

Flushed with success

Andrex is the runaway leader in our test of 20 toilet tissues

Luxury is a word often found in toilet roll advertising, but glamour is an altogether rarer claim for that most basic of personal hygiene goods. Surely even style gurus must settle for the same tissue as the rest of us? Not any more. If you think pastel peach, pink or aqua are as bold as toilet roll gets, brace yourself for the lifestyle statement of black – and bright red, orange and green.

Billed as having 'a voluptuous texture' and being 'soft and glamorous' by makers Renova, these vibrant options are available from The Conran Shop and selected online retailers at about £9.95 for a three-roll pack (not including postage and packaging).

And in case that doesn't tempt you, we've tested 20 more common rolls to find out which are softest, strongest and longest.



How we test

Stretched, shredded and all shook up – toilet rolls on test

Rock and roll

Our lab technicians measured and weighed each roll, and counted every sheet, then tested their strength (dry and wet) and absorbency. Finally, they assessed how much each roll disintegrated after flushing.

In addition 52 testers each rated a randomised selection of five rolls for softness, strength and thickness. They also shared their opinions on sheet size, tearability, how well the plies stayed together, and whether they were happy with the quality and comfort of the paper.

Best Buys **Quilted toilet rolls bowled us over**

We found a vast difference in performance across the rolls we tested. Our Best Buys were all quilted, costing about 50p a roll.

Andrex Quilts scored highly all round. Most people thought it was very thick – some too thick.

Velvet Quilted and **Waitrose Quilted Ultra Soft** were next in line to the throne, lagging behind

slightly on strength and degradability. Our testers were divided on the Velvet Quilted as some thought it too thick, while others said it ripped easily.

In short, if you're looking for soft, quilted, absorbent tissue, our Best Buys won't let you down. But if value for money and eco credentials are your bottom line, have a look at the options below.



Which should you choose?

Eco-friendly

Even if you want to use recycled paper, you might not be keen on its shorter, coarser fibres, which make it less soft. Products such as **Andrex** offer a compromise by containing an average of 10% recycled material.

An alternative is paper from sustainably managed sources. Look for the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) logo. **Velvet** uses the WWF logo instead, stating that three trees are planted for every one felled.

Cottonsoft (10), available at Waitrose, fares well for natural credentials, as it's made from 100% organic unbleached, undyed, unperfumed cotton. In our tests it was good for softness, but average for absorbency and strength, and poor for degradability. Some of our testers found that the layers separated too easily.

Economy rolls

The two economy rolls on test – **Sainsbury's Basics (15)** and **Asda Smart Price (16)** – cost about 80% less than our Best Buys, but couldn't match the more expensive rolls for performance. Testers' comments included 'thin', 'rough' and 'small'. One user said they 'wouldn't have confidence in it, faced with an extreme toilet situation'.

With its giant 361-sheet rolls, **Charmin Supersize (5)** will help you save on packaging. We found it's the same paper as Charmin with Absorbubbles, but double the length and double the price.

Thick and strong

Floralys (4) from Lidl was the only four-ply roll we tested, and proved the strongest roll on test. It's good value, but not everyone liked its pink floral pattern. It performed badly in our degradability test, which means it's more likely to block a u-bend, so it missed out on being a Best Buy.



