

Fridge-freezers

NEED TO KNOW

Fridge-freezers offer more flexibility and occupy less space than separate appliances. But there are weaknesses. For example, when we set the room temperature to 32°C, some overcompensated by cooling for too long, and the fridge temperature dropped enough to freeze and ruin delicate foods. This occurred in the Zanussi (20), Vestfrost (24), Indesit (25) Admiral (35), Hotpoint (38) and Miele (41).

FREESTANDING

The most common type, in lots of designs, colours and sizes. The fridge is usually above the freezer – so you need to bend less.

SIDE-BY-SIDE

These provide lots more storage. They can be huge, so check that doorways are big enough. Many have external ice makers for cubes, crushed ice – and chilled water if plumbed in. Side-by-sides are increasingly popular, but choice is still limited and they're often pricey.

BUILT-IN

Built-in models sit within a kitchen unit. They are smaller, because they need space to release heat to cool them and to prevent vibration being amplified by the cupboard. They can cost over 50 per cent more than similar freestanding models. Choice is limited and if it's part of a fitted kitchen, you may have no choice of brand.

FROST-FREE

Frost-free models such as this Bosch tend to cost a little more to buy and run, but they do make life easier by dispensing with defrosting. They work by circulating warmer air from vents in the compartments to ensure that condensation and ice don't build up. Our extensive tests found that no ice is formed even if the door is left open for a long period, so they work well.

BEST BUYS

A good fridge-freezer maintains consistent temperatures and cools and freezes groceries quickly to preserve the quality of food. Most fridge-freezers do this well but our Best Buys are better across the board.

FREESTANDING

There is a bigger difference between the best and the worst here than for other types of fridge-freezer.

The **Bosch (1)**, £299 from John Lewis, is hard to fault. Its outstanding insulation and excellent cooling and freezing preserve food in top condition. One slight criticism is that it's not quite as easy to rearrange the compartments or shelves as in other Best Buys.

The silver **Siemens (2)**, £799 from John Lewis, is a little more

SCORE

Ignores price and is based on:

Temperature stability	20%
Cooling and freezing	20%
Ease of use	15%
Noise and vibration	15%
Performance on recommended setting	10%
Insulation	10%
Uniform fridge temperature	10%

USING THE TABLES

We tested best-selling and popular models from the leading brands.

Specification

Price For Best Buys we give the cheapest widely available high-street price as we went to press; guide price for others. Online prices are in *italics*. **Size** Maximum space required to install the model, including any extra for air circulation recommended by manufacturer. **Volume** Usable space in litres. **Energy label** The manufacturer's claimed rating. **Room temp** Temperature range at which it works.

Temperature

Stability How well the correct internal temperature is maintained if the room temperature changes.

Cooling How quickly fridge cools food, and freezer freezes fresh food. Models rated ★ preserve texture and quality better than others on test.

Convenience

Noise Level when it starts and stops cooling cycles. None of the models tested is intrusively noisy.

Storage How easy compartments and shelves are to rearrange.

KEY

★ ☆ ○ ●
Best —————> Worst
■ Best Buy

BEST
ON
TEST

BEST
BUY

1 **Bosch**
FREESTANDING

2 **Siemens**
FREESTANDING

Fridge-freezers

FREESTANDING

- 1 **Bosch** KGU30605GB *Classixx*
- 2 **Siemens** KG32U193GB
- 3 **Bosch** KGU 31125 *Exxcel*
- 4 **Liebherr** CNES 3666
- 5 **Samsung** RL33S BNS
- 6 **Hotpoint** FFA84
- 7 **Whirlpool** ARC 7472
- 8 **Hotpoint** FFA74 Future
- 9 **LG** GR-469BSRA
- 10 **Servis** M0330
- 11 **Miele** KFN 8667 S-1
- 12 **Beko** CDA645F
- 13 **Liebherr** CUN 3021 Comfort NoFrost
- 14 **AEG** S75348KG
- 15 **Zanussi** ZENB9950SI
- 16 **Beko** CA5411FFW
- 17 **Smeg** FPD34
- 18 **Daewoo** ERF366
- 19 **Gorenje** RK4254E
- 20 **Zanussi** ZERB 3225X
- 21 **Hoover** HNMF 2605A-80
- 22 **Proline** PC231FFW
- 23 **Hotpoint** RFA52
- 24 **Vestfrost** SZ 310 M
- 25 **Indesit** BAAN10
- 26 **Icepoint** 178w/s



