

Think big with your new fridge

We've hunted high and low to find the models you can rely on

Everyone knows the feeling of trying to get more food into a full fridge. If you're looking for a model with more room, this is a good time to buy, as some of the tall fridges we've tested had higher scores than we've seen for five years.

If you want a freestanding worktop-height fridge, you'll have to compromise. Our Best Buys cool food quickly and keep a stable temperature, but have problems in other areas – too noisy or the thermostat may be difficult to set, for example.

There's never been a better time to buy something bigger

Fridges need to be energy efficient and quiet and have good capacity. They should also cool food quickly. The AEG Electrolux S72348KA and Hotpoint HUL161I were the fastest at this, taking just four hours and 20 minutes to complete our food cooling test (see 'How we test', right), while the Zanussi ZUD9124A took 19 hours and 18 minutes.

Conveniently, all the fridges defrost automatically but you will have to defrost freezer and ice boxes manually.

How we test

We tested cooling speed and how long food stayed frozen

Speed at cooling food

To see how quickly the fridges cool groceries, we set the room temperature to 20°C and allow the fridges to acclimatise. Each model is loaded with 6kg of gel packs – equivalent in weight to about 12 tomatoes, a large chicken and four pints of milk.

We insert temperature probes into the packs and record the average time they take to cool to 5°C, the highest temperature the government recommends for storing perishable food.

Frozen hours

We test how long three- and four-star freezer compartments keep fresh food frozen in a power cut. We load the freezer with gel packs and when they're all below -18°C, we switch the power off. We record the time it takes for any of the packs to rise to -9°C.

What you should look for

ICEBOX OR FREEZER COMPARTMENT

A four-star freezer compartment can store pre-frozen food for up to 12 months and freeze fresh food

SPLIT SHELVES

These half-depth shelves can form a full shelf. You can also have two-tier storage with a half-shelf at the back and space in front for taller items. On some models they click together securely

CONTROLS

Some fridges come with the controls on the inside – useful if you have young children who may be tempted to play around with temperature settings

CRISPER DRAWER

Good for keeping vegetables crisp. Sizes vary and some models have more than one, so you can separate salad from the rest of your veg

STORAGE OPTIONS

Look for handy storage options such as bottle shelves and door racks with grips to hold bottles



Contacts

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www.daewoo-electronics.co.uk
Electrolux
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Fridgemaster
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Indesit
01733 568989
www.indesit.co.uk
John Lewis
0845 604 9049
www.johnlewis.co.uk
Miele 01235 554455
www.miele.co.uk
Neff 0870 241 3383
www.neff.co.uk
Servis
0121 568 8333
www.servisuk.co.uk
Siemens
01908 328400
www.siemensappliances.co.uk
Smeg
0870 990 9907
www.smeguk.com
Whirlpool
0870 600 8989
www.whirlpool.co.uk
Zanussi
0870 572 7727
www.zanussi-electrolux.co.uk

1 FREESTANDING TALL

91% AEG Electrolux S72348KA £600

We couldn't fault this model which looks and performs like a quality fridge. It maintains an even climate when the room temperature changes and took just four hours and 20 minutes to cool newly stored food. This was the joint fastest time on test.

There are plenty of storage options including split shelves and bottle racks. And for a large-capacity fridge, it's pretty cheap to run, costing

£9 a year. Parents will be pleased that the controls are high up, out of reach of small children.

The S72348KA is available at Comet and John Lewis.

WE LIKE It has an additional tray for storing cans and small bottles at an angle in the main body of the fridge.

Cheapest store John Lewis **Volume** 285 litres **Running cost** £9 a year



USING THE TABLE

We tested bestselling models from leading manufacturers as well as own 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*. **Energy label** Manufacturer's claimed rating.

Size Dimensions of the model, including hinges with door closed.

You need to add several cm on each side to allow for the air circulation recommended by the manufacturer.

Volume The usable space that the fridge has inside. **Room temperature** The range of room temperatures at which the fridge is designed to work.

Icebox A ✓ indicates whether the fridge has

an icebox or freezer compartment.

Test performance

Reliability We show the reliability of this brand of fridge based on data, where available, from our reliability survey.

Thermostat accuracy

How well the fridge performs at the manufacturer's recommended temperature setting.

Stability How well the fridge maintains a stable

2 FREESTANDING TALL

87% Hotpoint RLA84 £350

This Hotpoint has more storage space than the AEG Electrolux (above). In addition to a crisper drawer, it

has two half-width drawers which can be placed side by side at any level. The bottle rack in the door has fingerstyle grips to hold bottles securely. The RLA84 cools food quickly despite not having the super-cool

feature which many models we tested

had. Temperature is even throughout. It's available at Comet and Currys.

