



## Buyers Guide

### CHOOSING A COMMERCIAL OVEN



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The commercial oven is simply one of the most important appliances in the professional kitchen. Whether you're just starting out or have an established chain of restaurants, the chances are that your oven is used every day. This guide should help you identify the right oven for you and your business.

### Types of Oven

Although price is a major consideration, there's much more to it than just cost. It's essential to focus on the purpose of the oven and consider your current and future requirements. Ovens fall into eight main categories:

#### Oven Range.

One of the most common oven types, the oven range features a large internal cavity for cooking meats, pastries or desserts, as well as open gas burners or electric hobs on top. Some of the top-end ranges include induction hobs, solid tops, or a built-in griddle to maximise the cooker's versatility - a great all-round option.

- Flexible: dual functionality of oven and hob cooking allows multiple dishes to be cooked simultaneously.
- Space Saving: prevents buying two or more separate appliances and running them all at the same time.
- GN Compatible: many oven ranges are Gastronorm compatible, allowing quick transfer of pans between appliances

#### Convection Oven.

Generally, more compact than a full oven range, the convection oven (or fan oven) uses an internal fan to distribute heat throughout the cabinet. This reduces cooking times and meat shrinkage, meaning higher product yields and less waste.

Some of the most efficient versions run from a single 13A plug, meaning these cookers are great for event catering, as well as the more traditional bakery and restaurant use.

Another less common type of convection oven is the bread prover, which helps to raise dough in preparation of further cooking.

- Fast: fan heat distribution reduces cooking times by around 25%
- Even Cooking: a consistent temperature throughout the oven ensures food cooks the same regardless of which shelf it's on
- Better Browning: the improved air distribution helps to render fat and brown food better than static ovens
- Better Yield: reduced cooking times mean meats retain more of their weight
- GN Compatible: many convection ovens are Gastronorm compatible, allowing quick transfer of pans between appliances

#### Combination Oven

More commonly called combi ovens or combi steamers, these are generally the most advanced and powerful cooking appliances in the professional kitchen. Combi ovens cook using steam, convection

or a combination of both. This means they can do the job of multiple other cooker types in one single appliance, removing the need to transfer pans between appliances and therefore saving time and energy.

As combination ovens cook with and generate a lot of steam, most models will need to be connected to a mains water supply. In addition, sufficient overhead extraction will be required in many circumstances.

As such, an engineer may arrange to visit your kitchen before installation to check whether the oven will work effectively. This process is called a site survey and if there's any doubt as to whether a combi is suitable for your kitchen, it's highly recommended to have one.

- Very Flexible: capable of steaming, frying, roasting, baking, stewing, braising and more
- Space Saving: as everything can be done in a single machine, you may not need other bulky appliances
- Manual or Programmable: either control the combi yourself or push a single button for complex multi-stage cooking - the choice is yours. Modern programmable versions usually have intuitive touch screen control and Wi-Fi connectivity
- Better Browning: exactly the same as convection ovens, combi ovens distribute air to render fat and brown food better than static ovens
- Precise: create dishes just how you want. Even manual versions are designed for accurate temperature control
- Size: combination ovens are available in a range of sizes, from small countertop versions all the way up to large roll-in versions
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#### Pizza Oven / Conveyor Oven.

When it comes to high volume consistent cooking, a conveyor oven is an excellent choice. Commonly used in takeaways or food halls, these quickly cook foods such as pizza, burritos, pies and more by using a set of rollers to slowly pull food past the powerful cooking elements.

Almost anything that can be cooked in a standard oven can be cooked in a conveyor oven, although it has to fit in a small 3-5" opening. As well as conveyor ovens, pizzas are commonly cooked in the more traditional stone base "deck" ovens for the perfect thin or stuffed crust pizza.

- Consistent: as the conveyor speed stays consistent, pies and pizza are cooked the same every time - great for multi-site businesses
- Easy to Use: once the oven is on, all the user needs to do is place the food onto the conveyor - no buttons to push or costly training required
- Stackable: both deck and conveyor ovens are usually stackable to double or even triple output

#### High Speed Ovens.

As the name suggests, high speed ovens are built for ultra-fast cooking. Able to cook up to 20 times quicker than traditional ovens, these are best placed in fast-paced "while-you-wait" businesses. By combining multiple different cooking methods, these ensure you get the results you want in a fraction of the time.