Specification							Temperature				Convenience			Score
Price (£)	Size hxxwxd (cm)	Volume (litres)		Energy label	Running costs (£/yr)	Room temp (°C)	Stability		Cooling		Noise	Storage	Defrost	(%)
		Fridge	Freezer				Fridge	Freezer	Fridge	Freezer				
299	180x62x63	165	77	A	23	10 to 38	★	★	★	★	☆	○	★	86
799	196x64x65	153	96	A	26	10 to 43	★	★	☆	☆	★	○	★	85
449	196x64x63	162	104	A	24	10 to 32	★	★	☆	☆	★	☆	★	84
800	211x96x67	184	95	A	29	10 to 43	★	★	☆	★	☆	☆	★	82
300	182x93x62	168	78	A	20	18 to 38	★	★	○	○	★	○	★	80
399	181x62x63	173	75	A	32	10 to 38	★	★	○	★	★	○	○	79
350	194x68x61	167	71	A	23	10 to 38	★	★	☆	○	☆	☆	★	79
329	190x66x63	154	84	A	23	10 to 38	★	★	●	★	★	☆	★	78
550	205x92x69	189	96	A	28	16 to 32	★	★	☆	●	★	○	★	77
400	186x67x66	143	95	A	33	16 to 32	★	★	○	○	☆	○	★	76
900	202x96x66	187	72	A	29	10 to 43	★	★	●	★	☆	☆	★	76
300	181x62x63	142	65	A	20	10 to 32	★	★	●	○	☆	○	★	75
399	189x61x66	169	73	A	25	10 to 32	★	★	○	●	★	○	★	75
580	195x86x72	148	97	A	24	10 to 38	☆	★	●	●	★	○	★	73
350	207x64x68	191	97	A	31	10 to 38	☆	★	●	○	★	○	★	72
230	162x57x63	109	62	A	19	10 to 32	★	★	●	○	☆	○	★	72
1,533	192x92x73	166	65	A	27	10 to 38	★	★	○	●	★	○	●	70
334	187x95x65	154	74	A	32	16 to 32	★	☆	○	●	★	○	★	68
389	184x58x62	117	79	A	28	10 to 32	★	★	○	●	☆	○	●	68
350	195x65x67	177	65	A	23	10 to 38	★	☆	○	●	☆	☆	○	68
290	173x56x61	123	67	A	24	10 to 32	★	★	●	●	☆	○	★	67
250	182x75x63	128	66	A	21	16 to 32	★	☆	●	●	☆	○	★	66
230	184x57x64	123	70	A	19	16 to 32	★	★	●	●	★	○	●	65
450	191x66x65	155	105	A	24	10 to 38	★	★	○	●	☆	☆	○	63
229	160x64x65	153	46	A+	17	10 to 38	★	☆	●	●	☆	○	●	60
190	161x69x58	98	43	A	16	16 to 32	★	★	●	●	☆	○	●	56

eyecatching than the Bosch (1). The freezer is larger than the Bosch's but the fridge is smaller. It's also one of the quietest fridge-freezers you can buy.

A handy bottle shelf and extra freezer compartment give the larger **Bosch (3)**, £449 from John Lewis, greater storage flexibility than many of our Best Buys. Chilling and freezing are good, and it's quiet too.

The **Liebherr (4)**, £800 from Comet, would suit a large family as there's plenty of space for stocking up on supermarket special offers. It has great insulation and is one of the best at retaining freshness by rapidly freezing food. We like the unique marking system that's a useful guide for storing food in the correct freezer drawer.

The design of the fridge on the **Samsung (5)**, £300 from Currys, is its major strength. It has a huge crisper for storing fresh vegetables, cheese and chilled meat. Cheap to run, the Samsung is one of the quietest models we've tested. However, freezing and chilling of fresh food is only average.

The **Hotpoint (6)**, £399 from John Lewis, and the **Whirlpool (7)**, £350 from Comet, score equally well. The quiet Hotpoint is excellent for freezing food quickly but does need to be manually defrosted from time to time. If you prefer not to do this, the frost-free Whirlpool might suit you better; it's the direct replacement for our previous Best Buy, the 7470. Its good insulation and fridge cooling are coupled with smart looks.

SIDE-BY-SIDE

This type of fridge-freezer, also known as American-style, tends to be consistently good, with little to choose between models. The best is the **Whirlpool (27)**, £800 from Powerhouse. Its fast rate of freezing helps preserve food quality better than other side-by-sides, and the electronic control panel makes it easy to



manage fridge, freezer and the automatic ice maker. The main drawback is that its interior is small compared with other models.

Next is the **Maytag (28)**, £1,600 from John Lewis, which is a side-by-side with a twist. The fridge has two doors and there's a slide-out freezer compartment. The spacious fridge is particularly well laid-out compared with our other American-style Best Buys. The freezer is on the smallish side and it's harder to organise than an upright freezer, as its two compartments are quite deep. It also lacks some features you'd find on similar-priced models, such as an external electronic control panel.

The quiet **GE (29)**, £1,749 online, is one of the quickest at cooling fresh food in the fridge. The freezer is slow to freeze food but does maintain a stable temperature. Another flaw is that many of the freezer door racks are two-star rated – fine for pre-frozen food, such as ice cream, but not suitable for freezing fresh items.

We like the neat serving tray and cooler for drinks in the **Samsung (30)**, £800 from Comet. The cooler allows you to remove chilled bottles

without opening the door and frees space inside for other groceries. It's one of the quietest fridge-freezers around but the freezer is slow to freeze food.