WE FOUND The split shelves can be clipped together to form one full-depth shelf.

Cheapest store Currys **Volume** 311 litres **Running cost** £10 a year



3 FREESTANDING TALL

86% Zanussi ZERC2620 £230

Simple and effective are the watchwords here. This fridge stays evenly cool from shelf to shelf, blissfully unaffected by temperature changes outside, and the manufacturer's recommended

temperature setting works well. There isn't the bottle shelf which other freestanding tall Best Buys have, but different-sized

bottles are kept in place by grips in the bottle rack. Running costs are quite high at £14 a year. It's available from Currys.

WE LIKE The sliding half-width door rack moves to make space for taller items.

Cheapest store Currys **Volume** 228 litres **Running cost** £14 a year



Facts & scores

Points of interest from our fridges test

Juice on tap

You can have chilled drinks on tap thanks to the dispenser on the front of this Hoover fridge. You fill a tank inside the door with a drink such as juice or water, then help yourself without even opening the door.

Just ice

This Daewoo's icebox has no star rating so you can use it to make only ice cubes. All the other fridges (apart from the Beko RA610S) have four-star freezer compartments so they're capable of freezing fresh food.

Pre-frozen only

The Beko has a two-star freezer compartment – which is suitable only for making ice cubes and storing pre-frozen food for up to a month.

MODEL

FREESTANDING TALL

- 1 AEG ELECTROLUX S72348KA
- 2 HOTPOINT RLA84
- 3 ZANUSSI ZERC2620
- 4 SIEMENS KS30R430GB
- 5 BEKO TLDA521S
- 6 HOOVER HNL3505ATL-80
- 7 BOSCH KSR30410GB/02
- 8 SERVIS M7571S-1
- 9 SMEG FAB28R4

FREESTANDING WORKTOP HEIGHT

- 10 HOTPOINT RLA34
- 11 AEG ELECTROLUX S70170TK
- 12 BOSCH KTR16425GB/01
- 13 JOHN LEWIS JLUICFRW6001
- 14 DAEWOO FR-143WH
- 15 HOTPOINT RSAV21P
- 16 INDESIT TLA1(UK)
- 17 WHIRLPOOL ARC0820
- 18 BEKO RA610S
- 19 ZANUSSI ZERT6646
- 20 FRIDGEMASTER MTRL170
- 21 MIELE K2202S-1
- 22 JOHN LEWIS JLUICFRW6003

internal temperature when the room temperature changes.

Evenness The temperature difference between the coldest and warmest parts of the fridge. We give the highest rating to those models with the most even temperatures. **Cooling power** How quickly the fridge cools food. **Noise** How noisy the fridge is when cooling

cycles start and stop. **Flexible storage** How easily you can move shelves and the suitability of other storage systems and accessories.

Score

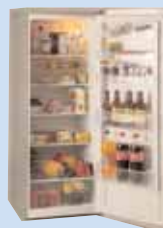
This ignores price and is based on:
 Temperature **70%**
 Noise **10%**
 Ease of defrosting **10%**
 Ease of use and cleaning **10%**

Which should you choose?

Here are some ideas for fridges that might suit your particular needs

Best on a budget

BEKO TLDA521S £200 This Beko (5) has less space and cools food more slowly than our Best Buy Zanussi, but it's cheaper to run and costs £30 less. It keeps an even temperature. Beko is a reliable brand according to our survey of *Which?* members.



Best for easy access

BOSCH KUR15444GB £280 Using the crisper which is part of this Bosch (29) is much easier than on many other built-in worktop height fridges, thanks to its lift-up lid. Be warned, though: the fridge tested well overall, but it does take quite a while to cool food down.



