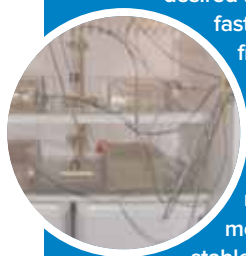


Chilling performance and practicality are key to our testing. We took almost 59 million readings in order to bring you our results

Keep it chilled

We place 1kg, 500g and 250g gel packs, which simulate food, at various positions in the fridge and freezer. Using temperature probes linked to a computer outside the fridge-freezers, we measure how quickly the gel packs drop to the desired temperature. The faster the drop, the fresher your food stays. We also change the temperature in our testing room and measure how stable the temperature remains inside the fridge and freezer.



Added extras

We check for things that can make a fridge-freezer more pleasant to use – for instance, whether the handle design makes for easy opening (fridge-freezer doors are sometimes sticky to open) and how quiet and free of vibration the fridge-freezer is.

As well as measuring the fridge-freezers' external dimensions, we measure the available space inside the fridge and freezer and calculate the capacity of any drinks dispenser and ice maker by filling them with water.

The way we were

We first tested fridge-freezers in 1972, reporting on just four models ranging from £57 to £140. The 70s was the decade when sales of fridge-freezers took off and, according to the British Frozen Food Federation, the 'product of the decade' was the Findus Crispy Pancake.



Cool customers

We take a fresh look at the latest fridge-freezers – and have a peek at the models of the future

Almost 1.5 million fridge-freezers were sold in the UK in 2006. And it's no wonder they're so popular when they save on space and are cheaper than buying a fridge and freezer separately. Some also come with handy extra features such as ice makers and humidity-controlled compartments to help keep foods fresh for longer.

We even had a quick look at a model that comes with a built-in TV – which isn't as bizarre an idea as you may first think. If you want to watch your favourite programmes while you cook, owning a fridge-freezer with a built-in TV means you won't have a television set taking up much-needed work-surface space.

Before you can choose from our latest test of 41 fridge-freezers, you have to decide what type will best suit your needs – freestanding, built in or side by side.

Freestanding fridge-freezers are the most common type. They are usually tall, sometimes up to two metres, and the fridge is often the top compartment as it's the one that's used the most.

Be prepared to pay extra for a choice of colour, at times up to £100 or more for a free-standing model

Built-in models allow you to match your fridge-freezer to your kitchen décor. They are often smaller than freestanding models and are significantly more expensive. This is because they use different components and far fewer of them are made.

Side-by-side models – otherwise known as American style – are slowly gaining in popularity, as they offer more storage space than the other types and also look good. But at almost a metre in width, they are very broad, so check that your doorways are wide enough to fit one through before you buy.

As well as being available in different styles, fridge-freezers have moved on from the days when they were available in any colour you wanted as long as it was white. However, be prepared to pay extra for a choice of colour, at times up to £100 or more for a freestanding model.

Now you know about all the different types of fridge-freezer that are available to buy, read on to discover the results of our test.

Futuristic fridge-freezers

LG's latest model gives a whole new meaning to the term TV dinner

Not only will the £1,700 LG GRG227STBA store food, but it also features a built-in 15-inch colour TV, an FM radio and a connection for a DVD player or set-top box.

We took a quick look at these features and found the screen has a decent picture quality with a good viewing angle, so you get a clear view even if you're standing considerably to one side of the screen. However, it's only about 88cm from the ground – ideally it should be higher to make it more comfortable

to view – and you will need to spend £15 extra on a portable aerial for TV reception.

Maximum volume is quite loud – useful if you have a large, noisy kitchen – but you'll get some distortion if you turn the volume up high.

Not to be outdone, the Siemens KG39MT90 also comes with a built-in 15-inch TV, although it's more expensive at £2,500. For the ultimate high-tech fridge-freezer, the £5,000 Electrolux EN55700X offers a TV, internet access and more.





1 FREESTANDING

85% Siemens KG32U193GB £700

This Siemens has the biggest freezer capacity of any freestanding model on test and has an easy-to-understand digital display for temperature controls. Fridge and freezer cooling is quick, it's frost free and temperature stability is excellent. Available from Comet, Currys, Iceland and John Lewis.

WE LIKE It is one of the quietest fridge-freezers we've tested.

Cheapest stores Currys, Comet, John Lewis
Size 186x60x61cm **Fridge capacity** 162 litres
Freezer capacity 104 litres



3 FREESTANDING

81% Miele KFN 8862 SD £650

The Miele KFN makes life easy. It's got a bottle rack, a shelf you can split in half to create more space underneath and easy-to-open doors. The freezer also comes with a guide to how long different types of frozen food last, and a memo dial that reminds you when you put the product in. Available from Boots, Comet, Iceland and John Lewis.

