**Kitchen Range Buying Guide**

A [kitchen range](http://www.ebay.com/sch/Ranges-Stoves-/71250/i.html?_catref=1) lies at the heart of the kitchen, and it is usually a self-contained unit that combines a cooking surface with an oven. There are some models that separate the two elements, but a single unit is the most common way ranges are sold.

Kitchen ranges are available in a variety of types, styles, and colors to meet every cooking need and type of decor in a kitchen. There are lower-tech options as well as higher-tech ones, offering the home cook plenty of options for heat sources and amenities.

Kitchen ranges are available to accommodate any pre-existing kitchen set-up, or may be customized with a new kitchen design.

**How to Choose a Kitchen Range**

First, determine which fuel types are available in the kitchen, as this is the biggest factor in narrowing down the type of range to choose. The fuel types are electric and gas. If installing a gas range, in particular, confirm that the residence has met any requirements of the fuel company and local building codes.

Next, measure the available space, making sure to consider overhead space if other kitchen accessories will be installed. Overhead cabinets should be far enough distant from the range to not be affected by the heat.

Next, review installation configurations and prepare the materials to be hooked up. Since there may be a need for dedicated wiring, read the guidelines in the owner’s manual first to learn if this is necessary.

**Cooking Fuel Type Considerations**

Before choosing a kitchen range, first consider the fuel type for the range. The three fuel types are gas, electric, or dual fuel models.

**Gas**

Before considering a [gas kitchen range](http://www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_trksid=p5197.m570.l1313&_nkw=gas+range&_sacat=0), first determine if gas is available and if the installation requirements can be met. If gas is available, consumers may choose the gas or [dual fuel model](http://www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_trksid=p5197.m570.l1313&_nkw=dual+fuel+range&_sacat=0). The dual fuel model typically has a gas cooktop with an electric oven.

The gas used is either natural gas or propane, although propane is more often found in remote locations where natural gas or electricity is not as readily available.

The heat generated by gas ranges is measured in British thermal units, or BTUs, per hour. Like electric and induction ranges, gas ranges usually have four heat elements. Two of surface burners are typically medium-power burners of about 9,000 BTUs. There is usually a small burner with heat generation of about 5,000 BTUs, and one or two larger burners that generate heat of about 15,000 BTUs. Some units may have a fifth burner instead of a center section. There are also some gas-on-glass models in which gas burners are mounted above a smooth ceramic surface.

One benefit to gas as a cooking fuel is that gas burners can accommodate a variety of pot types and sizes.

**Electric**

[Electric ranges](http://www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_trksid=p5197.m570.l1313&_nkw=electric+range&_sacat=0) are the most popular type of range sold, and are generally more economical than gas ranges. Electric ranges offers faster heat with more precise simmering at lower temperatures.

**Displaced Coil Tops**

There are electric ranges with [displaced coil tops](http://www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_nkw=coil+range&_sacat=0&_odkw=coil+top+range&_osacat=0), which have been the standard in years past. These are generally the lowest priced ranges on the market.

Smooth tops are sleeker than displaced coil tops, and clean up is far easier as spills just wipe up. However, most coil cooktops are now liftable to make it easy to clean underneath. Most also have a seamless top without a crevice to trap dirt or cause paint to chip.

**Smooth Tops**

Electric and [induction ranges](http://www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_nkw=induction+cooktop&_sacat=0&_odkw=induction+range&_osacat=0) are designed with [smooth tops](http://www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_trksid=p5197.m570.l1313&_nkw=smooth+top+range&_sacat=0), which place the heating elements beneath a sleek ceramic surface. Standard electric smooth tops use radiant heat to heat the elements. Induction elements include magnetic coils below the ceramic glass surface. Heat is generated directly in the pot or pan rather than on the cooking surface. Induction cooktops are known for quick heating and energy efficiency. One downside is that they require [magnetic cookware](http://www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_trksid=p5197.m570.l1313&_nkw=magnetic+cookware&_sacat=0).

Choose a smooth top with a no-drip raised edge. This prevents boil-overs from dripping down the door vents.

**Standard Elements**

There are four surface elements included with most smooth top ranges. The elements usually include one or two medium-power elements, of about 1,500 to 1,800 watts, and one or two large ones, of 2,500 watts or more. Some smooth tops are designed with a warming element in the center section.

