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Freezers

Selection

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Have you been thinking you need more freezer space? Freezers are available in many sizes, brands, and models so it will pay you to study the different types on the market. A recent publication lists approximately 25 manufacturers and 370 models available to the consumer. So, the selection of a freezer is no simple matter. Basically, your choice depends upon:

- The floor space you have available.
- The amount of freezer space you need.
- The amount of money you can spend on this appliance.

Alternatives

Before you buy a separate home freezer, you may consider these choices to add to your freezer space.

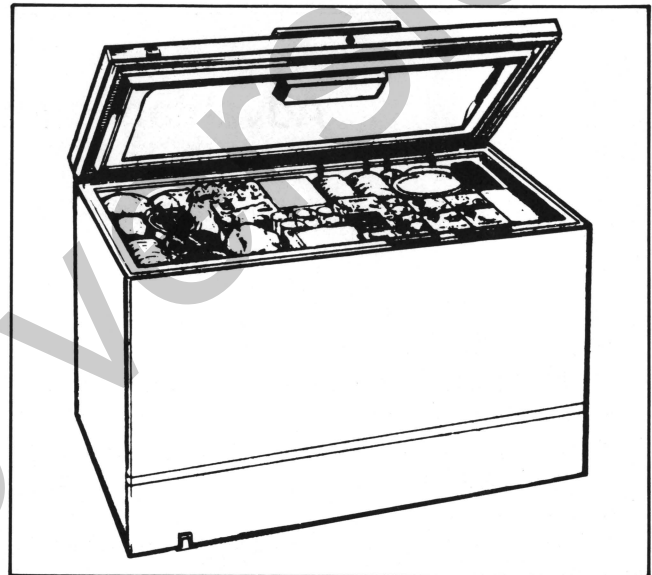
- Refrigerator-freezer combination.
- Frozen food locker rental.
- Walk-in freezer.
- Frozen food plans.

Your choice will depend on your individual situation.

Investigate carefully before you enter into any contract for a food freezer plan. The package deal that includes purchase of a freezer may, in some instances, be less to your advantage than buying a freezer separately. The food items included may or may not measure up to your usual purchases. In any event, be sure to read the contract before you sign it.

Rental of frozen food lockers is available in fewer localities than several years ago. The dependability and quality of service should be investigated. This method of freezing food makes it possible to have large quantities of food frozen more quickly than most home freezers are designed to do. Driving distance from the locker plant is a prime consideration.

Some families prefer to have a walk-in freezer constructed in their home, particularly if they have need for large amounts of space and/or are a long distance from a



town with locker service. Convenience versus cost would be the big factor with this alternative.

The remainder of this guide will focus on the selection of the home freezer appliance.

Benefits of a Home Freezer

- Freezer living can save time and work.
- Freezers are a great aid in serving balanced meals, no matter what the season.
- Freezing is a good method to preserve and/or store foods.
- With proper preparation and wrapping, frozen foods retain their appearance, taste, and nutritional value over extended periods of time.
- Wise planning and buying can make your freezer a "supermarket" in your own home.
- Frozen foods are usually quick and easy to prepare.
- Last minute shopping trips can be avoided.
- Feeding surprise guests will no longer be a problem.
- You can prepare foods for special occasions in advance.

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Will a Home Freezer Be a Savings?

A freezer rarely saves money for the owner when total costs such as initial cost, operating costs, depreciation, food wraps and containers, plus the cost of the food are considered. But, your freezer may help in your overall food budget if you:

- Take advantage of food specials.
- Buy meats in quantity, at special prices.
- Make fewer, more efficient shopping trips.
- Package foods in meal sizes so only required amounts are thawed.

Chest Vs. Upright

The place you plan to locate the freezer is often a deciding factor when debating whether to buy a chest or an upright freezer. Although they require more floor space, chest models are more economical to operate than uprights. Since hot air rises, very little cold air escapes when a chest model is opened. You have probably noticed that supermarkets rely primarily on chest freezers that often are open. Upright models are more attractive, are available in standard appliance colors, and fit into most kitchen plans more easily than the chest. But, when an upright freezer is opened, cold air from all levels is released.

