

Keep cool for less



You don't have to spend a fortune on a new fridge. Our cheapest Best Buy is just £250

We've recently tested more than 100 fridges, from the Hotpoint RSAV21, which costs £139, to the tall Smeg FAB28RR, which will set you back £1,100. Unfortunately, while the 1950s-style Smeg looks great, it didn't perform brilliantly when cooling food. It scored 69%, which isn't good enough to be a Best Buy.



You don't have to spend anywhere near £1,000 if you want to get a trendy-looking Best Buy. The Beko TLDA662, which has a useful water dispenser, costs just £300 and scored an exceptional 83%.

Reliability

In our summer 2008 survey of 1,966 online panel members, we found that 72% expect a fridge to last at least six years. And in our annual reliability survey, fridges received an overall reliability score of 94%. Beko, Bosch and Neff are the most reliable fridge brands.

Given that few fridges break down in the first six years of their life, we'd advise you to think twice before buying an extended warranty. It could be a waste of money. An extended three-year warranty for the Beko TLDA662 from Comet, for example, would set you back £55.

Running costs

Annual running costs for fridges are quite low, starting at £7 and increasing to £35. But it's still wise to check and compare running costs (see our table, p47) before you buy a new fridge. The Hotpoint RSAV21 (£139) and the Lec R5026 (£145) have similar price tags, but over six years the Hotpoint would cost £54 to run, while the Lec would cost £96.

As our diagram on p46 shows, keeping your fridge in good condition will keep running costs down. And if parts do break, you can often buy replacements from the manufacturer and carry out simple repairs yourself.

For more information on fridge efficiency, and for reviews of more than 100 models, go to www.which.co.uk/fridges.

Freestanding tall



Bosch KSR30 N01GB £375

Which? test score 87%
PROS Test results were outstanding. It cools food quickly, and running costs are good for a fridge of this size.
CONS It has no extra frills, such as a high-temperature alarm or a metal wine rack.

Available at Argos, Comet
 We found it cheapest at Comet
 Annual running cost £16 Volume 255 litres



Lec L6046W £291

Which? test score 84%
PROS Cools food fairly quickly. The temperature varies little from top to bottom – impressive for a tall fridge.
CONS In an extremely hot room the fridge can dip to 0°C, but it shouldn't affect food.

Available Online
 We found it cheapest Online
 Annual running cost £20 Volume 242 litres



Beko TLDA662 £300

Which? test score 83%
PROS It cools quickly and is easy to clean. There's a rack for storing wine horizontally.
CONS The raw meat compartment is above the salad drawer – but it is sealed.
Matching freezer TZDA629F

Available at Comet, Currys
 We found it cheapest at Comet
 Annual running cost £17 Volume 247 litres

Built-in tall



John Lewis JLBILIC02 £599

Which? test score 70%
PROS This fridge is spacious, with a wine rack and drawers for meat and fish. It cools quickly.
CONS It's not quite good enough to be a Best Buy. The recommended set-up temperature is too warm – you should adjust it to below 5°C.

Available at Exclusive to John Lewis
 We found it cheapest at John Lewis
 Annual running cost £11 Volume 270 litres

Freestanding small



Bosch KTR16 A21GB £267

Which? test score 74%
PROS The internal temperature doesn't vary if room temperature changes. Running costs are low.
CONS It's not a Best Buy. It takes 14 hours to cool food to 5°C. Slow cooling can mean food deteriorates more quickly.
Matching freezer GSD12V20GB

Available at Argos, Asda
 We found it cheapest at Asda
 Annual running cost £12 Volume 131 litres



Hotpoint RSAV21 £139

Which? test score 71%
PROS This model cools fresh food quickly. Once you've set the thermostat according to the instructions, you won't need to adjust it again.
CONS It didn't reach Best Buy standards in tests. We found the ice box awkward to defrost.

Available at Argos, Tesco Direct
 We found it cheapest at Tesco Direct
 Annual running cost £19 Volume 102 litres

Built-in small



Neff K5604 X7GB £490

Which? test score 84%
PROS This impressive fridge is quick to cool, easy to set up and immune to fluctuations in room temperature. Useful extras include an illuminated temperature display and a shelf that can be split in two.
CONS None that we could find.

Available Online
 We found it cheapest Online
 Annual running cost £15 Volume 123 litres



Beko BL20 £250

Which? test score 75%
PROS The thermostat works well at the recommended setting, so once you've set it up you shouldn't need to fiddle around with the controls again.
CONS The crisper is awkward to access, as you have to slide a glass shelf out of the way first.

Available at Comet
 We found it cheapest at Comet
 Annual running cost £12 Volume 102 litres

Care for your fridge and cut costs

Freezer compartment Defrost the compartment when the ice reaches 1.5cm thick. Any thicker and the fridge will use more electricity than necessary.

Shelves Try not to overload shelves, as they could break. You can buy new shelves from manufacturers. Wire shelves allow cold air to circulate freely, but don't stop leaks like solid glass shelves can.

Door hinges Place heavy items (like a big bottle of milk) close to the door hinges to put them under less stress. Replacement hinges can cost from £22.

Drainage To prevent leaks that could damage your floor, clean the drain every few months with the tool provided by the manufacturer or alternatively use a cotton wool bud.

Door seal Keep the door seal clean. Mould will distort the seal's surface and allow cold air to leak out. Replacement seals start at £15, but can cost more than £60.

Cooling coils Vacuum the rear of the fridge every six months to avoid a build-up of dust on the cooling coils. If the coils are dusty, your fridge will have to work harder – increasing your electricity bills.

Thermostat Adjust the thermostat if your fridge starts to freeze or if food is going off quickly. A thermometer in a glass of water will help you set it to between 1°C and 5°C. Any warmer and food will spoil faster than it should.

