



BEST ALL-SEASON & SNOW TIRES

Top Ranges and Cookware



GET THE MOST TV FOR YOUR MONEY

CR Consumer Reports®

NOVEMBER 2018

REVIEWS & RATINGS

- Accord Hybrid
- Toilets
- Fitness Trackers
- Humidifiers
- Toaster Ovens

Natural Cures

WHICH WORK, WHICH DON'T

To treat pain, sleeplessness, and stress, more people are turning to supplements, superfoods, herbs, Reiki, and other new treatments.

What to know before you try.



THE TRUTH ABOUT
Ice Melts,
Food Expiration Dates,
Printer Ink
& more

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[THE SMART START TO YOUR SATURDAYS]



Consumer 101

DEBUTS THIS FALL ON NBC
SATURDAY MORNINGS

Hosted by Jack Rico
STARTING OCTOBER 6TH

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CR.ORG/CONSUMER101



P. 26



26 Get the Most TV for Your Money

In the market for a new TV—if you can get the right price? This Black Friday, don't go shopping till you read our expert guide to navigating the sales hype to ensure that you come home with a truly great deal.

RATINGS

COVER STORY

34 Natural Cures: Your A-Z Guide

To treat pain, stress, sleeplessness, and more, people are increasingly trying alternative treatments. We explain which can provide relief and which may be a waste of money—or worse.



44 Boost Your Cookware Confidence

Find out how quality cookware and a top-notch range can help you take control of your kitchen and up your culinary game.

RATINGS



PRODUCTS RATED
IN THIS ISSUE



P. 10



P. 26

P. 13



P. 56

DEPARTMENTS & COLUMNS

10 **What We're
Testing in Our Labs ...**

Humidifiers, coffee makers,
toaster ovens, and more.

RATINGS

VICKS
V5100NS



12 **Ask Our Experts**

How to get a good deal on
transporting your car, the
advantages of OLED
phone screens, and how to
treat your mattress right.

13 **CR Insights**

Turkey safety tips, new water
heater types, peer-to-peer
payment services, and more.

RATINGS

PRODUCT UPDATE

20 **How to Prep for
Winter Storms**

Ice melts, shovels, and snow
blowers, oh my! We've tested
tons of products to keep your
home safe and your driveway
clear all winter long.

RATINGS

IN EVERY ISSUE

6 **From the President:
Coming Soon: CR on Your TV!**

Get more of the advice you turn to
us for, but in a new, exciting way.

7 **Building a Better
World, Together**

More efficient cars, less student
debt, and how technology might
affect our kids.

8 **Your Feedback**

Readers' comments about
our recent content.

19 **Recalls**

66 **Index**

67 **Selling It**

Goofs and gaffes.

ROAD REPORT

55 **Ahead of the Curve**

Auto ratings, news, and advice.

56 **What Makes a
Tire Tops?**

Our ratings steer you to the
best-performing tires. Plus, our
exclusive tread life testing reveals
which tires last longest.

RATINGS

63 **Road Test**

We put the Acura RDX, Nissan
Kicks, Toyota Avalon Hybrid, and
Honda Accord Hybrid to the test.

RATINGS

TOYOTA
AVALON
HYBRID



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Coming Soon: CR on Your TV!



FOR 82 YEARS, we at CR have prided ourselves on delivering the independent, expert guidance that families need to confidently make choices in the face of questions large and small. How safe and reliable is my car? Is this a predatory loan masquerading as a fair deal? Is there a right way to load a dishwasher to get a better clean? How can I safeguard my privacy and security in an age when so many everyday products

are internet-connected? Across the generations, tens of millions of Americans have looked to our magazine, our website, and our social media channels for insights and answers they can trust.

Now we're thrilled to introduce a brand-new way that CR will equip people with the tools they need to make smarter choices: our first-ever TV show. Premiering Oct. 6 and airing Saturday mornings on NBC, our new show, "Consumer 101," will take you behind the scenes of our labs and our auto test track to bring you answers to your most pressing questions and deliver an honest look at the products, services, and apps that you care about most. Each 30-minute episode will feature CR engineers and experts tackling a handful of issues, from deciphering food labels to choosing the right car seat to navigating the world of smart products. And as with everything we bring you, you'll be able to count on our show for the same independent analysis, scientific rigor, and consumer-first approach you've come to expect from us through the years.

We're excited to connect you with a whole new view of CR's work to bend the marketplace to better meet your needs and interests—and we hope that you'll tune in as we embark on this new venture together.

Marta Tellado

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Making Cars More Efficient

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Whether you're motivated more by concern for the environment or your own personal finances, you should care about an ongoing effort to roll back auto fuel-efficiency standards.

If finalized, a Trump administration proposal would result in more greenhouse gas emissions and hit consumers squarely in their wallets.

Better fuel economy, of course, means drivers spend less at the gas pump over time. How much less? A 2017 Environmental Protection Agency analysis projected that the so-called CAFE (Corporate Average Fuel Economy) standards—now at risk of being dismantled—would save consumers almost \$100 billion. A separate CR study found that buyers will save \$3,200 per car and \$4,800 per truck or SUV over a vehicle's life if manufacturers meet the standards by model year 2025—even after considering the added cost of new technology.

