

Kettles

NEED TO KNOW

Kettles come in two basic shapes – dome (or traditional) and jug. Dome kettles have their handles at the top, so it can be a little awkward to remove the lid, and you have to tip the kettle up completely to pour the last bit of water out. This may be tricky if you have weak arms or don't have much flexibility in your wrists.

Jug kettles are taller and thinner than dome kettles and have their handles at the side. The finishes vary, but many people favour a sleek, stainless-steel coffee-pot style. Cream, red, wood and glass are also popular.

MATCHING SETS

If you like a co-ordinated kitchen you can buy toasters, coffee machines, and panini machines to match many of the kettles we tested. Our table opposite shows you which kettles are part of a matching range. Check out our toasters report on p58 to see how the matching models fared.

FILTER KETTLES

If limescale really bothers you (see p57), a kettle with a built-in water filter, such as the Kenwood (18) or Hinari (21), could suit you. But they also had the smallest capacities on test and they're both rather heavy and unbalanced. The Hinari also takes 1 minute and 25 seconds to filter a litre of water (although you can set the Kenwood to boil and filter at the same time).

BEST BUYS

Our six Best Buys all have excellent ergonomic design, making them easy to handle – something that's vital for a kettle. They're also all energy efficient and cost £30 or less.

For Best Buys we give the cheapest widely available high-street price as we went to press.

The **Kenwood (1)** was the best in our test. It's very easy to use, quick to boil, easy to clean and reasonably quiet. Plain and simple, this is a great kettle – a classic jug that does everything it's supposed to do and does it well for just £15 from Comet and John Lewis.

If you're after something a bit more high-tech, the **Home-tek (2)**, £30 from Powerhouse, might suit you. As well as being a great all-rounder, this kettle has a 'keep warm' function (see opposite) and a reduced temperature option (see right) so you can heat your water to any temperature between 50° and 100°C. This is useful if you like green tea, which is best made with water at less than boiling point. The only slight niggle with this model is that it's awkward to get the lid off for cleaning and the filter is fiddly to fit and remove. However, it does have excellent controls and a water-level indicator that's very easy to see, although the markings on the controls are a bit small. It also holds more water (two litres) than any of the other

kettles we tested – handy if you're a large family of enthusiastic tea drinkers.

The **Morphy Richards (3)** incorporates an indicator light on the inside, so the water glows orange when it's switched on. The kettle is nicely balanced, making it really easy to fill and pour, and boils pretty quickly. It even whistles when the water boils, which may be why this model is called the Opera (but it is a bit noisy.) The Morphy Richards costs £20 from Argos, Comet and Currys.

If you prefer an old-fashioned dome kettle, we'd recommend the traditional **Kenwood (4)**. It's the only dome kettle that's a Best Buy and it's really easy to clean, with a filter that's simple to remove and replace. It's also quick to boil and easy to carry and handle. It's £25 from Comet and John Lewis.

The **Russell Hobbs (5)** jug kettle, £25 from Comet, Currys and John Lewis, has a



1 Kenwood

REDUCED TEMPERATURE SETTING

You can set this Home-tek to heat your water to any temperature between 50° C and 100° C. When we measured its accuracy at 50° C and 80° C we found that the water temperature was a few degrees out, but this function can still be useful for heating water for green tea or to warm a baby's bottle, for example. The Tefal (9) has a similar function, with a dial offering low, medium and high settings, but we found the dial stiff and awkward to use, and the range of temperatures available was much smaller (the lowest setting was 74° C).



