain its original, delicious texture.







FOUR STAR FREEZER RATINGS

If a freezer has a four star rating, it means it's capable of storing food as low as -18°C, freezing fresh produce, and storing goods for up to 12 months. The maximum storage time depends on the type of food and best before date.

You may also come across one, two, and three star freezers. One star models are often just an ice box in a fridge. They keep food at -6°C and can store pre-frozen food for up to a week.

A two star freezer will freeze foods at -12°C, and can store pre-frozen food for up to one month. Three star freezers reach -18°C and can store pre-frozen food for three to 12 months.

Only four star freezers are suitable for freezing food from fresh – something to bear in mind if you like to freeze leftovers, unused ingredients, or the extra items you get from those irresistible buy-one-getone-free offers.

POWER CUT SAFETY FEATURES

Many freezers have a useful power failure safe storage feature. This keeps your food frozen in the event of a power cut, so you'll have time to get the problem fixed without worrying about your food defrosting. The storage period varies depending on the model, so it's important to check this before you buy.



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OTHER FEATURES



Freezers come with a wide range of features, from frost free systems to LED control panels. We explain some of the most common here.





INTERNAL LIGHTING

You may never have noticed, but unlike most fridges, freezers often don't have internal lights.

If you want to avoid rummaging around in the dark for ice cream, it might be worth investing in a model that does have them. If you can, invest in a freezer that has LED lighting. LEDs offer great light levels while staying cool and fairly energy efficient.

CHILD LOCK

Most commonly found on chest freezers, a child lock helps to prevent curious fingers from getting trapped by a falling lid. If you have young children in your home, it's a useful feature to look out for in a chest freezer.

In more sophisticated and high-end tall freezers with digital control panels, child locks are less of a safety feature, and more of a convenience. The child lock prevents children from altering settings for the freezer, ensuring that nothing changes without your knowledge.

ELECTRONIC CONTROLS AND LED DISPLAYS

More luxurious freezer models usually have an electronic control panel with an LED display.

Not only does this add a high-tech look to the appliance, but it also lets you easily select different options and control the temperature. This can be more convenient than using an internal thermostat, or opening the door to check on indicator lights.







FROST FREE

Picking a model with a frost free or no frost feature can be a real time saver.

We've all been there, trying to cram some food into a freezer that's suffering from built-up ice. And, there never seems to be a good time to defrost it.

If you don't fancy this, choose a freezer with frost free technology. This means the freezer will periodically heat up the cooling element and defrost any ice that has formed around it. The resulting water is then funnelled away. Some models also circulate air inside the freezer more effectively, to avoid the moisture build-up that leads to ice.

As an added benefit, produce is less likely to stick together in a frost-free freezer.

This time-saving feature does have some downsides though. As the appliance will be running a heating element for periods of the day, these models can be slightly less energy efficient. However, it's worth remembering that a freezer with a build-up of ice inside is also less efficient. As the freezer has to warm up enough to melt the frost, there is a risk of food warming up too. While this shouldn't cause any real harm, it could have a cumulative effect on any produce that's in the freezer for a long time.

It's unlikely that these downsides will have a real impact, particularly as modern freezers have better efficiency and higher performance ratings. 97% of users surveyed for a Which? poll rated this feature as useful or essential, so it's probably worth the investment.

Picking a model with a frost free or no frost feature can be a real time saver.





REVERSIBLE DOORS

Freezers that have reversible doors allow you to hinge the door on whichever side you want. This extra flexibility can come in handy if space is at a premium in your kitchen.

If you install your new freezer snug against a wall, be sure to attach the door so that it opens away from it. That way, you'll be able to access your food more easily.

SMART FEATURES

Though not as widespread as in fridges, soon, high-end freezers may be able to connect to other devices via Wi-Fi or Bluetooth. If you are able to get yourself a smart freezer, you'll be able to control the temperature from your phone while away from your freezer.

With a smart freezer, you'll be able to control the temperature from your phone while away from your appliance.









ENERGY EFFICIENCY



Freezers are one of the few appliances that are on all the time, so it's important to get an energy efficient model. This makes a difference to your utility bills and reduces your impact on the environment.

But which models are the most efficient, and which cost a little more to run? Scroll down to find out more. House Efficiency Rating

THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY RATING

The simplest way of narrowing down products for energy efficiency is to use the energy label. Thanks to EU regulations, every freezer has to have one of these displayed, so you can quickly tell an appliance's grade.

