

Cooktops Rangetops

Burners

Various configurations and capabilities available.

Induction

The Future Is Here

Plays Well With Others

Installing a Wall Oven Below the Cooktop

BONUS SECTION
MODULAR COOKING

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Kieffer's Buying Guide: Cooktops and Rangetops

Cooktop or rangetop? Rangetop or cooktop? While both provide surface cooking, it's always helpful to understand the differences between the two as one might prove more beneficial for your kitchen. This buying guide will walk you through the differences between cooktops and rangetops.



What's visually different between cooktops and rangetops?

Cooktops

Both gas and electric cooktops are surrounded on all sides by a countertop. This means that a specific hole, known as the cutout, must be carved into the countertop material. Once this is created, the cooktop fits into the cutout with only about an inch overlapping the cutout on all sides. The result is an integrated, sleek look. Cooktops generally have a low profile once placed in a counter and work great in modern kitchen designs. Although rare, some units install fully flush with the countertop.

Rangetops

Imagine a gas range and then imagine removing the oven below leaving only the gas burners and the front face that holds the knobs; a rangetop is born. Rangetops are taller than cooktops, and a cutout isn't required. Rather, rangetops install flush against a back wall with the countertop stopping at the beginning of the left and right edge of the appliance. Because of their height, rangetops drop into a base cabinet. The end look is a much bulkier feel that mimics the style of professional kitchens; whereas cooktops convey a sleek look, rangetops convey a substantial look.



Classic Cooktop and Rangetop Installations

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What sizes of cooktops and range tops are there?

	Cooktops	Rangetops
Sizes	30- and 36-inches. (Odd sizes are available, but offer less choices.)	30-, 36-, 48-, and 60-inches . (Odd sizes are available, but offer less choices.)
Fuels	Electric, gas, and induction.	Gas Only.
Colors	Black, White, Stainless Steel. (Depending on brand and fuel type)	Stainless Steel. (Some brands offer various knob colors)



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Do you need a gas, electric, or induction cooktop or range top?

Certainly the look of cooktops versus the look of rangetops can be the deciding factor. If you want a sleek, modern look, cooktops fit the bill. If you want a professional kitchen look, rangetops provide the bulky design that lends itself to pro-style kitchens. Sometimes the choice is already made for you. If electricity is your power source, then selecting either an electric or an induction cooktop is your only choice. Manufacturers do not make electric or induction rangetops (yet).

Natural Gas (NG) & Liquid Propane (LP)

Do not confuse these two types of gas because connecting a NG cooktop or rangetop to a LP line or vice versa is dangerous. You must know what type of gas you'll use prior to making your purchase. In some instances, both cooktops and rangetops must be ordered specifically for the gas in your home, but in other instances, they can be converted from NG to LP or the other way around. This is accomplished with a special conversion kit that is brand, and sometimes model, specific. Don't worry about what kit you'll need, simply share what gas type you have and let our salespeople do the work for you.

Electric

Using electricity as a fuel source is quite common, and electric cooktops connect to a 220-volt line not a standard 120-volt outlet. If you're replacing an electric cooktop, you already have a 220 line in place.

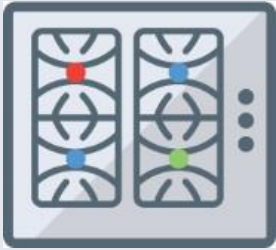
Induction

It's difficult to visually differentiate between an electric and an induction cooktop. There are areas on the surface that look like burners, but instead of emitting heat, they emit a magnetic field that interacts with induction ready cookware (cookware that contains iron in its design) to generate heat. Essentially, the pot or pan becomes the burner. Cooking with induction is as responsive as cooking with gas and it's a much more energy efficient technology than electric. For more information, download our induction buying guide.

Editor Tip:

Because gas or electricity is involved, always use our certified installers or another qualified technician when replacing any cooktop or rangetop.

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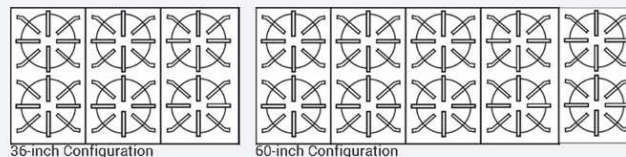
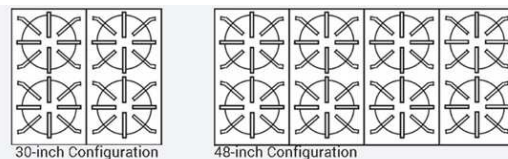
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How many burners do you need?