SCORE

Ignores price and is based on:

Ease of use	60%
Time to boil	30%
Noise	5%
Energy consumption	5%

KEY

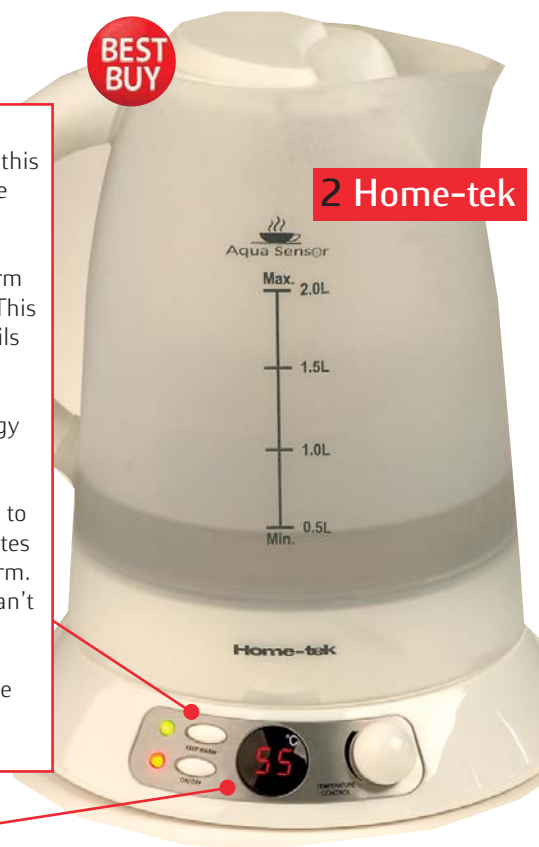
★	☆	○	◐	●
Best				Worst
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: red; margin-right: 5px;"></div> Best Buy </div>				

**BEST
BUY**

2 Home-tek

'KEEP WARM'

Some kettles, such as this Home-tek, the Breville (13) and the Prestige (19), let you keep the water in the kettle warm after you've boiled it. This means the kettle reboils more quickly. But we found that all three kettles use more energy to keep a litre of water warm for 30 minutes and then reboil it than to reboil it after 30 minutes without keeping it warm. So unless you really can't wait a few moments longer for your Bovril, it's best to boil only the amount of water you need each time.



USING THE TABLE

We tested the latest kettles from the main manufacturers, including as many as possible that are part of matching ranges.

Specification

Price For Best Buys we give the cheapest widely available high-street price as we went to press. Prices for other models are a guide to what you should expect to pay.

Capacity The maximum volume of water you can boil, as stated by the manufacturer. **Matching set** ✓ indicates that the kettle is part of a matching range.

Performance

Energy to boil How much energy it took to boil 1 litre of water.

☆ means the kettle used the same amount of energy required to power a 60W light bulb for 1 hr 50 min to 2 hr; ○ means the

energy needed would power a 60W light bulb for 2 hr to 2 hr 10 min. **Time to boil** How long it took to boil 1 litre of water.

★ means the kettle took less than 2 min 25 sec to boil. ● means it took more than 3 min 12 sec.

Noise How noisy the kettle was when boiling 1 litre of water.

★ means it was 63dB or under (about as noisy as a busy office). ● means it was over 72dB (as noisy as a vacuum cleaner).

Ease of use

This was assessed by an ergonomist. **Handling** Handle comfort, filling and pouring, and weight and balance, looking at the needs of those with weaker arms, poor grip or small or large hands.

Controls Size, brightness and position of buttons and markings.

Cleaning How easy it is to clean the outside of the kettle and filter.