Significant advantages and disadvantages of chest and upright freezers are as follows:

Advantages and Disadvantages

Chest

Advantages of the Chest

- Chests vary in size from 4 to 25 cubic feet.
- Chest freezers are somewhat less expensive to buy.
- Cost of operation is less than that of an upright.
- Little space is wasted as there are no shelves or coils inside and odd-shaped packages can be easily stored.
- Food will stay frozen for several hours if current goes off or freezer stops.
- Frost can be scraped off freezer lining to keep it from becoming too thick and acting as an insulator.
- Top may be used as a counter area if necessary.

Disadvantages of the Chest

- User must bend to load and unload freezer.
- Most chest freezers have to be manually defrosted.
- There may be some frost build-up on packages.
- It is difficult to place food to be frozen always in contact with walls or coils to get quicker freezing.
- It is difficult to remove items without moving other packages.
- Orderly package arrangement is difficult to maintain.

Upright

Advantages of the Upright

- Sizes range from 4 to 20 cubic feet.
- User exerts little energy in bending or reaching to load and unload food.
- It is easier to organize the storage of different kinds of food packages.
- Shelves on the door provide handy storage space.
- Automatic defrost systems are available on uprights (top-of-the-line models).
- Less floor space is required, so the appliance can often be located in a more convenient place.

Disadvantages of the Upright

- Many upright freezers have to be manually defrosted.
- Care must be exercised during defrosting to prevent water leakage through any seams into the insulation.
- Frost may build up on packages and packages may stick together.
- Accumulated frost wastes space, as with the chest type.
- Unless shelves have front guards, food packages must be carefully arranged to prevent their falling out when door is opened.
- Good flooring is necessary because of the concentrated weight.

Frost-Free Models

The frost-free freezer has vents inside for the flow of cold air in and warm air out. Models vary in size from 12 to 20 cubic feet. This type of freezer has the highest initial and operating costs. Significant factors are:

Advantages

- Frost does not build up anywhere inside the freezer, consequently no defrosting is necessary. Space is not wasted because of frost build-up.
- Frequent cleaning of walls and shelf space is possible without having to deal with accumulated frost.
- Foods to be frozen need only to come in contact with the moving cold air.
- Freezing is as fast as, or faster than, contact freezing in the other two types.

Disadvantages

- Air circulation removes moisture from poorly packaged foods more rapidly than in manual defrost freezers.
- Cold air stops immediately if the current goes off or the freezer stops. Frozen foods start to thaw soon after, especially if the shelves are not fully stocked.
- In most models, cold air flow stops if the door is left open. Foods stored on door shelves will start to thaw immediately.
- Initial and operating costs are both higher—up to 25 percent higher operating cost over manual defrost models of the same capacity.

Size and Capacity

How large a freezer does your family need? Freezer size is stated in cubic foot capacity. Most home freezers have capacities from 11 to 18 cubic feet. However, compact freezers to commercial sizes are available. One cubic foot will hold 35 pounds of frozen food, if the packages are regular in size and stored closely together. Urethane foam is being used as insulation in some models to permit greater capacity with no increase in overall dimensions or required floor space.

As a guide to your needed freezer size, figure from 4 to 6 cubic feet of storage per person. However, if your freezer will be used mainly as a storage box and seldom for freezing large loads, as little as 3 cubic feet per person may do. If you depend upon a freezer for much of your food supply, you may need as much as 10 cubic feet per person.

Installation

In order for the food freezer to operate at its maximum efficiency, it must be properly installed.

Make sure the location you pick for your freezer has a very firm foundation. Air leaks around the door and/or cabinet warping can result if the loaded freezer should sag because of inadequate flooring. Check to see that the appliance will be absolutely level, as mechanical parts operate best in a level position, and door closure will be tighter.

Locate the freezer in a cool—not cold—spot. The cool location results in less work for the compressor, giving lower cost of operation. The freezer should not be situated in a damp place or in an area where temperatures are apt to fall below freezing. Dampness may cause damage to the motor and exposed metal surfaces. At low temperatures the freezer mechanism may not function properly. If only the floor is damp, raise the cabinet off the floor with blocks. The use and care book will indicate if you can place the freezer in an area with cold temperatures.