MODEL	SPECIFICATION	
	PRICE	SIZE (cm) (h x w x d)
FREESTANDING TALL		
BOSCH KSR30N01GB	375	156x60x62
LEC L6046W	291	151x60x62
BEKO TLDA662	300	173x60x65
BEKO TLDA567	340	178x55x62
SMEG FAB28RR	1100	152x61x69
BOSCH KSR38N01GB	394	185x60x62
FREESTANDING SMALL		
BOSCH KTR16A21GB	267	85x60x61
HOTPOINT RSAV21	139	84x54x62
LEC R5026	145	84x48x59
INDESIT TLA1(UK)	150	84x55x63
HOTPOINT RLA34	166	86x60x62
LEC L5026W	159	84x48x56
BEKO RA610	170	85x50x58
WHIRLPOOL ARC903	150	85x55x61
BEKO LA620	160	84x55x60
BUILT-IN TALL		
JOHN LEWIS JLBILIC02	599	177x55x56
HOTPOINT HT303NI	550	177x54x54
BUILT-IN SMALL		
NEFF K5604X7GB	490	87x55x61
BEKO BL20	250	82x60x54
HOTPOINT HUL162	239	82x58x57
FRIDGEMASTER MTBL140	197	82x59x50
INDESIT INE160GI	213	88x54x56

EXTEND THE LIFE OF YOUR FRIDGE

Replacing broken parts is far cheaper than buying a new appliance

Most manufacturers sell replacement parts for their appliances, so if a shelf breaks or the door seal becomes worn, find out whether you can replace it yourself rather than calling a professional in or buying a new fridge.

To order parts, phone the manufacturer or go to its website. Some electrical retailers can order spares. Alternatively, you could use an online spares company, such as www.espare.co.uk.

We checked the Bosch website for the price of six parts for the Best Buy Bosch KTR 15465,

which originally cost around £330 but is now discontinued. Replacing the fridge with the Bosch KTR16A21GB would cost £267.

REPLACEMENT PART	PRICE*
Foot	£1.84
Bottle shelf	£7.37
Light bulb	£1.84
Shelf	£23.09
Salad crisper	£12.08
Door seal	£16.55

* Not including delivery charge



USING THE TABLE

The more stars the better.

Specification

Price See p29.

Size Dimensions, including hinges with door closed. Add several cm on each side for air circulation.

Volume Usable space inside the fridge (from our measurements).

Room temperature

The range of temperatures at which the fridge is designed to work.

Energy label The manufacturer's claimed rating.

				WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE									SCORE (%)
	VOLUME (litres)	ROOM TEMPERATURE (°C)	ENERGY LABEL	RUNNING COST (£/YR)	SPEED OF COOLING	TEMPERATURE STABILITY	THERMOSTAT SETTING	EVENNESS OF TEMPERATURE	EASE OF USE AND CLEANING	NOISE AND VIBRATION	FLEXIBILITY OF STORAGE	BRAND RELIABILITY	
	255	10 to 38	A	16	★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	AA	87
	242	10 to 32	A	20	★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	A	84
	247	10 to 32	A	17	★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	AA	83
	247	10 to 32	A	15	★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★	AA	71
	175	10 to 32	A	19	★	★★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	n/a	69
	312	10 to 38	A	12	★	★★★★★★	★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	AA	64
	131	10 to 38	A+	12	★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★★	AA	74
	102	16 to 32	A	19	★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	A	71
	63	16 to 32	A	16	★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★	A	70
	108	16 to 38	A	14	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★★★	★★★	n/a	68
	123	10 to 38	A	12	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	A	66
	81	16 to 32	A	12	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	A	66
	86	10 to 32	A	19	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★★★★	★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★	AA	63
	80	10 to 38	A	14	★	★★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★	A	61
	118	10 to 32	A	18	★★★★★	★★★	★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★	AA	60
	270	10 to 38	A	11	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	n/a	70
	200	16 to 38	A	35	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★	A	69
	123	10 to 38	A	15	★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★	AA	84
	102	10 to 32	A	12	★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★	AA	75
	111	10 to 38	A	12	★★★	★★★★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	A	65
	112	10 to 38	B	19	★★★★★	★★	★	★★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	n/a	62
	133	16 to 32	B	15	★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★	n/a	61

Test performance**Running cost**

Cost of running the fridge for one year based on 12.48p per kWh.

Speed of cooling

How quickly food is cooled.

Temperature stability

How well the fridge maintains internal

temperature when we alter room temperature.

Thermostat setting

Performance at the maker's recommended setting. **Evenness of temperature**

Temperature difference between the

warmest and coldest parts of the fridge.

Brand reliability

Reliability of the brand based on data from our Aug 2008 survey. AA = Above average. A = Average. n/a = not enough data for a reliability score.

Score

Ignores price and is based on:
Stability **25%**
Evenness **25%**
Ease of use and cleaning **20%**
Cooling power **10%**
Noise and vibration **10%**
Thermostat accuracy **10%**

Contacts

Beko www.beko.co.uk
0845 600 4904

Bosch www.bosch-home.co.uk
0844 892 8925

Fridgemaster www.fridgemaster.co.uk
0845 052 9006

Hotpoint www.hotpoint.co.uk
0800 092 1922

Indesit www.indesit.co.uk
0844 824 2526

John Lewis www.johnlewis.com
0845 604 9049

Lec www.lec.co.uk
0844 815 3737

Neff www.neff.co.uk
0844 892 8926

Smeg www.smeguk.com
0844 557 9907

Whirlpool www.whirlpool.co.uk
0870 600 8989