SPECIFICATION							WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE							SCORE %
PRICE (£)	ENERGY LABEL	SIZE (cm) hxxwxd	VOLUME (litres)	RUNNING COST (£/yr)	ROOM TEMPERATURE (°C)	ICEBOX	RELIABILITY	THERMOSTAT ACCURACY	STABILITY	EVENNESS	COOLING POWER	NOISE	FLEXIBLE STORAGE	
600	A+	180x60x65	285	9	10 to 43		average	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	91
350	A	180x60x61	311	10	10 to 38		average	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	87
230	B	140x60x60	228	14	10 to 38		average	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	86
349	A+	157x60x62	255	8	10 to 43		average	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	83
200	A	146x55x63	216	7	10 to 32		good	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	82
259	A	164x61x61	229	12	16 to 38			★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	76
330	A	156x60x61	258	11	10 to 38		average	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	73
304	A	123x54x83	144	15	16 to 32	✓		★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	71
869	A	146x60x67	222	16	16 to 38	✓		★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	67
170	A	86x60x63	132	9	10 to 38		average	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★	73
235	A+	86x60x64	120	7	10 to 38		average	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	72
209	A+	85x60x63	127	8	10 to 38		average	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	71
199	A	86x60x63	98	12	10 to 38	✓		★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	71
197	B	86x48x55	88	13	16 to 32	✓		★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	70
139	A	84x55x63	76	12	10 to 38	✓	average	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	69
129	A	84x55x63	108	14	16 to 38			★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	68
175	A	84x60x60	127	9	10 to 38		average	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	68
170	A	85x55x61	86	13	10 to 32	✓	good	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	63
170	A	85x55x62	124	10	10 to 38		average	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	62
133	A	85x55x56	104	12	16 to 32			★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	61
235	A	85x55x62	129	12	10 to 32		average	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	57
199	A	86x60x63	125	8	10 to 43			★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	55

10 FREESTANDING WORKTOP HEIGHT

73% Hotpoint RLA34 £170

This Hotpoint is big, easy to clean and quite cheap to run. Despite its size, it completed our food cooling test in less than eight and a half

**WHICH?
BEST
BUY**

hours. Temperature inside is even from one shelf to the next.

You can adjust the shelves and door racks and there are finger grips in the bottle rack to keep bottles secure. On the downside it's noisier than some other models that we tested.



It comes in graphite or white and is widely available from Argos, Comet, Currys and John Lewis.

WORTH KNOWING At 132 litres this is the largest-capacity worktop height fridge on test.

Cheapest store Comet **Volume** 132 litres
Running cost £9 a year

11 FREESTANDING WORKTOP HEIGHT

72% AEG Electrolux S70170TK £235

The super-cool function makes this AEG quick to cool food and on test it was the cheapest worktop-height model to run.

**WHICH?
BEST
BUY**

We found the recommended thermostat setting wasn't cold enough, so you may need to experiment to get the temperature right. The controls are on the outside and include an on/off



switch so you don't have to unplug the fridge to turn it off. It's available online.

WE LIKE The crisper drawer comes with dividers to separate your salads.

Available Online Volume 120 litres
Running cost £7 a year

23 BUILT-IN TALL

91% Neff K4624x4GB £849

We were impressed by the simple effectiveness of the Neff. The temperature inside hardly varies when room temperature changes. The Neff also works well at the setting that the manufacturer recommends.

**WHICH?
BEST
BUY**

The grips in the bottle rack help keep different-sized bottles in place when you

open the door. The Neff is available from Currys.

WORTH KNOWING An attachable drawer fits the underside of any shelf to give extra storage.

Cheapest store Currys **Volume** 244 litres
Running cost £13 a year



The Hotpoint RLA34 is easy to clean but is noisier than other models on test

26 BUILT-IN WORKTOP HEIGHT

89% Whirlpool ARG 581/2 £299

It looks basic but this is the best built-in worktop-height fridge at keeping an even temperature throughout and it maintains a stable temperature inside when the room temperature changes. A generous 14-litre vegetable crisper should suit those eating their

**WHICH?
BEST
BUY**

five-a-day portions, and there's plenty of space in the door racks for bottles. It's available online. **WE LIKE** Simply designed, this fridge gave a strong all-round technical performance.

Available Online Volume 127 litres
Running cost £14 a year



27 BUILT-IN WORKTOP HEIGHT

75% Whirlpool ARG 585/A £299

Clever tricks improve storage here. Fold-up door racks allow extra space for bottles when you're entertaining,

**WHICH?
BEST
BUY**

without having to remove the racks. On the downside we found that the temperature inside was colder towards the bottom shelf, so it's best to store your vegetables in the

crisper rather than on the shelf to ensure they don't become too cold. The ARG 585/A is available online. **WE LIKE** The bottle rack in the door includes a divider.

Available Online Volume 122 litres
Running cost £11 a year



Facts & scores

Expert advice from our fridge testing team

Keep frozen

In a power cut, the four-star freezer compartment on this Hotpoint would keep food frozen for more than 30 hours.

Cool zone

All Bosch models on test, including the freestanding ones, have a graphic inside showing the shelf level where the temperature is likely to be the coolest.

