AN ORIGINAL KIEFFER'S APPLIANCES BUYING GUIDE







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More water and energy efficient than ever before, dishwashers have become essential kitchen appliances. This guide will walk you through the nearly-endless options to choose from.



Size: How Much Space Do You Have?

Most manufacturers rely on industry standards when making appliances in different sizes, and dishwashers are no different. Some manufacturers make dishwashers that are 18-inches wide that are great for tight-space applications, such as apartments and home bars. The most common size is 24-inches.

Another dimension to account for is depth. When designing a kitchen, some choose to integrate their dishwasher into the cabinetry by outfitting it with a wood panel. The standard cabinet depth is 24-inches, so in order to achieve a seamless look, the dishwasher plus the addition of a ¾ inch thick wood panel needs to equal 24 inches.



24-inch Dishwasher



Colors, Stainless Steel, or Wood Panels?

Like most appliances, dishwashers are available in different finishes. Most manufacturers offer dishwashers in black, white, and stainless steel. Others offer bisque (almond) and custom colors. Keep in mind that not every manufacturer offers every color or model combination.

Integration is the latest trend in the appliance world, and dishwashers are on the forefront. Many manufacturers offer panel-ready units that blend seamlessly into your cabinetry and décor. These dishwashers do not have a front-facing control panel, but integrate it into the top panel of the door.



How Quiet Are Dishwashers?

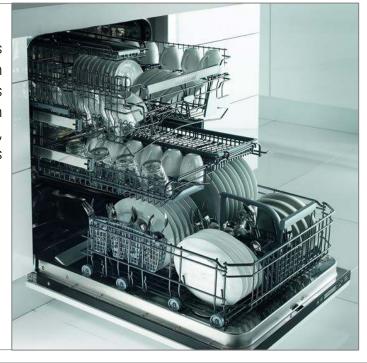
Manufacturers will advertise their dishwasher's noise output as it is the most frequently compared feature between dishwashers. Noise level is measured in decibels (dB). To put things in perspective, the average human conversation is around 60 dB, while a whisper is 30 dBs

We recommend choosing a dishwasher that is rated between 40 and 50 dB.

Noise	Average decibels (dB)
Leaves rustling, soft music, whisper	30
Average home noise	40
Average Dishwasher Noise	40-50
Normal conversation, background music	60
Office noise, inside car at 60 mph	70
Vacuum cleaner, average radio	75

Tip:

Many dishwashers are equipped with stainless steel tubs that not only aid in drying the dishes, but also suppress noise.





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Racks And Cycles: Which Do You Need?

Racks

Racks are an overlooked feature of dishwashers that can affect the price point. Some brands offer features like extra baskets and stemware holders. Some dishwashers are equipped with foldable tines that adjust to fit extra-large items.

The latest trend in dishwasher features is the addition of extra jets, which are sometimes called power or scrubbing zones. These deliver powerful streams of water onto the dishes to help clean extra dirty items.







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Racks And Cycles: Which Do You Need?

Cycles

Every manufacturer offers the basic cycles, such as "Normal" and "Heavy", but some have implemented more, like gentle cycles designed for china and express cycles that are quicker. Based on the kind of cleaning you do most often, our experienced salespeople can find you the perfect dishwasher with the right set of features to fit your needs.

Eco Cycles

Advanced models do the work for you with built-in Eco programs designed for maximum water and energy efficiency. When selected, sensors monitor the cleanliness of the water during the cycle. Once the sensors determine the water is clear, an indication the dishes are clean, the dishwasher's computer switches to the next stage in the cycle. This is different from normal or other built-in cycles because those have pre-determined times for each cleaning stage, and could potentially use more water or energy than what's needed.



Editor Tip:

Dishwashers are programmed by their manufacturer to wash your dishes efficiently and thoroughly. Using the proper cycle to match the dishes will yield the best results.





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American vs. European Dishwashers

Both styles share many of the same wash cycles and features, but there are some slight differences that need to be addressed. Naturally there are slight variations between brands and specific models.

Heating Elements

American dishwashers have a heating element at the bottom of the tub. This heats the water during a wash cycle and provides a heated dry option. It's during the heated dry cycle that plastics placed on the bottom rack can melt; therefore they should always be placed on the top rack if the heated dry option is selected. A dishwasher with its heated dry option engaged will use more energy than a European model.

European dishwashers don't have a heated dry cycle. Instead they utilize a condensation dry process. After a cycle ends, the dishes are extremely hot, but the stainless steel interior of the dishwasher is cooler. The water on the dishes condenses onto the interior walls of the dishwasher. The lack of a heated dry option and an exposed heating element means that virtually all plastics are safe in the bottom rack of a European dishwasher.







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American vs. European Dishwashers (cont.)

Installation

European dishwashers are designed to install flush with your cabinetry. American units are about an inch deeper so they will stick out from standard cabinetry unless the cabinets are made deeper to match or the dishwasher can be recessed slightly into the wall behind the unit.

Disposers

Some American dishwashers have a hard food disposer while European models never include one. A hard food disposer is like a garbage disposer in your dishwasher. It grinds up bigger pieces of food left on dishes. In lieu of this feature, European models and some American models use a multi-stage filtration process to eliminate large pieces of food. During the wash cycle, water pushes food particles through levels of filters that break up the food. Choosing a dishwasher with a hard food disposer adds noise and uses more energy.



Design Tip:

If you want to attach a cabinet front to your dishwasher, consider a European model. Their ability to accept a wood panel and still install flush with standard cabinetry is unmatched.

Brands to Consider

American: KitchenAid, GE, Whirlpool, Frigidaire, Maytag.

European: Bosch, Miele, Gaggenau, Thermador, Blomberg, Electrolux, Asko,



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BONUS SECTION: What Are Dishwasher Drawers?

Dishwasher drawers, also referred to as dish drawers, offer more flexibility and opportunities for space and energy savings. Single drawers are a good solution for small kitchens. The double drawers fit in standard openings of 24-inches.

Each drawer operates independently from the other, and when paired, they have the same capacity as a traditional 24-inch dishwasher. This allows you to use one drawer when needed.



Designer Tip:

Dishwasher drawers are available in 24and 36-inch widths, as well as single, or double applications.

Designer Tip:

Similar to full-size dishwashers, drawer models are panel-ready for a seamless look.