WE LIKE This Miele has one of the largest storage capacities on test.

Cheapest stores Comet, John Lewis, Boots
Size 200x60x63cm **Fridge capacity** 187 litres
Freezer capacity 96 litres



2 FREESTANDING

81% Liebherr CNES 3666 £900

This is one of the few models on test more than two metres tall, and it's spacious inside – the fridge is bigger than the Best Buy Siemens (left). The Liebherr also stood out for its cooling performance and temperature stability. Available from Comet.

WE LIKE You can remove half of one fridge shelf so tall items, such as jugs, can be fitted in on the shelf below.

Cheapest store Comet **Size** 201x60x63cm
Fridge capacity 184 litres **Freezer capacity** 95 litres



4 FREESTANDING

80% Samsung RL33S BNS £380

Although cooling times are a little longer than for the top three freestanding models, this good-value, frost-free Samsung is cheap and quiet to run. It also has a huge crisper drawer at the bottom of the fridge for storing fresh vegetables, but there's no fast-freeze feature. Available from Currys.

WE FOUND After a power cut, the freezer will maintain its temperature for 31 hours – saving food that would otherwise go off.

Cheapest store Currys **Size** 177x60x62cm
Fridge capacity 168 litres **Freezer capacity** 78 litres

The Best Buy Siemens is one of the quietest fridge-freezers we've tested

MODEL		PRICE (£)	SIZE (cm) (h x w x d)
FREESTANDING			
1	SIEMENS KG32U193GB	700	186x60x61
2	LIEBHERR CNES 3666	900	201x60x63
3	MIELE KFN 8862 SD	650	200x60x63
4	SAMSUNG RL33S BNS	380	177x60x62
5	HOTPOINT FF200-EP	360	200x60x66
6	SAMSUNG RL33SBSW	350	177x60x65
7	AEG Santo 86378-KG1	692	200x60x66
8	JOHN LEWIS JLFFW 2004	399	210x60x64
9	BOSCH KGN34X00GB	330	185x60x62
10	WHIRLPOOL ARC 4170	470	187x71x70
11	HOOVER HNMF 3906	340	195x60x64
12	LG GR359SQ	300	172x60x63
13	ZANUSSI ZENB2625	300	165x55x62
14	ZANUSSI ZNB 3450 S	380	185x60x64
15	DAEWOO ERF-384MNL	300	187x60x63
16	BEKO CA 7014 FFX	430	191x70x64
17	BEKO CDA659FS	400	187x60x66
18	HOTPOINT FFP187B	380	187x60x65
19	HOOVER HNMF 2805A L-80	350	176x54x60
20	ZANUSSI ZNB3440	330	185x60x64
21	BEKO CDA 543F	280	182x55x64
22	CANDY CFMF 266A	280	163x54x61
23	LEC ET3505W	315	136x55x63
24	BOSCH KGV28V00	230	171x55x61
25	INDESIT BAAN12	200	175x60x70
26	WHIRLPOOL ARC5571	300	203x60x64
27	HOTPOINT RFA 52 P	250	174x54x59

MORE INFO ONLINE

Free website access

For even more information about fridge-freezers, plus previous test results for more than 60 fridges and 40 freezers, go to www.which.co.uk.

Not logged in before? Then follow our step-by-step guide at www.which.co.uk/loginhelp.

SPECIFICATION					WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE							SCORE %
CAPACITY (litres) FRIDGE	CAPACITY (litres) FREEZER	ENERGY LABEL	RUNNING COSTS (£/yr)	ROOM TEMP (°C)	STABILITY (FRIDGE)	STABILITY (FREEZER)	COOLING (FRIDGE)	COOLING (FREEZER)	NOISE	STORAGE	DEFROST	
162	104	A	26	10 to 43	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	85
184	95	A	29	10 to 43	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	81
187	96	A	30	10 to 43	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	81
168	78	A	20	18 to 38	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	80
162	83	A	29	10 to 38	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	79
157	76	A	30	18 to 38	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	78
183	79	A+	20	10 to 43	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★	74
227	67	A	24	10 to 38	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	74
157	78	A	25	16 to 38	★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	73
255	84	A	38	18 to 43	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	73
171	98	A	44	16 to 38	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	72
154	83	A	40	16 to 32	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	72
126	66	A	24	10 to 38	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	72
198	66	A	21	10 to 38	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	71
180	79	A	21	16 to 32	★★★★★	★★★★	★★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	70
192	103	A	26	10 to 32	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	69
152	68	A	20	10 to 32	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	68
149	83	A	26	10 to 38	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	67
124	79	A	30	10 to 32	★★★	★★★★★	★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	65
193	66	A	24	10 to 38	★★★	★★★★★	★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	65
127	82	A	22	10 to 32	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	63
127	68	A	29	10 to 32	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	63
117	43	A	19	10 to 38	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	63
151	80	A	26	10 to 32	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	59
150	77	A+	17	10 to 32	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	59
197	78	A	28	16 to 38	★★★★	★★★★★	★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	59
121	70	A	22	10 to 32	★★★★	★★★★★	★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★	55

USING THE TABLES

We tested popular models from the leading brands. The more stars the better.