BUILT-IN

The **Neff (36)**, £800 from Comet, is by far the best option here. The large fridge is good for chilling quickly. However, the freezer is quite small and can freeze only 1kg of food in a day, otherwise the fridge temperature is lowered below zero, which spoils delicate salad vegetables such as cucumber and lettuce.

USING THE TABLE

See p56.

SCORE

Ignores price and is based on:

Temperature stability	20%
Cooling and freezing	20%
Ease of use	15%
Noise and vibration	15%
Performance on recommended setting	10%
Insulation	10%
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KEY

★	☆	○	◐	●
Best				Worst
■ Best Buy				

ELECTRONIC CONTROLS

Electronic controls that are set externally within the door, like those on this Whirlpool, can be a lot easier to use. Unlike conventional twisting knobs, a menu system (below) gives complete control over the fridge, freezer and the ice maker. But not all electronic panels help you to get the most out of a fridge-freezer. Some, like the Daewoo (18), have only a narrow range of settings rather than a continuous scale. If the settings aren't close together, you may have problems keeping your fridge-freezer at a reasonable temperature.



PHOTOGRAPHY NICK WRIGHT

Fridge-freezers

SIDE-BY-SIDE

27 Whirlpool S20D RBB 32 - A/G

28 Maytag Trilogy G342026PEK

29 GE PCG 21 MMFFWW

30 Samsung RS21 FCNS

31 GE GCG21f

32 Samsung RS2 CNS

33 Hotpoint MSZ703NF

34 LG GRL207QVJA

35 Admiral GC2224GEK B/W

BUILT-IN

36 Neff K9524X4GB

37 De Dietrich DRC328J

38 Hotpoint HM315I

39 Whirlpool ART 477/3

40 Indesit IN C 265 AI

41 Miele KD 683 i-3

**BEST
ON
TEST**



**36 Neff
BUILT-IN**

27 more fridge-freezers on test

The main table shows all newly tested models as well as Best Buys from previous tests. There are details of 24 conventional models and three side-by-side models from previous tests and still in the shops at www.which.co.uk/fridgefreezers.

If you'd prefer a separate fridge and freezer, there are over 70 models at www.which.co.uk/fridges and www.which.co.uk/freezers.

The small tables below show Best Buy freestanding fridges and Best Buy freestanding freezers.

Fridges	Price (£)	Type	Score (%)
Frigidaire RLE1099A	215	tall	86
Gorenje R2907MLA	305	tall	86
Hotpoint RLA61	275	tall	86
Bosch KTR15465GB	330	worktop height	76
Bosch KTR18425GB	269	worktop height	74

Last report Sep 2005. Online prices are in *italics*

Freezers	Price (£)	Type	Score (%)
Siemens GS12S493GB	169	worktop height	75
Bosch Logixx Maxx	240	worktop height	71
Hotpoint Future RZA51P	318	tall	66
Miele No Frost FN4697S	705	tall	65
Hotpoint FZA84P	400	tall	59

Last report Oct 2004. Online prices are in *italics*

**BEST
BUY**



**28 Maytag
SIDE-BY-SIDE**

**BEST
BUY**



**29 GE
SIDE-BY-SIDE**

**BEST
BUY**



**30 Samsung
SIDE-BY-SIDE**

Specification							Temperature				Convenience			Score
Price (£)	Size hxxxd (cm)	Volume (litres) Fridge	Freezer	Energy label	Running costs (£/yr)	Room temp (°C)	Stability Fridge	Freezer	Cooling Fridge	Freezer	Noise	Storage	Defrost	(%)
800	179x152x79	240	134	A	59	16 to 38	★	★	○	☆	☆	☆	★	82
1,600	178x90x111	308	102	A	35	18 to 43	★	★	○	○	★	○	★	81
1,749	178x159x76	261	138	A	55	16 to 43	★	★	☆	●	★	★	★	80
800	175x151x72	288	139	A	54	10 to 43	★	★	○	●	★	☆	★	79
1,150	187x162x75	282	114	B	49	16 to 43	★	☆	○	○	☆	○	★	76
924	187x152x73	267	139	A	41	10 to 43	★	★	☆	●	★	☆	★	74
750	190x159x80	293	163	A	39	16 to 32	★	★	○	●	☆	☆	★	71
850	206x150x75	248	117	A	56	16 to 32	★	★	●	☆	★	☆	★	71
899	180x157x73	251	126	A	45	18 to 43	★	★	○	●	☆	☆	★	70
800	189x57x54	172	49	A	24	10 to 32	★	★	☆	○	☆	☆	●	68
630	188x57x55	166	58	A	22	10 to 38	★	★	●	●	○	○	●	61
750	188x56x55	123	68	A	23	16 to 32	☆	★	○	●	☆	○	●	61
550	180x56x56	126	73	A	23	10 to 32	★	★	●	●	☆	☆	●	60
380	187x57x55	122	69	A	23	16 to 32	☆	★	●	●	☆	○	●	59
800	188x58x56	172	49	A	23	10 to 38	☆	★	○	●	☆	☆	●	56