**Dual Fuel**

There are also dual fuel models available. These typically feature gas cooktop with an electric oven.

**Types of Kitchen Ranges**

There are several types of kitchen ranges to choose from. The choice for a range may be determined in part by the existing kitchen design.

**Freestanding Range**

The [freestanding range](http://www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_trksid=p5197.m570.l1313&_nkw=freestanding+kitchen+range&_sacat=0) is the most economical kitchen range. Most ranges in this category are 30 inches wide, although there are smaller units available. This range can be placed between or beside cabinets, or alongside the [refrigerator](http://www.ebay.com/sch/Refrigerators-/20713/i.html?_catref=1).

**Slide-In Range**

It slides in between the cabinets to give a built-in appearance. A slide-in range is usually more expensive than a freestanding range.

With contoured sides and a slightly protruding cooktop, the slide-in range allows the installer to slide the unit in so that the cooktop rests on top of the countertop on each side. These models often have a bottom drawer for storing cookware.

The controls on this range are at the front edge of the cooktop, which may not appeal to families with young children.

**Drop-In Range**

There is much more involved in choosing a [drop - in range](http://www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_trksid=p5197.m570.l1313&_nkw=drop+in+range&_sacat=0). This type requires custom installation within the cabinetry, and drop-in ranges are the most expensive ranges on the market.

Drop-in ranges offer a customized look to the kitchen. One drawback, however, is that there is no extra drawer for storage, as slide-in ranges have. Also, drop-in ranges typically require special ordering, as they may not be available in retail locations.

The controls on this range are at the front edge of the cooktop, which may not appeal to families with young children.

**Installed Cooktop**

Another kitchen range option is to install a [cooktop](http://www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_nkw=cooktop&_sacat=0&_odkw=installed+cooktop&_osacat=0) in a countertop and a [wall oven](http://www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_trksid=p5197.m570.l1313&_nkw=wall+oven&_sacat=0) in other cabinetry. This splits the cooking work areas and can make a kitchen more efficient; however, an installed cooktop can also reduce the amount of counter workspace. More thought is needed when placing these appliances to not interfere with traffic areas or reduce the efficiency of the work area.

The cost of these two appliances doubles that of a freestanding unit. But cooktop and wall oven combinations are quite popular and stylish, with versatile cook and grill top modules and more ranges of sizes available. Wall ovens come in various sizes and combinations of single or double ovens, and buyers can even add a convenient warming drawer.

Cooktops vary in size from 24 to 30 inches, with four to six burners. Single or double wall ovens are available in 24- or 30-inch widths.

**Oven Preferences**

There are four main options for ovens: [conventional single oven](http://www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_trksid=p5197.m570.l1313&_nkw=single+oven&_sacat=0), [double oven](http://www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_trksid=p5197.m570.l1313&_nkw=double+oven&_sacat=0), [convection](http://www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_sacat=0&_nkw=electric+convection+oven&_frs=1), and [trivection](http://www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_trksid=p5197.m570.l1313&_nkw=trivection+oven&_sacat=0) cooking.

The conventional single oven is the most common and familiar in the kitchen. Heating elements are on the top and bottom of the cooking area to produce the heat. In a double oven set up, one oven is usually smaller and can accommodate casseroles and trays.Convection, by comparison, uses air circulation to cook or bake evenly and quickly. Cooking times may vary for convection ovens, so it is recommended that buyers consider one with an auto conversion feature.

Some higher-end ranges will offer trivection cooking, which combines microwave, conventional, and convection for quicker cooking.

**Range Finishes**

Ranges are available in a variety of colors and materials to suit any kitchen decor. They come in white, color, black, stainless steel, or other finishes. White is generally the least expensive option.

If choosing stainless, ask if it is stainless steel to be sure. Prices are typically reflective of the quality of stainless steel used.