Specification

Price For Best Buys we give the cheapest widely-available high-street price. Prices for other models are a guide. Online prices are in *italics*. **Size** Including hinges, with doors closed.

Some makers recommend allowing extra space – usually less than 10cm – to allow for air circulation. **Capacity (fridge/freezer)** Amount of usable space. **Energy label** Maker's claimed rating. **Running costs** Estimate based on current electricity prices. **Room temp** Optimum room temperature range for the fridge-freezer.

Test performance

Stability (fridge/freezer) How closely both the fridge and freezer maintain internal temperature when the exterior temperature changes. **Cooling** How quickly the fridge cools food from room temperature; how quickly fresh food is frozen by the freezer. Models that are rated ★★★★★ are better

at preserving food quality and texture. **Noise** How noisy the model is when it starts and stops its cooling cycle; none of the models in this test was noisy. **Storage** How easily you can move any shelves and compartments. **Defrost** Ease of defrosting. Scores ★★★★★ if frost free.

Score

This 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%**



WHICH?
BEST BUY

5 FREESTANDING

79% Hotpoint FF200-EP £360

This Hotpoint's fridge was the quickest at chilling fresh food – it really impressed, beating the next-best Liebherr (2) and Miele (3) by an hour. The Hotpoint also makes good use of its available space inside, with good storage features. Available from Comet, Currys and Iceland.

WE LIKE It comes with two handy ice-cube trays that fit neatly between the freezer drawers.

Cheapest store Iceland **Size** 200x60x66cm
Fridge capacity 162 litres **Freezer capacity** 83 litres



28 SIDE BY SIDE

75% LG GRL207TUJA £799

Although it's not the biggest inside, thanks to an intelligent design this LG is one of the best models on test for convenience. Freezing speed is the best out of all the side-by-side models on test, although it is not up to the standards of the Best Buy freestanding models. Available from Comet and Currys.

WORTH KNOWING This model is the most expensive to run – over ten years it will cost about £370 more than the Electrolux (29).

Cheapest stores Comet, Currys **Size** 176x89x69cm
Fridge capacity 222 litres **Freezer capacity** 129 litres

Contacts

AEG 0870 535 0350

www.aeg-electrolux.co.uk

Beko 01923 81821

www.beko.co.uk

Bosch

0870 240 0060

www.bosch.co.uk

British Frozen Food Federation

01476 515 300

www.bfff.co.uk

Candy

0870 950 2943

www.candy-domestic.co.uk

Daewoo

0870 100 2525

www.daewoo-electronics.co.uk

Electrolux

0870 595 0950

www.electrolux.co.uk

Hoover

0870 950 2943

www.hoover.co.uk

Hotpoint

0870 150 6070

www.hotpoint.co.uk

Ignis

0870 600 8989

www.whirlpool.co.uk

Indesit

0870 150 6070

www.indesit.co.uk

John Lewis

0845 604 9049

www.johnlewis.com

Lec 0871 222 2635

www.lec.co.uk

LG 0870 873 5454

<http://uk.lge.com>

Liebherr

0870 898 5050

www.liebherr.com/hg/en/default_hg.asp

Miele 0870 755 4466

www.miele.co.uk

Neff 0870 241 3383

www.neff.co.uk

Samsung

0870 726 7864

www.samsung.co.uk

Siemens

0870 240 0070

www.siemens.co.uk

Whirlpool

0870 600 8989

www.whirlpool.co.uk

Zanussi

0870 572 7727

www.zanussi-electrolux.co.uk



WHICH?
BEST BUY

6 FREESTANDING

78% Samsung RL33BSW £350

This model has the smallest internal capacity of all the freestanding Best Buys. But thanks to a good design, it's one of the easiest models to clean. Overall, it's a very good all-rounder, but fridge-cooling speed lets it down a little. Available from Currys.

WORTH KNOWING Like the other Best Buy Samsung (4), this model works best at 18-38°C – but in our tests we found that it still works well outside this temperature range.

Cheapest store Currys **Size** 177x60x65cm
Fridge capacity 157 litres **Freezer capacity** 76 litres



WHICH?
BEST BUY

34 BUILT IN

71% Hotpoint HMB313I £500

Good value for money, this Hotpoint is very quick at cooling and freezing, helping to preserve the quality of food. It also comes with a fast-freeze option and a digital display for easier temperature control. However, it isn't frost free, so you'll have to manually defrost about twice a year, and there's also less usable freezer space than for most other models on test. Available from Comet.