Deciding how many burners you need is as simple as taking into account how many burners you currently use. More times than not, two or three burners is plenty for day to day cooking. Holidays and parties are a different story, and most people don't want to be caught off guard and burner-less. Most 30-inch cooktops feature four burners, but some models have five. Realize that their width doesn't change so it may be a tight squeeze to use all five burners at once depending on how large your pots and pans are. If you foresee this being a problem, consider choosing a 36-inch model. Nearly every 36-inch cooktop has five burners, some have six. Opting for a wider cooktop means that the surface area is larger thus more pots and pans fit comfortably over each burner.

Rangetops are designed in the same way in that their width directly relates to the number of burners they have. Models of the 30-inch variety have four burners, 36-inch units have six, 48-inch models boast eight, and 60-inch models have ten burners.



*Some brands allow the substitution of any two burners with a griddle, grill, or other cooking features

What are power and simmer burners? Do you need them?

All gas burners are rated in the British Thermal Unit (BTU). The higher the number in the BTU department, the more heat the burner puts out. This is important for searing and raging boils with big pots. If using a medium size pot, using a power burner at full blast is counterproductive because most of the heat exuding from the burner can't be absorbed by the smaller pot. In terms of a simmer burner, every cooktop and rangetop has at least one burner dedicated to simmering. You might not need a heavy duty power burner, but you'll always need some simmering capability.



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Do you need a griddle, grill, or French top?

Selecting a rangetop over a cooktop does have advantages besides look and size. If you need a wider cooking surface, rangetops come in wider widths, which translate into more burners. Rangetops can also feature built-in griddles, grills, or French tops while cooktops, with few exceptions, can't.

Griddles

They're not just for pancakes. Anything that goes in a frying pan can be put on a griddle including fajitas, hamburgers, mushrooms, or anything you can think of. There is no reason that you can't put a pot directly on the griddle to keep its contents warm thus freeing up a gas burner to prepare something else. Typically, griddles are 12-inches wide, but certain companies offer 24-inch wide griddles on 48- or 60-inch rangetops. If doubling the width of the griddle, understand that it will replace another front and rear burner.

Editor Tip:

Griddles are built into the rangetop and can't be retrofitted with burners, a grill, or French top. If you choose a rangetop with a griddle, it's permanent.

Grills

Get that charbroiled flavor without going outside! Just like a griddle, grills on rangetops are 12-inches wide and built-in. They cannot be removed or retrofitted with burners, a griddle, or French top. Though grilling inside during the dead of winter seems inviting, beware that an incredible amount of smoke is generated during use. It's imperative that your ventilation system is extremely powerful and vents to the outside. Check out our ventilation buying guide for more information.



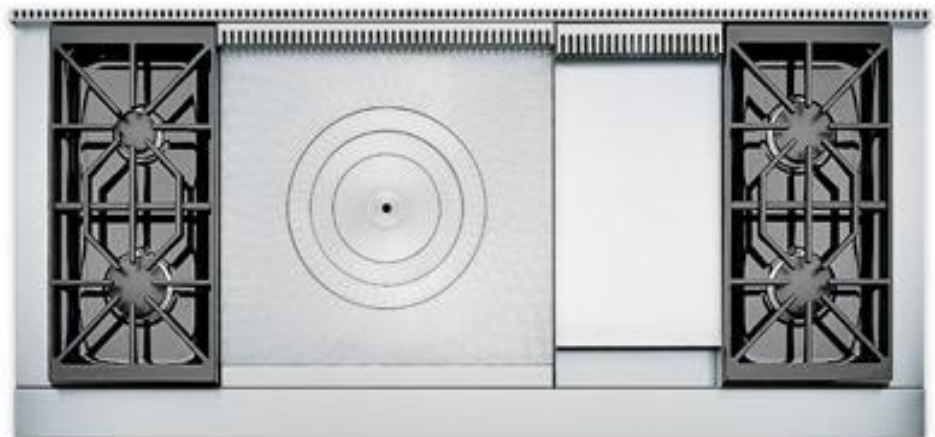
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French Tops

A lesser-known burner configuration is the French top. Often seen in professional kitchens, they are extremely rare in residential kitchens because of their unfamiliarity among the general public. A French top looks like a 24-inch wide griddle, but food is never to be placed directly on it. In the center of the plate is a series of stainless steel concentric circles, almost like a bulls-eye target. As the circles increase in radius so does their overall thickness. Centered beneath the stainless steel plate is a burner. The ability of the flame below to heat the thicker, outer circles is limited while the thinner circles in the center absorb more heat. High heat or low heat is not determined by turning a knob to control the intensity of the flame, but rather by how close to the center a cooking vessel is positioned on the French Top. These burners are only found on 48- and 60-inch rangetops and they replace four burners on the range.