Kettles

MODEL

	Specification			Performance			Ease of use				Score (%)
	Price (£)	Capacity (litres)	Matching set	Energy to boil	Time to boil	Noise	Handling	Controls	Cleaning	Overall	
1 Kenwood JK770	15	1.5	✓	☆	☆	○	★	☆	☆	★	83
2 Home-tek Aqua Sensor HT355	30	2.0		☆	☆	○	☆	★	●	☆	74
3 Morphy Richards Opera	20	1.5	✓	☆	☆	●	☆	☆	○	☆	73
4 Kenwood SK630	25	1.7	✓	☆	☆	●	☆	☆	★	☆	73
5 Russell Hobbs Classic Satin Montana	25	1.7	✓	☆	☆	●	☆	★	★	☆	71
6 Tefal Delfina	20	1.5	✓	☆	●	★	★	☆	☆	★	71
7 Bush KT019	30	1.7	✓	☆	★	●	☆	○	○	☆	69
8 Wahl James Martin	30	1.5	✓	☆	★	●	○	☆	○	☆	67
9 Tefal Vitesse S	25	1.7		☆	☆	○	☆	☆	☆	☆	66
10 Kenwood SJ300	40	1.7		☆	☆	●	○	☆	☆	○	66
11 Krups Expert Aqua Control FLF3	50	1.6	✓	○	☆	●	○	☆	★	☆	65
12 Morphy Richards Memphis Traditional	40	1.5	✓	☆	☆	●	○	★	○	☆	65
13 Breville Lightning JK68	30	1.7	✓	☆	☆	☆	○	☆	○	○	64
14 De'Longhi Argento	55	1.7	✓	☆	☆	●	○	☆	○	☆	64
15 Breville Elements JK49	35	1.7	✓	○	☆	●	○	★	★	○	63
16 Bosch Solitaire TWK8SL1GB	80	1.7	✓	☆	○	○	☆	☆	○	☆	62
17 Morphy Richards Kitchen Hardware Jug	50	1.5	✓	☆	★	●	○	☆	★	○	62
18 Kenwood Puresse WK970	50	1.2		○	☆	●	○	★	☆	○	62
19 Prestige Symmetry	23	1.6	✓	○	☆	●	○	★	●	☆	58
20 Breville Classique JK85	50	1.7		○	☆	●	○	○	●	○	57
21 Hinari Aqua-flow JF150	25	1.25		○	●	○	☆	☆	☆	☆	56
22 Russell Hobbs Satin	50	1.7	✓	☆	☆	●	○	☆	●	○	56
23 Russell Hobbs 10789	25	1.7	✓	○	☆	●	○	○	○	○	56
24 Dualit 72022	55	1.5	✓	☆	○	●	○	★	☆	○	50
25 Prestige Deco	45	1.5	✓	☆	○	●	○	☆	○	○	47

big, bright power switch and a comfortable handle. However, the water-level indicator can be seen only from one side, so if you're left handed you might find it a bit more awkward to use than our other Best Buys. It's also one of the noisiest kettles on test, but it's quick to boil and its filter is really easy to clean.

If noise bothers you, you might be better off with the **Tefal (6)**. This black jug kettle is remarkably quiet but it takes almost a minute longer to boil than the quickest kettle we tested. It's the only kettle without a concealed element, but despite this it wasn't noticeably worse for limescale build-up. It's also the lightest on test, so might appeal if you have problems with grip or weaker arms. It costs £20 from independent retailers.



3 Morphy Richards



4 Kenwood

LIMESCALE FILTER

All the kettles, apart from the Kenwood (18) and Hinari (21), which have built-in water filters, have a small filter in the spout area to prevent bits of limescale being poured from the

kettle into your cup or teapot. As with this Morphy Richards, you can usually take them out to clean (see below). Our rating for ease of use takes into account how easy it is to do this.



Making the perfect cuppa

'There is no trouble so great or grave that cannot be much diminished by a nice cup of tea.' (Philosopher Bernard-Paul Heroux)

You can't get much more particular than the Japanese when it comes to making tea. But the British aren't far behind in engaging in a lot of ceremony about the perfect cuppa – countless formulae have even been devised detailing how to achieve this. Here are our top tips for a tasty tipple. 1 Use freshly drawn cold water. Ensure that your kettle is descaled regularly and that your teapot is

clean. You might want to use filtered water if you live in an area with hard water. Boil only what you'll need – it'll save time and energy.

2 Warm the teapot with some hot tap water, and then pour it away.

3 Add as much tea as you desire to the pot (one teaspoon of tea, or one bag, per cup is usually about right). Leave to brew for about three minutes.

4 The Royal Society of Chemists and the British Standards Institute agree you should pour milk in the cup before the tea, but according to George Orwell it should definitely be added after. Whatever your preference, we'd recommend that the milk shouldn't be too creamy and you should add enough to produce a rich colour.