| | SPECIFICATION | | | | | WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE | | | | SCORE % |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------|----------|---------------|---------|
| | PRICE FOR FOUR ROLLS (£) | PRICE PER ROLL (pence) | PRICE PER SHEET (pence) | SHEETS PER ROLL | FSC CERTIFIED | ABSORBENCY | SOFTNESS | STRENGTH | DEGRADABILITY | |
| STANDARD | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 ANDREX Quilts | 2.18 | 55 | 0.34 | 160 | ✓ ^a | ★★★★★ | ★★★★★ | ★★★★ | ★★★★ | 89 |
| 2 VELVET Quilted | 1.99 | 50 | 0.30 | 164 | | ★★★★★ | ★★★★★ | ★★★ | ★★★ | 79 |
| 3 WAITROSE Quilted Ultra Soft | 1.99 | 50 | 0.29 | 170 | ✓ ^b | ★★★★★ | ★★★★★ | ★★★ | ★★★ | 78 |
| 4 LIDL Floralys Supersoft | 1.36 ^c | 34 | 0.21 | 160 | | ★★★★★ | ★★★★★ | ★★★★★ | ★ | 78 |
| 5 CHARMIN Supersize roll | 3.49 | 87 | 0.24 | 361 | | ★★★★★ | ★★★★★ | ★★★★ | ★ | 76 |
| 6 ANDREX Puppies on a Roll | 2.08 | 52 | 0.23 | 222 | ✓ ^a | ★★★★ | ★★★★★ | ★★★ | ★★★★ | 74 |
| 7 ANDREX Hello Softie | 2.18 | 55 | 0.23 | 241 | ✓ ^a | ★★★★ | ★★★★★ | ★★★ | ★★★★ | 74 |
| 8 MARKS & SPENCER Softest ^d | 1.89 | 47 | 0.24 | 199 | ✓ | ★★★★ | ★★★★★ | ★★★★ | ★★ | 70 |
| 9 ASDA Shades | 1.69 | 42 | 0.19 | 221 | ✓ | ★★★★★ | ★★★★ | ★★ | ★★★ | 64 |
| 10 COTTONSOFT 100% Organic Cotton | 2.05 | 51 | 0.27 | 189 | | ★★★ | ★★★★ | ★★★ | ★★ | 58 |
| 11 VELVET Triple | 1.94 | 49 | 0.24 | 199 | | ★★★★ | ★★★ | ★★★ | ★★ | 57 |
| 12 SAINSBURY'S Supersoft | 1.85 | 46 | 0.18 | 259 | ✓ | ★★★ | ★★★★ | ★★★ | ★★★ | 54 |
| 13 ASDA Shades Quilted | 1.99 | 50 | 0.26 | 193 | ✓ | ★★★★ | ★★★ | ★★ | ★ | 46 |
| 14 SOMERFIELD Luxury | 1.79 | 45 | 0.19 | 239 | | ★★ | ★★ | ★★★ | ★★★ | 36 |
| 15 SAINSBURY'S Basics | 0.38 | 9.5 | 0.05 | 203 | ✓ | ★ | ★ | ★★★ | ★ | 19 |
| 16 ASDA Smart Price | 0.38 | 9.5 | 0.05 | 204 | | ★ | ★ | ★★ | ★★ | 18 |
| RECYCLED | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 NOUVELLE 100% Recycled Quilted Luxury | 1.84 | 46 | 0.21 | 223 | | ★★★★ | ★★★★ | ★★★★ | ★ | 43 |
| 18 MARKS & SPENCER 100% Recycled | 2.09 | 52 | 0.26 | 199 | | ★★★★ | ★ | ★★★★ | ★★ | 36 |
| 19 SAINSBURY'S Revive 100% Recycled | 1.70 | 43 | 0.18 | 241 | | ★★★★ | ★★ | ★★★★ | ★★ | 35 |
| 20 WAITROSE Recycled Paper | 1.72 | 43 | 0.18 | 241 | | ★★ | ★★ | ★★ | ★ | 31 |

^a Not FSC certified when we tested, but Andrex says it will be by time of publication ^b Not FSC certified when we tested, but Waitrose says it will be by August 2008 ^c Available only in 10-pack for £3.39. Price for four rolls is calculated from price per roll ^d M&S Softest is to become part of the retailer's 'Design Collection'

Tesco is revising its range of toilet tissue, so its products don't feature in our test. The packaging of all the Andrex products we tested will also change.

ROLL OF HONOUR

Sizing up
three brands

**Charmin
Supersize**
361 sheets

13.5cm

12cm

10cm

**Andrex
Quilts**
160 sheets

**Sainsbury's
Basics**
203 sheets

Contacts

Andrex 0800 626008; www.andrex.co.uk
Asda 0113 243 5435; www.asda.co.uk
Charmin 0800 028 1029; www.charmin.co.uk
The Conran Shop 020 7589 7401
www.conranshop.co.uk
Cottonsoft
 01284 766261; www.robinsonyoung.co.uk
Lidl 0870 444 1234; www.lidl.co.uk
Marks & Spencer
 0845 302 1234; www.marksandspencer.co.uk
Nouvelle 01204 673300; www.softonyou.com
Renova 020 8341 7070
www.renovaonline.net/you_iuk.html
Sainsbury's 0800 636262; www.sainsburys.co.uk
Somerfield 0117 935 9359; www.somerfield.co.uk
Tesco 0800 505555; www.tesco.com
Velvet 0845 603 1847; www.velvetbabymd.com
Waitrose 0800 188884; www.waitrose.com

USING THE TABLE

Specification

Price per roll Based on buying a pack of four rolls.
Price per sheet Calculated from the average number of sheets per roll.

Test performance

Absorbency Ability to hold water – measured in a laboratory.
Softness Rated by our panel of testers.
Strength Takes into account the wet and dry strength, measured in a laboratory, and the

opinions of the 52 people on our user panel who tried them at home.

Degradability We folded together five sheets of each paper, put them in the toilet bowl, waited one minute, then flushed. We collected the waste and assessed the extent of disintegration.

Score Ignores price and is based on:

| | |
|---------------|------------|
| Absorbency | 30% |
| Softness | 30% |
| Strength | 30% |
| Degradability | 10% |