- Compact: as these ovens usually cook food to order, they don't need to have capacities for batch cooking. This means they are usually quite compact and can be positioned front of house

- Ultra-Fast: nothing else really compares for speed. If you want lightning fast results without compromising on taste or texture, a high-speed oven is for you
- Versatile: there's not much that can't be cooked in a high-speed oven. The only real restriction is size.

#### Charcoal Oven.

Without any need for a gas or electricity connection, these unique cookers are used to produce the authentic BBQ charcoal flavour from the convenience and versatility of an indoor oven. Cooking much hotter and faster than traditional ovens, charcoal ovens are perfect for producing delicious steaks, vegetables and fish in a front of house environment.

- No Gas or Electricity: standalone units use wood or charcoal to cook - no hardwiring or plumbing required
- Indoor or Outdoor: the traditional chargrill taste and texture - great cooking results wherever you need it
- Glass Door: customers can see the flames, adding theatre to the cooking process

#### Steam Oven.

Ideal for quickly cooking fish, vegetables, rice and more, a standalone steam oven is great at large scale cooking whilst retaining nutrients and reducing food shrinkage. However, steam ovens on their own cannot brown or crisp foods, so a separate salamander grill, frying pan or oven range is commonly used to finish the dish.

- High Capacity: steam ovens usually have a generously sized GN compatible interior - perfect for transferring pans between appliances
- Flavour Retention: steam cooking helps to seal in flavours, vitamins and moisture, keeping food much closer to its natural state in comparison to conventional cooking
- No Flavour Transfer: steam cooking reduces the chance of flavour transfer, meaning you can confidently cook multiple dishes at the same time

#### Potato Oven.

Specifically designed for front of house use, a potato oven uses convection cooking technology to cook large batches of potatoes quickly and efficiently - whilst also providing an attractive, traditional merchandising solution. As jacket potatoes can take a substantial amount of time to bake, a separate potato oven can be a great addition to free up your main oven.

- Display: potatoes by themselves can look pretty bland - use a potato oven to make them look and smell amazing.
- Efficient: due to their relatively small size, potato ovens reach temperature quickly and retain temperature well - keeping running costs and queues down
- Portable: most potato ovens simply plug in, meaning you can take them anywhere there's demand for delicious jacket spuds. If you're doing a spot of mobile catering, don't forget the takeaway boxes

#### Cook and Hold Oven.

Whilst the technology dates back to the 1970s, cook & hold ovens are still immensely popular. Used across the globe, these ovens slowly and gently cook meats for deliciously tender results.

In addition, once cooked, meat can be kept for long periods without any detriment to taste or texture, making these ovens perfect for carveries, restaurants and canteens. Some Cook & Hold ovens are available with smoker attachments to create that distinctive BBQ pulled pork or beef brisket taste.

- **Simple and Efficient:** specially designed elements and insulation mean it's often more economical to cook & hold instead of conventional oven roasting
- **Tender Meats:** meats cooked in a cook & hold are incredibly tender and fall apart
- **Longer Hold Times:** perfect for all-day carveries or for cooking well in advance of service

### **What to Look For**

**Size:** An oven which is too small may not have the capacity you need, whilst if it's too big it might not fit into your kitchen at all. Make sure to measure up before purchase.

**Power Type:** Ovens can use a variety of fuels, from gas and electricity to solid fuels like charcoal or wood. As professional cookers can use a tremendous amount of power to run, it's vital to check that there is sufficient capacity within your kitchen to keep your oven running effectively.

Gas options include LPG or mains "natural" gas, whereas electric options are available in standard 13A plug or powerful single phase or 3 phase connections.

**Extraction:** It's entirely possible that if you install a professional oven, you may also need extraction. A commercial kitchen canopy channels and filters smoke, grease and heat out of the kitchen making a much more comfortable environment to work in. Some appliances must have sufficient extraction to comply with local and national regulations.

**Plumbing and Water:** Steam, combination and some convection ovens may require a mains water connection to operate. This helps both the production of steam for the cooking process and cleaning at the end of service.

Therefore, pay special consideration to the positioning of the oven before purchase to ensure it can be located close to a water connection. Also be aware of limescale, which can cause substantial damage to ovens if allowed to build up. To avoid this, you may need to fit a water filter as part of the oven installation to validate its warranty. Browse the full range of commercial water filters [here](#).