5 Sweeten to taste. Sit back and relax with your copy of this month's *Which?*. PS We also find that tea tastes best when it's made by someone else.



Tea making doesn't have to be as elaborate as this



5 Russell Hobbs



6 Tefal

Descalers

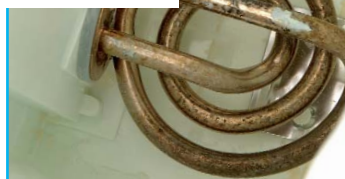
NEED TO KNOW

Limescale is a chalky deposit found in kettles, particularly in hard-water areas. It's harmless but it can damage your kettle and make your tea taste unpleasant.

Two of our Best Buys, the Home-tek (2) and the Russell Hobbs (5), both built up a lot of limescale. Don't be alarmed – use one of our Best Buy descalers to dissolve the problem.



Kettle element before (above) and after (below) using the Henkel descaler



OUR TESTS

We boiled 12 identical plastic jug kettles 150 times and set 12 descaling products to work. As well as commercial products, we tested white vinegar and a glass marble (which we assume is supposed to knock limescale off the inside of the kettle). The vinegar was cheap and effective and is probably something you'll have in the house – but even after six rinse and boil cycles, the kettle still smelt of vinegar. The marble smashed – see 'Don't Buys'.

1 Thompson & Capper

BEST BUYS

Our two Best Buy descalers, the **Thompson & Capper (1)** and the **Henkel (2)**, worked brilliantly at getting rid of all the limescale. They both come as tablets that you pop into your kettle and leave for around 30 minutes. They caused no damage to the kettle and were really easy to use. These tablets won't leave nasty smells or tastes in your kettle after rinsing either.

DON'T BUY

We left a marble (12) in the kettle while it boiled, as we'd heard this prevented limescale. It doesn't. It got stuck in the element, and in our test it got smashed – definitely not one to try at home. **La Cafetière (11)**, the other preventive descaler, wasn't actually dangerous, but it made no difference to the amount of limescale. It's been discontinued, though you may still see it in the shops.

11 La Cafetière

12 Glass marble

Descalers

MAKE

	Price (£)	Ease of use	Effect	Damage	Score (%)
1 Thompson & Capper Kettle Klear	1.79	★	★	★	100
2 Henkel Lime Lite Ultra Power Tablets	1.59	★	★	★	100
3 Kilrock-K Multi-purpose Descaler	2.98	☆	★	★	90
4 Reckitt Benckiser Scale Away	1.17	☆	★	★	90
5 Jeyes Kleen Off Appliance Descaler	1.85	○	★	★	80
6 Quickshine Descaler Bag	1.29	○	★	★	80
7 Oust All Purpose Descaler	1.25	◐	★	★	70
8 Waitrose Appliance Descaler	1.99	◐	★	★	70
9 Sarsons Distilled Malt Vinegar	1.18 ^a	●	★	★	60
10 Dri-Pak Aqua Softna	1.20	●	★	○	55
11 La Cafetière Cadnit	0.79	★	●	★	30
12 Glass marble	n/a	○	●	★	10

^a Price per litre

USING THE TABLE

We tested the descalers most widely available on the high street. For Best Buys we give the cheapest widely available high-street price as we went to press. Prices for other brands are a guide to what you should expect to pay.

Performance

Ease of use Based on how awkward or difficult the descaler was to use and whether it left

nasty smells or tastes in the kettle after rinsing. **Effect** ★ means that the descaler removed all traces of limescale from the kettle. The total score was capped if the descaling device was completely ineffective. **Damage** We assessed the kettles for any damage after we'd used the descalers. The only damage we noticed was a white powdery layer left on the inside of the kettle by the Dri-Pak (10).

KEY

★ ☆ ○ ◐ ●
Best —————> Worst
■ Best Buy ■ Don't Buy

SCORE

Ignores price and is based on:
Effect 50%
Ease of use 40%
Damage 10%