A step-by-step guide to find the right counter depth refrigerator for your kitchen.

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Regular counter depth refrigerators have been upgraded to meet new energy standards. Most interiors have upgraded their interiors and lighting to LED.

Integrated refrigerators have become more widespread in the industry. All refrigerator and freezer columns have likewise been popular in the very high end kitchens. Sub-Zero has the newest introduction with air cleaner, new digital temperature controls and water purification system.

Looking forward, you will see more integrated options because they will pass ever tougher Federal energy standards.
The Samsung Family Hub in an internet-ready, Wi-Fi enabled refrigerator. You have a touchscreen on the front plus cameras inside so you can see what is in the refrigerator remotely.
Bosch has manufactured a new line of counter depth refrigerators with two compressors instead of one or one compressor with two evaporators.

It’s designed to keep the warmer refrigerator air separate from the colder, drier refrigerator air to keep food fresher longer.
GE Café Counter Depth Refrigerator

GE, Samsung and LG, has Wi-Fi connectivity in their refrigerator and a built-in Keurig coffee machine.

Now, you can wake up and have coffee ready from a setting on your app that connects with your refrigerator.

Photo Credit: GE Appliances
ThermadorColumns:

Thermador released a series of columns with customizable bin storage and a push to open door.
Integrated Refrigeration

Jenn-Air Integrated Refrigeration:

Jenn-Air has brand new integrated refrigerators with Wi-Fi and three-zone cooling.
Black Stainless Steel:

Black stainless steel has been marketed as an alternative to stainless steel.

It’s black hue matches most cabinets and is rich looking. But Black Stainless Steel is an oxide coating and can scratch.

Click the link below before you buy black stainless steel appliances.
GE Café White Appliance Finish:

White may be back as a trendy color after a 25-year hiatus. Both Miele and GE Cafe have white products.

GE also allows you to choose your handle and trim colors in brass, stainless or copper finishes.
There are currently three very different types of counter depth refrigerators: regular, professional and integrated.

Counter depth (or shallow depth) refrigerators do not protrude from the cabinet and provide a cleaner, more linear appearance in the kitchen. Sub-Zero was the first to offer shallow refrigeration in the 1960’s. Currently, every brand produces at least one type of counter depth refrigerator.
Refrigerator Problems
Important information about a refrigerator's lifespan

Regular Counter Depth
All you need to know about the most popular counter depth refrigerators
REFRIGERATOR PROBLEMS

Why the phrase “they don’t make them like they used to” is so true

Photo credit: Southern Studio Interior Design / Houzz
REFRIGERATOR PROBLEMS

Refrigerators have become more efficient, but they are also more prone to failure. Condensers now run constantly in order to be more efficient, and consequently the life of a refrigerator is now just 6-10 years.

Some manufacturers are also markedly better than others in terms of reliability.

You also need to maintain your refrigerator by cleaning the condenser at least twice a year so it doesn’t overheat.
Based on our service department’s service calls in 2018. It's calculated as sales divided by calls completed over the first year. With a fail rate of 26.36% just on refrigerators, you will need some service with a whole kitchen of appliances.

In addition to researching prices and features, you should know your service agent before your purchase.
Regular counter depth refrigerators are the most popular style.

Photo credit: Vogt Design Studio / Houzz
Regular counter depth is quite simply a shallow refrigerator. It is also much less expensive than the professional or integrated types.

A regular counter depth is available in many different configurations such as bottom freezer, French door and side-by-side. Typically between 20 to 25 cu. ft. capacity.

The refrigerator should be purchased in stainless steel. Because the door on the refrigerator is so thick, panels do not look sharp on this unit. Only KitchenAid manufactures a counter depth refrigerator to accept a panel.

**Widths:** 24”, 30”, 33” and 36”

**Brands:** Jenn-Air, Bosch, GE, KitchenAid, Whirlpool, Samsung, LG, Electrolux, Dacor, Blomberg, Fisher & Paykel, Maytag and Frigidaire

**Price:** $1,700 - $3,800
Side-by-Side: Refrigerator and freezer are side-by-side in this configuration.

Side-by-sides have more organized storage and proportionally more freezer space.
French Door: A French door is a side-by-side refrigerator with a pull-out bottom freezer. It has proportionally more refrigerator space and has better lateral storage for bigger trays and platters.
Double Drawer French Door: Similar to the French door, just with another drawer, and is the newest refrigerator style available.