MODEL	PRICE (£)	ENERGY LABEL
BUILT-IN TALL		
23 NEFF K4624x4GB	849	A
24 HOTPOINT HT303NI	453	A
25 AEG ELECTROLUX SK91800-4I	525	A+
BUILT-IN WORKTOP HEIGHT		
26 WHIRLPOOL ARG 581/2	299	B
27 WHIRLPOOL ARG 585/A	299	A
28 ELECTROLUX ERN1673	235	A
29 BOSCH KUR15444GB	280	A
30 ZANUSSI ZUD9124A	460	A
31 HOTPOINT HUL161I	249	B
32 HOOVER FRHBRU160AK	280	A

28 BUILT-IN WORKTOP HEIGHT

**72% Electrolux
ERN1673 £235**

This Electrolux has a lot of space for this style of model. The 12-litre crisper drawer allows you to stuff in a large number of vegetables, while the split shelves offer options for storing tall bottles in the main part of the fridge. It completed our food cooling test in six hours and 40 minutes, even without a super-cool function. This is the fastest for a Best Buy of its type. The temperature inside is uneven.



It gets colder towards the bottom shelf, so it may be best to store butter nearer the top for easier spreading. It's available online.

WE LIKE This was the only model of its kind on test with a crisper drawer that slides out.

Available Online Volume 129 litres
Running cost £10 a year

WHICH?
BEST
BUY

MEMBER BENEFIT

FREE website access

If you're interested in reading more about fridges and seeing the results for more models that we have tested, then why not have a look on our website at www.which.co.uk/fridges where you can also find out how reliable your current make of fridge is, according to our survey. On the website you can also find information on a variety of other white goods that we have tested.

Insider information**Katie Waller explains the meaning of efficiency ratings**

A fridge generally lasts 15 years, so while yours has been quietly humming away in the corner of the kitchen there have been big changes in the market.

One area of improvement has been in the amount of energy they use. Fridges consume around a fifth of all the electricity used by domestic appliances, which explains why the government continually urges manufacturers to produce energy-efficient appliances.

Over the past three years, Which? testing has seen electricity consumption fall as fridges become more efficient.

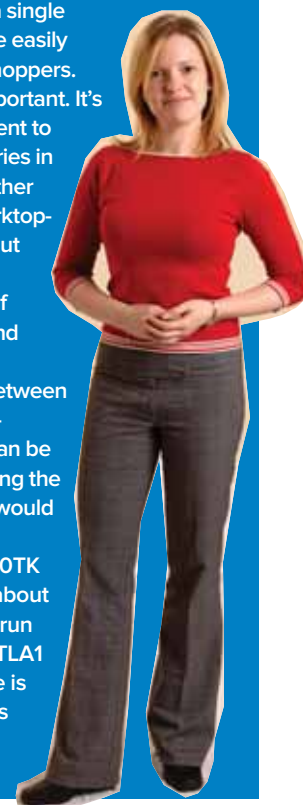
There has been EU energy labelling of cold appliances for more than a decade with ratings ranging from the ultra-efficient A++ to the power-hungry G classifications. Most on sale now will be A++ to C.

These ratings are based on how much electricity the fridge uses together with its capacity,

features and what type of fridge it is, to produce a single rating that can be easily interpreted by shoppers.

Capacity is important. It's often more efficient to keep your groceries in one tall fridge rather than run two worktop-height models. But it's worth buying a tall fridge only if you keep it around two thirds full.

The savings between the most energy-efficient bands can be quite small. Among the biggest savings would be with the AEG Electrolux S70170TK (11) which costs about £7 less a year to run than the Indesit TLA1 (16). If your fridge is older, the savings are likely to be larger.



SPECIFICATION					WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE							SCORE %
SIZE (cm) hxxwxd	VOLUME (litres)	RUNNING COST (£/yr)	ROOM TEMPERATURE (°C)	ICEBOX	RELIABILITY	THERMOSTAT ACCURACY	STABILITY	EVENNESS	COOLING POWER	NOISE	FLEXIBLE STORAGE	
177x55x54	244	13	10 to 38		good	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	91
177x54x54	200	23	16 to 38	✓	average	★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	69
179x55x55	228	11	10 to 38		average	★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	63
82x60x50	127	14	10 to 38		average	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	89
82x60x54	122	11	16 to 32		average	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	75
89x55x54	129	10	10 to 38		average	★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	72
82x60x55	123	8	10 to 32		average	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	70
81x60x54	81	11	10 to 38	✓	average	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	66
81x58x55	106	13	10 to 32		average	★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	64
82x60x55	114	9	16 to 32			★	★★★★	★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★	49

See p68 for the notes on using the table