The scale goes from A+++ for the most efficient appliances, down to G for the least efficient. The rating is calculated based on energy consumption in relation to internal volume.

It is worth keeping in mind that, in the next few years, the energy efficiency labelling system will be undergoing a rehaul. EU rules will make A the highest rating and G the lowest, to avoid confusing consumers.

New models with modern technology will likely be much more efficient.

BEYOND THE RATING

Of course, there are other aspects to take into account regarding energy efficiency – that go beyond the letter rating.

For instance, two different sized freezers with A++ ratings could have very different running costs, as a bigger appliance will normally require more energy. Buying the right size appliance to suit your demands will help improve your energy costs.

OLD VS. NEW

If you have an old freezer and are thinking of upgrading, new models with modern technology will likely be much more efficient.

Manufacturers now only produce freezers that are rated A+ to A+++. This means you can feel confident that your new freezer will have a good efficiency rating.





RUNNING COSTS

Running costs can have a big impact on your freezer expenses in the long run. Energy efficient models can cost as little as $\pounds 20$ to $\pounds 25$ a year. However, if you have an older or less efficient appliance, it may cost you much more to run – up to and over $\pounds 100$, with some particularly old models costing over $\pounds 150$.

If you purchase the most efficient freezer over one of the least efficient, you could save hundreds of pounds across its lifespan.



HELPING YOUR FREEZER

There are a few measures you can take to ensure that you get the most efficient performance from your freezer.

It might seem obvious, but putting anything hot or warm in the freezer should be avoided. It can raise the internal temperature and affect the frozen contents, meaning the freezer has to work harder.

Make sure to keep your door fully closed as much as possible. An open door means cold air escapes and warm air enters. If you're prone to leaving the door open, consider buying a model with an acoustic alarm that will remind you to close it.

Keeping your freezer fuller means there is less empty space that is needlessly cooled. Why not stock up on spares or prepare some meals in advance?

Frost and ice in the freezer also lower efficiency. If you're not a fan of defrosting manually, consider a frost free model.





SOUNDS AND NOISES



Generally, freezers run fairly quietly in your home, so it's unlikely you'll be kept awake at night. However, as your freezer is always on, it will make some noise most of the time.

When buying a new model, it's possible to find some that are quieter than others. Find out what noise levels to expect in this section of our guide.

GENTLE HUMMING

The most common sound you're likely to hear coming from your freezer is a gentle hum. This is the sound of the compressor running, cooling the appliance down.

As the freezer needs to be cold all the time, the compressor will be running quite often. That means you'll hear this noise most of the time, although thankfully it's a quiet hum that you're unlikely to hear over the hustle and bustle of the kitchen.

If you notice your freezer is humming more often or louder than normal, this could be a sign of a fault you need to get fixed. Luckily, most new freezers come with a warranty that should cover this sort of problem.

If you notice your freezer is humming more often or louder than normal, this could be a sign of a fault you need to get fixed.

GROANING, POPPING, AND MORE

Alongside the normal humming sound, freezers can make a host of other noises. These include groaning, creaking, popping, and even hissing. A lot of these sounds come from the changing temperature inside the appliance. The panels can expand and contract with fluctuating temperatures, which causes a lot of the creaking sounds.

Similarly, some special features can contribute to the noises a freezer makes. If you have a frost free freezer, the heating element melting ice around the compressor can make some hissing sounds.



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HOW LOUD?

If you're concerned about how loud a freezer is to run, manufacturers list the appliance's sound level on their spec sheets. This is measured in decibels (dB).

Most freezers have a sound emission level between 38-48 dB, though quieter and louder ones are available. Of course, what's loud to some may be barely noticeable to others. To put this into perspective, a whisper is usually measured around 15-30 dB, while normal conversation can be 60 dB or higher.

It's worth noting that these dB readings are taken in ideal conditions, so the noise level in your kitchen may differ.

Most freezers have a sound emission level between 38-48 dB, though there are models which will be quieter or louder.

HELPFUL SOUNDS

Most sounds are a by-product of running your freezer. However, some models emit sounds to alert you if something goes wrong.

If your freezer has this feature, an acoustic alarm will sound when the door is left open too long, or if there's been a significant change in temperature. This is particularly handy if you are prone to leaving the door open.