**Range Features to Consider**

The following are features to consider when purchasing a range.

| Feature | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Control Lockout | The control lockout feature allows the user to disable oven controls; recommended if the electronic oven control panel is at the front of the range, rather than the backsplash |
| Digital Display | Digital displays are common on most models of ranges; displays the temperature and sometimes other information on the oven, such as timers |
| Hot-Surface Light | This light lets the user know when an element is still hot; often found on ranges with smooth tops |
| Low-Power Simmer Burner | A low-power simmer burner, particularly with gas ranges, provides an extra-low setting for delicate sauces |
| Self-Cleaning Cycle | The oven self-cleaning cycle uses high heat to burn off spills and spatters; most self-cleaning models have an automatic safety lock that prevents the oven door from being opened until it has cooled; some models feature a countdown clock that shows the length of time left in the cycle |
| Multiple Rack Positions | Ovens with five or more rack positions are better; users can adjust the rack position for the size of the food and distance to the broiler element or frame |
| Warming Drawer | A warming drawer keeps plates and food warm; useful when cooking for a crowd |
| Variable Boil | The variable boil feature is available in most electric and gas ovens; provides adjustable settings for foods that need to cook slower or faster |

 **Before You Shop**

Measure your existing appliance or the space you need to fill. Determine whether you need electric or gas connections.

**Good to Know**

Look for installation instructions on the range, cook-top or wall oven you are interested in for exact cutout specifications to ensure a perfect fit.

**Performance**

Today's appliances have features to help you do more. Look for ranges and cooktops with high heat or low power burners for a customized cooking experience. If you feel the need for speed, keep in mind that convection ovens cook 25-30% faster.

**Performance Features:**

* Dehydration settings for fruits/veggies
* Sabbath Mode to keep foods warm during big dinners
* Warming Drawers
* Auto Off to automatically turn the oven off when timer sounds to avoid overcooking

**Speak the Language**

Ranges are appliances that combine an oven and a cook-top into a single piece. Ranges can be freestanding, slide in or drop-in.

* Freestanding ranges have finished sides and either a rear or front control console. These units can go between cabinets or stand alone.
* Slide-in ranges have a seamless look with controls on the front. If the slide-in range replaces a freestanding unit it will come with a back-splash or filler strip for a more streamlined appearance. Slide-in ranges come with your choice of finished or unfinished range cabinetry. Finished cabinets may be used in any application, while non-finished models require cabinetry on both sides for proper installation.
* Drop-in ranges look similar to slide-ins, with controls on the front, but may require cabinet modification for a tight fit. You can tell the difference by the strip of cabinetry under their ovens.

Wall ovens offer the same characteristics as ranges without the floor footprint because it is installed in the cabinets. Because these ovens are installed at work level, they reduce back strain from bending and lifting.

Cook-tops are installed in the counter-top and use either gas or electric heat, just like ranges and ovens.

The number and configuration of the burners range from 4-8, with optional special burners for simmering and boiling, to suit your personal cooking preferences. Induction cook-tops are available and heat 25-50% faster than traditional electric, offering responsiveness close to gas without the flame.

Capacity refers to the oven’s inner cooking space and is measured in cubic feet. The size of your oven depends on how much cooking and entertaining you like to do, as well as the number of items you bake or roast simultaneously. The ovens on all ranges come with multiple oven racks to accommodate more than one dish at once.

**Good to Know**

Consider simultaneous range hood replacement for an updated and streamlined appearance.

 **Cleaning**

Modern cook-tops and ovens are easy to clean and maintain. Smooth surfaces and covered interior burners wipe down easily. Also keep an eye out for cook-tops with raised edges help to contain spills and protect your counters and floor.

Self-cleaning settings work by heating the oven to very high temperatures to reduce interior residue to a small pile of ash that is easily wiped out of the oven. Some ovens use a Steam Assist cleaning feature that uses a small amount of water and a low temperature to loosen interior residue for easy removal.

**Conclusion**

Kitchen ranges are kitchen appliances used to cook food. Kitchen ranges are available that use different fuel type including electricity, gas, or a combination of the two. When choosing a kitchen range, determine which fuel type to use first, and that will narrow down the options from which to choose.

Most kitchen range models include a cooktop and oven together; however, there are models in which the two are separated. There also are models that have two ovens.

Kitchen ranges on the market offer a variety of cooking methods like conventional cooking, convection, and trivection.

To match any kitchen decor, there are kitchen ranges in a number of colors and finishes. White ranges tend to be the least expensive, and high-quality stainless steel is on the higher-end of the pricing scale.

There are also a range of features to consider, such as timers, self-cleaning functionality, and warmer drawers. Deciding on these features will help buyers find the right range for their needs.