From Left to right: Burners, French Top, Griddle, and Burners.

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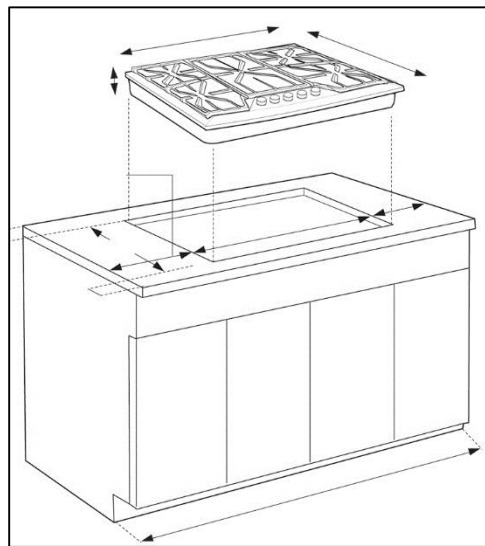
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What should I consider when replacing a cooktop?

When replacing a cooktop, chances are you're going to choose the same fuel type as your existing unit, but even though your new cooktop might be in the same width category, the cutout requirements of the new unit might not match up with what is currently cut into your countertop. Some counter cuts might be needed so the new unit fits. This may or may not be difficult depending on what type of material your countertop is made out of. Stones countertops like granite can prove problematic, but materials like Formica and Corian are relatively easy to cut.

It's extremely helpful if you can determine your current cooktop's model number. In some instances, we are able to look up the specifications of your model to better match new cooktops that would minimize any countertop cuts.

If you don't have a record of your model number, see if you can find the model number on a white sticker on the bottom of the cooktop. This will require looking up into the cabinet or removing a drawer below the cooktop. We always recommend choosing our certified installers when replacing any cooktop.



What should I consider when installing a cooktop in a remodel or new construction?

The first step is to determine the cutout size needed for your new cooktop. This information is always provided by our salespeople upon ordering your appliance. The next step is to position the fuel connections in the proper place based on the provided specifications. Remember that because of the height of a cooktop, it might prove impossible to get use of the drawer directly below the unit. In cases where a drawer can be designed below a cooktop, it's important to make it shallower than the rest of the drawers because of the electrical and gas connections needed to power the cooktop.



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Can I install a wall oven below a cooktop?

If you are in this situation, alert a Kieffer's salesperson and let us find the appliances that will work. The simplest answer is yes, but you absolutely must use the same brand cooktop and wall oven for two reasons. First, manufacturers design many of their wall ovens and cooktops to install together, but not every wall oven within a brand's lineup will work. Second, if you mix and match brands and ever need an in-warranty service call, one brand's servicer will not remove another brand's appliance to repair the malfunctioning one.



What should I consider when replacing a rangetop?

Know your fuel type, either natural gas or liquid propane, and share that information with a Kieffer's salesperson. If you want to avoid major cabinet work, stick with the same width as your current unit.

What should I consider when installing a rangetop in a remodel or new construction?

First determine if you need natural gas or liquid propane, then consider your width and burner configuration. Since rangetops are taller than cooktops, you will lose drawer space below, and forget about installing a wall oven below a rangetop. Also know that as you step up to wider rangetops, you will lose countertop area. If you're in a small kitchen and counter space is at a premium, consider a 30- or 36-inch rangetop to save vital counter space.



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BONUS SECTION: What Is Modular Cooking?

Flexible and stylish, modular cooking can be your main go-to or complement your existing appliances. With modular cooking, everything is smaller and is customizable. Units are generally 12-, 14-, or 15-inches wide and there are a variety of cool appliances to add to your kitchen. Want a two burner induction cooktop? Choose a modular unit. Certain companies make two burner gas cooktops or electric cooktops. How about a steamer, deep fryer, or a grill? No problem!



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