WE FOUND The Hotpoint comes with a very useful bottle cooler.

Cheapest store Comet **Size** 178x54x55cm
Fridge capacity 158 litres **Freezer capacity** 44 litres

MODEL	PRICE (£)	SIZE (cm) (hwxwd)
SIDE BY SIDE		
28 LG GRL207TUJA	799	176x89x69
29 ELECTROLUX ERL6296KK1	1,099	177x92x72
30 SIEMENS KA58NA40GB	1,500	180x91x68
31 HOTPOINT MSZ 702 NF D UK	930	181x93x75
32 DAEWOO FRS-U20DAI	899	179x90x68
33 ZANUSSI ZERT2170	349	85x90x61
BUILT IN		
34 HOTPOINT HMB313I	500	178x54x55
35 BOSCH KIN32A41 GB	740	177x55x54
36 MIELE KF 888 iD N-1	900	177x55x55
37 NEFF K4254X6GB	680	177x55x55
38 WHIRLPOOL ART 477/4	400	178x55x56
39 IGNIS ARL757	419	179x54x55
40 INDESIT INCB310	335	178x54x55
41 CANDY CIC 324/1 AGK	532	177x54x54

For notes on using the table, see p67 a Despite scoring the same overall

What you should

HUMIDITY CONTROL

This allows you to manually control humidity in a fridge compartment. Increasing the humidity can prolong the life of fruit and vegetables by preventing them from drying out. Lowering humidity can increase the life of meat, fish and dairy foods

FAST FREEZE

Most of the models on test have this feature and it's useful if you're freezing fresh foods – quick freezing helps retain more nutrients and also preserves the texture of foods such as bread. Some models require you to switch fast-freeze on 24 hours before you put the fresh food in

SPECIFICATION					WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE							SCORE %
CAPACITY (litres) FRIDGE	CAPACITY (litres) FREEZER	ENERGY LABEL	RUNNING COSTS (£/yr)	ROOM TEMP (°C)	STABILITY (FRIDGE)	STABILITY (FREEZER)	COOLING (FRIDGE)	COOLING (FREEZER)	NOISE	STORAGE	DEFROST	
222	129	A	67	16 to 32	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	75
305	134	A	30	18 to 43	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	71
278	138	A	38	10 to 38	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	69
278	149	A	39	16 to 32	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	64
282	131	A	36	16 to 32	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	63
98	52	B	25	10 to 38	★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★	★	54
158	44	A	23	10 to 38	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★	71
123	64	A	22	10 to 38	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	71 ^a
169	53	A	22	10 to 38	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	68
132	71	A	28	10 to 38	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★	65
122	75	A	24	10 to 32	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★	★★★★★	★★★	★★	58
122	74	B	28	10 to 32	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★	★★★★★	★★★	★★	57
167	45	B	25	16 to 38	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★	★★★★★	★★	★	52
171	61	A	23	16 to 32	★★★	★★★★★	★★	★	★★★★★	★★★	★	51

as the Hotpoint (34), this Bosch is not a Best Buy because of its relatively poor fridge-cooling performance – we consider fridge-cooling ability to be essential in a fridge-freezer

look for

FROST FREE

Frost-free models are usually more expensive. However, if you buy a fridge-freezer that isn't frost-free, you will have to manually defrost the freezer approximately twice a year

WATER CONNECTIONS AND ICE MAKER

if you plumb the unit into the mains supply, these enable your fridge-freezer to make ice cubes, crushed ice and chilled water on demand. Usually found on side-by-side models, they can be removed if you find that you need more space in the fridge

Which should you choose?

Best for making ice

ELECTROLUX ERL6296KK1, £1,099 The internal ice maker on this Electrolux (29) can make a total of 2.25kg of ice – the largest amount of any model on test – which it can dispense crushed or in cubes.



Best for long-lasting fresh foods

BOSCH KIN32A41 GB, £740 The humidity-controlled compartment in this Bosch (35) works better than the humidity-controlled compartments found in six of the models on test (7, 10, 28, 32, 35, 37). The humidity-control compartment in the Whirlpool (10) worked particularly poorly in our tests.

Best for easy opening

MIELE KFN 8862 SD, £650 Owing to internal pressure and insulation, some fridge-freezer doors need a good tug to open them. If you sometimes have trouble opening doors, this Miele (3) is the one to go for.



Budget buy

LG GR359SQ, £300 Our cheapest Best Buy, the Samsung RL33SBSW (6), is £350 but if you can't quite stretch to that, this LG (12) is a great choice – particularly as LG scores above average for fridge-freezer reliability.