The second drawer will be either freezer or refrigerator depending on the brand.

Most popular are Samsung, GE and LG.
4-Door French Door: Samsung and LG have 4 door French doors. You can choose refrigerator or freezer in the right-hand freezer compartment and swap as needed.
**Bottom Mount:** Freezer on the bottom, refrigerator on top.

Available in larger capacities and easy access to fruits and vegetables are the main benefits.
French doors currently outsell side-by-sides and other bottom mounts by about 15 to 1. Better refrigeration space and a trendy appearance would be the main reasons.
A regular counter depth is by far the most economical between regular, integrated and professional refrigerators. Look for package rebates during the year which can save 10% to 25% on average.

**Jenn-Air JFC2089BEM**
The Jenn-Air is part of some great promotional packages with other appliances

**Samsung RF23HCEDBSR**
Samsung has two separate environments for the freezer and refrigerator resulting in better tasting food and less freezer burn.

**Samsung RF18HFENBSR**
At only 33” wide, Samsung dominates with the only affordable French door shallow refrigerator
KITCHEN EXAMPLES

Photo credit: Inspired Spaces Design/ Houzz
KITCHEN EXAMPLES

Photo credit: Woodmaster Kitchen and Bath/ Houzz
KITCHEN EXAMPLES

Photo credit: Moen / Houzz
Professional counter depth refrigerators have commercial styling and can match your cabinetry.

Photo credit: Mahoney Architects & Designers/ Houzz
Professional counter depths are characterized by their restaurant appearance and 84” height with the compressors on the top of the unit.

The Pro looks good in stainless or can be covered with custom panels.

**Widths:** 30”, 36”, 42” and 48”. 36” is the most popular size.

**Brands:** Sub-Zero, Thermador, Jenn-Air, GE Monogram, Liebherr, Viking, Dacor, Fisher & Paykel, LG, True, Samsung, Fhiaba and KitchenAid.

**Price:** $6,000 to $15,000.
Sub-Zero was the first counter depth manufacturer and for years still has exclusive features like a vacuum seal to lock air out of the refrigerator and two compressors which eliminate air crossover from the freezer to the refrigerator.

The crispers are also magnetic, keeping the right temperature and humidity for fruits and veggies.

In 2011, they introduced an air scrubber which “scrubs” the odors and gasses off spoiling food so they won’t contaminate other foods as well.

Sub-Zero is designed to keep food fresher for a longer period of time by keeping the right air in the refrigerator and freezer and by sealing and filtering the air inside each compartment.
Viking is the other marquee name in professional refrigerators. 15 years ago they bought the tooling to build refrigeration from Amana.

The early Viking products were problematic, and they have struggled to improve quality recently. In 2013, Viking was purchased by Middleby Corp.

Viking has its “Plasmacluster” which uses ions to kill bacteria and mold inside the fridge and also features a 3-year warranty.
Jenn-Air is the upscale appliance division of Whirlpool Corp. They have pumped $300 million into this brand over the last several years, all in cooking.

They have become incredibly promotional with their refrigerators, giving away dishwashers and rebates with qualifying purchases.

Their best piece is the 42” French door, pictured left.
Liebherr is a German refrigeration manufacturer and they have a really decent portfolio of professional and integrated refrigerators. It is also well priced and less expensive than the others.

Unlike other German companies, Liebherr needs more repair and service.
The professional refrigerator segment is really Sub-Zero against other less expensive, less featured brands. Thermador and Jenn-Air will offer free dishwashers and hoods in a kitchen package as incentives.

Sub-Zero BI-36U/S-TH
At one time this refrigerator was #7 in sales for all refrigerators in the US

Jenn-Air JF42NXFXDE
The Jenn-Air 42” has been improved with LED lighting, new interior and shelving

Sub-Zero BI-48S/S
Sub-Zero offers the better vacuum seal as well as the air scrubber and water purification system
KITCHEN EXAMPLES

Photo credit: Reed Design Group / Houzz
KITCHEN EXAMPLES
Photo credit: Village Home Stores/ Houzz
Integrated counter depth refrigerators can seamlessly blend in to your kitchen for that custom look.

Photo credit: Michael Kelley Photography/ Houzz
An integrated refrigerator fits flush the cabinet and becomes indistinguishable from the cabinet itself. This style needs a minimum of 25” depth.