Most models require 4 inches of clearance at both sides and on top of the freezer for good circulation of air. Keep the freezer away from strong drafts to prevent outside sweating, leading to mildew or mold.

The freezer should be secluded from dust, lint, or pollen. If these cover or coat mechanical parts, efficiency will be reduced as the freezer will have to work harder and longer.

A freezer should always be plugged into a separate appliance circuit. This insures that the freezer will get an adequate amount of electrical energy and can be properly protected (by fuse or circuit breaker) against motor overload damage. If it is placed on a fused circuit, a time delay type of fuse will take care of the momentary overload when the freezer starts up each time.

Other Selection Points

Convenience features also enter into freezer selection. Each individual homemaker must decide how important such features will be in saving time and energy and whether they are worth any increase in cost.

Automatic defrosting is available in most top-of-the-line uprights. The defrosting mechanism may be automatically controlled by time or by the number of door openings. If defrosting is not automatic, look for an accessible drain or hose, preferably in the front of the cabinet, to speed removal of water when the freezer is defrosted.

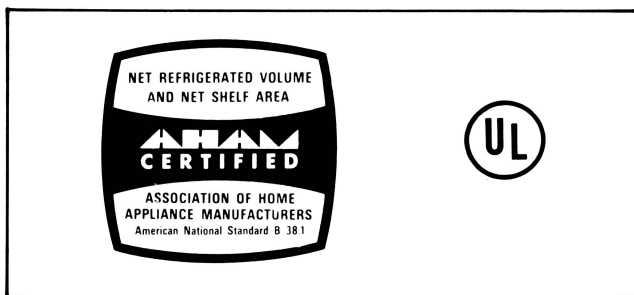
Watch, too, for features that simplify storage. In uprights, these may include door racks and shelves which are adjustable or removable for cleaning; slide-out or swing-out shelves or storage baskets; and tilt-down drawer fronts that may double as loading shelves. In chest freezers, storage features include removable divider partitions and sliding wire baskets which help you to adjust areas to current loads and make it easier to reach items in the bottom of the freezer.

Other features you may want to consider are:

- Signal light or alarm to warn when freezer is off or temperature is too high.
- A safety lock—especially important where freezer is accessible to children.
- Counter-balanced lid, on chest type, to stay open while adding and removing food.
- Fast-freeze surfaces, cooled by coils directly beneath shelves, for quick food freezing. (Not featured in frost-free models).
- Rollers or wheels for easy moving.
- Accessible temperature control dial.
- Lighted interior (or white walls) so foods are easy to locate.
- Toe operated pedal to open door when arms are full. (Mostly on uprights).
- Offset door hinges on upright to allow freezer to be installed in a corner or flush against another appliance.
- Automatic icemakers or devices for speedy release of cubes from trays.
- Design and materials that will aid ease of cleaning.
- A thermometer so you will know if the freezer is maintaining zero degrees Fahrenheit.

Labels

The UL Seal should appear on your electric home freezer. This seal indicates the appliance has met certain electrical safety requirements. UL stands for Underwriters Laboratory, a non-profit testing organization.



The AHAM label indicates a freezer has been measured in a prescribed manner to determine the cubic feet of usable space. When this seal is on your appliance, you can be sure the capacity stated on the name plate or accompanying literature is correct. AHAM stands for Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers.

Energy Guide

The freezer shopper can now compare energy efficiencies and estimated annual operating costs in the marketplace. The yellow label is attached to the appliance and thus in plain view, or it is included in mail order catalogs. The consumer must be careful to compare models similar in size, but also compare chest models to chest models or uprights to uprights.

Summary

The number of freezer models being offered to meet consumer demand is constantly increasing with wide choices in size, styling, color, and convenience features. Remember—you will probably not save any money by owning a freezer, but it is an appliance that provides convenience to the busy family.

Look for a reputable dealer and manufacturer. Study the guarantee on the appliance and be sure you understand what it provides. A freezer is estimated to have a 15 year life expectancy, so make your selection with this in mind. Careful selection plus proper use and care of your freezer will result in satisfaction.