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LOCATION AND INSTALLATION

It's worth taking a few moments to decide exactly where your new freezer is going to go before going to buy one. It's not just size and style that makes a difference – some freezers can be left out in the cold, while some can't. Having the right space in mind is important.

SPACE DICTATES STYLE

The space you have available for a new freezer will often dictate what you can buy. A large gap below your kitchen surfaces? Then an undercounter model is best. Lots of free space in your utility room? Try a freestanding tall freezer or a chest freezer.

HOT VS. COLD

While this might sound obvious, keeping your freezer away from heat sources is a good idea.

Don't keep it next to the cooker or radiator, and, if possible, position it so that it gets as little direct sunlight as possible. This helps the appliance maintain its internal temperature more efficiently. It also means less hot air gets inside the freezer, and prevents your frozen produce being affected.

Some manufacturers produce freezers that work at low temperatures.

IT'S FREEZING OUTSIDE

Perhaps you want to keep your freezer in a garage, conservatory, or outbuilding?

This can be a great way of fitting in bigger appliances and increasing your freezing capacity. However, if you want to do this, make sure the appliance is designed to work in low-temperature environments.

It sounds strange, but a lot of freezers can't work in temperatures that are too cold. This is because moisture builds up inside the freezer, causing damage. Likewise, the key components that are outside the freezer, such as the compressor, may not be designed to work in the cold.

There are options available to you if you want to keep your freezer in a dry, unheated environment. Some manufacturers produce freezers that work at low temperatures, such as Beko's range of freezers equipped with Freezer Guard technology. This lets the appliance work in temperatures as low as -15°C.







INSTALLATION

When it comes to installing the appliance, make sure there is plenty of room to open the door fully – you don't want to struggle to get food in and out.

Models with reversible doors can be great in tight spaces as you can attach the hinges on whichever side you want, giving you greater flexibility.

You also need space around the appliance for it to work at its best. The compressor on a freezer expels hot air, so it's best to leave a gap, approximately 25 mm, for this to escape.

Once the appliance is in place, wait several hours before running it. This gives all the gases inside the freezer time to settle. Once switched on, again, leave it for several hours before putting food inside, so that it can get to the right temperature. Check the manufacturer's instructions for details.



General hours of the oppliance is in place, wait several hours before running it.



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FREEZER PRICES

If you've already started comparison shopping for freezers, you'll have noticed the huge difference between the cheapest and most expensive models. Find out here what you can get for your money.

DECIDE ON YOUR BUDGET

It's essential to have a clear idea of what your budget is. Once you've decided how much you're willing to spend, you'll be able to narrow your search down to suitable models at the cheap or more expensive end of the scale.

Although this sounds simple, setting a budget can be a balancing act. If you can afford it, a good quality freezer from an established brand can last for years and is worth the extra spend. Online reviews will help you work out whether certain models are worth the price.

Alternatively, you could sacrifice factors like size or features for a high-quality freezer that still falls within your price range.

If you can afford it, a good quality freezer from an established brand can last for years and is worth the extra spend.



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TALL FREEZERS

With tall freezers, the height (and therefore capacity) does tend to correlate with price. Basic models that are smaller than 150 cm start at around £200.

Mid-height models of 175-185 cm can cost in the range of £300-400. Beko, Hotpoint, Indesit, and Zanussi have plenty of models in this price range, whereas premium models from Bosch or Samsung are more expensive at £500-750, or more.

Of all freezer types, top-of-the-range tall designs come in at the most expensive. The tallest freezers with extra features, such as stainless-steel finishes and retro styling, can be more than £1000.

CHEST FREEZERS

Prices also vary with their size and capacity.

You can pick up a small, low-end version for £150-200. At these prices, they're usually under 78 cm wide. Models with more features, an extended warranty, or from bigger brands, can be £300-400.

Larger chest freezers will cost a bit more – anywhere from £400 up to £600 and more, depending on the size and brand.

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UNDERCOUNTER FREEZERS

You can pick up a basic undercounter freezer for less than £150, with frost free models starting at around £230 from major brands. More expensive models with advanced features and premium designs can cost upwards of £450, with some selling at just below £1000.

Integrated models are a little more expensive than freestanding ones, and tend to start at £250.

SALES AND DEALS

Biding your time and buying a freezer when seasonal sales and discounts are available is a great way to get a bargain. Some brands offer cashback or trade-in offers too, which are worth checking out.

Buy when seasonal sales and discounts are available.



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