In contrast, both the doors of regular cabinet depth and professional counter depth will protrude outside the cabinet.

Although you can buy stainless inserts, the integrated looks best with custom panels.

**Widths:** 18”, 24”, 27”, 30” and 36”.

**Brands:** Thermador, Gaggenau, Sub-Zero, Miele, Liebherr, Jenn-Air and Bosch.

**Price:** $5,000 to $12,000 (but you may need two units).
Integrated: Columns vs. Regular

**Regular**
You can buy a regular unit with refrigerator and freezer, typically at 30” and 36” widths.

**Columns**
Columns, or separate all freezers and all refrigerators, can be purchased at 18”, 24”, and 30” widths. You would typically buy two columns to complete a kitchen.
These three brands are part of the BSH appliance group. Thermador has the most variety with columns and the only French door integrated at 36” wide.

Gaggenau has stainless on the inside and is more expensive.

The Bosch label is less expensive and more limited in selection.

This group sells the most integrated refrigerators because they were first to aggressively market columns and market rebates to the customer.
Sub-Zero introduced a whole new line of integrated refrigerators at 18”, 24”, 30” and 36” with features similar to the professional series including air purification, filtering and internal water dispenser.

Their new touch screen control panel will maintain temperature to less than 1 degree of setting.

They have also added their air scrubber and water purifying system to their integrated refrigerators. The shelving is coated with nanotechnology to stop spills from spreading.

Sub-Zero also produces a fully integrated undercounter product as well.

They have discontinued their 27” units.
Miele is another family-owned company like Sub-Zero, but they source the refrigerator from Thermador and add better lighting and a more temperature sensitive crisper drawer dubbed the MasterChef. I like the unit, but it’s expensive.
Jenn-Air

Winners at the Architect Digest Show, Jenn-Air has an innovative new integrated refrigerator with multiple zones of cooling and freezing.
Sub-Zero IT-36CI
Sub-Zero sets the bar with features like their digital temp controls and easy clean shelf coating

Jenn-Air JF36NXFXDE
Jenn-Air offers pro handles and the ability to sit flush with your cabinetry
KITCHEN EXAMPLES

Photo credit: Frets/ Houzz
KITCHEN EXAMPLES

Photo credit: Hobbs Jamieson Architecture/Houzz
Deciding which refrigerator is right for you comes down to two factors.

Photo credit: Sutro Architects/ Houzz
The decision between these three styles is based on two factors: style and price.

From a price standpoint, the regular counter depth is much cheaper than the other two.

In a choice between integrated and professional refrigeration, the choice is all style. **The integrated refrigerator is hidden from view whereas the professional becomes the signature piece of your kitchen.**
We’ve answered all the most common questions and concerns about choosing a professional or integrated refrigerator in this in-depth, educational video.
Buy where you’re comfortable

There are tons of stores and products, but a limited number of consumers. Check review sites like Yelp, CitySearch, Google and the Better Business Bureau before you purchase.

Remember, any store can sell an appliance; the biggest issues are shipping and service.
Our free checklist will help you avoid a delivery nightmare. At the end, you will know what to ask from your local, national, or box store appliance dealer.

**Delivery is one of the biggest causes for your dissatisfaction. You need to be prepared.**

In the Delivery Checklist you’ll learn:

- How to choose a dealer with a first class delivery experience
- Which questions to ask to spot a quality delivery team
- The importance of online reviews to help your appliance search
ABOUT US

Proud to be family owned and operated since 1923.

Photo credit: Genesis Architecture / Houzz
Yale has been based in Boston for over 90 years and operates two showrooms; in Boston and Framingham. We operate the largest independent service and repair department in New England with 50 people and 21 service technicians. Counter depths are a specialty with over 100 different units and and 10 live kitchens.
About Us

The Yale Difference

Sales
Browse our two 15,000 sq. ft. showrooms guided by our sales staff with 269 years of combined experience

Delivery
We bring the products right into your home, not just to the curb. Every delivery includes removal of the old appliance

Install
Our professional install team can hook up your new dishwasher or re-configure your cabinets to accept a new wall oven

Repair
20 service techs on the road every day backed by our Yale Warranty. Service is the largest department at Yale
VISIT OUR STORES

Now you can schedule a free, private showroom visit to go over the needs of your project. Choose a time that works for your schedule to visit our Boston or Framingham, MA showrooms.

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