There's also evidence that the proposed rollback could endanger drivers. Yes, occupants of smaller cars are at a disadvantage if they collide with a larger vehicle. But a 2017 study by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that by reducing the average weight of all cars on the road, CAFE standards “likely saved lives.” Undoing them could undermine those gains.

HOW CR HAS YOUR BACK

CR supports the existing CAFE standards and opposes the effort to weaken them. We will file formal comments with regulators, emphasizing that CR surveys have established that many Americans are willing to pay more up front in order to save fuel over time.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

The proposed changes aren't yet final. Go to CR.org/fueleconomy to tell the Department of Transportation not to roll back fuel economy.

Tackling Student Debt

WHAT'S AT STAKE

When for-profit Corinthian Colleges and ITT Tech shut down in 2015 and 2016, respectively, besieged by government investigations of deceptive advertising and other fraudulent acts, they left behind thousands of students burdened by debt—but lacking the career training they had been seeking.

The Obama administration put in place a loan forgiveness program for such students. But a new proposal by the Department of Education (DOE) would make it practically impossible for them to cancel their debts. It would prohibit students defrauded by higher education programs from making group claims even when large numbers of students are affected. And borrowers would have to

default on their loans and then prove, independently, that a school acted recklessly or intentionally deceived them before even applying for relief.

At the same time, the DOE is planning to reverse an Obama-era rule that cut off federal funds to career education programs that fail to prepare students and leave them in debt they can't pay back.

“Instead of helping defrauded students move on with their lives, these proposed rules shield poor-performing schools from being held accountable for their misconduct,” says Suzanne Martindale, senior attorney for Consumers Union, the advocacy division of Consumer Reports.

HOW CR HAS YOUR BACK

Martindale pushed for stronger protections as a participant in a DOE-sponsored negotiation process, and CR has supported legal challenges by several state attorneys general to the agency's recent efforts to

undermine the current rules. Now we're helping lead a coalition of consumer and student groups fighting to maintain the safeguards.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Learn more about how these proposals would harm borrowers, and strategies for choosing a college that will provide career training, at CR.org/studentdebt1118.

Is Technology Harming Kids?

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Are we, as a society, conducting an unintentional scientific experiment on an entire generation of children?

Consider this: A 2017 report by Common Sense Media finds that children age 8 and younger spend an average of 48 minutes a day on mobile devices, up from 15 minutes in 2013. And 42 percent of them now have devices of their own, up from 1 percent in 2011.

Educators are concerned that we have little idea what effect immersive exposure to screens and social media has on young children. That's because, to date, little independent, in-depth research has been done on the topic.

HOW CR HAS YOUR BACK

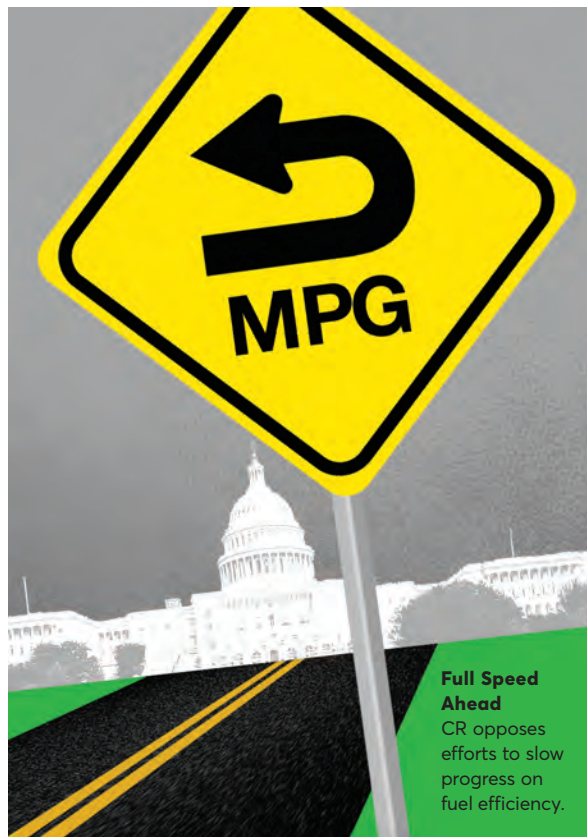
CR is part of a coalition of groups promoting a bipartisan bill to rectify this situation.

If passed, the Children and Media Research Advancement (or CAMRA) Act would authorize a National Institutes of Health research program on technology and media's effects on cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional development.

“It's not enough to worry about the impact of technology on kids,” says Katie McInnis, policy counsel for Consumers Union. “A serious, scientific investigation of possible real effects is long overdue.”

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Contact your representatives, at congress.gov, and ask them to co-sponsor the CAMRA Act.





Our September story “**Sick of Confusing Medical Bills?**” explained why unexpected charges happen—and what you can do to protect yourself financially. To join the conversation, go to CR.org/medbills1118.

I READ YOUR ARTICLE with great interest. For the past 30 years, I have been a medical biller for a physical therapy practice, so I've seen where medical billing was 30 years ago (much simpler) and where it is now (totally confusing and ever-changing). You were spot on with regard to how confusing it is for both consumers and medical providers, and your recommendations were very good. As both a consumer and provider, I've seen mistakes made by insurance companies with claims processing. I've had insurance representatives give me the wrong benefits on a patient. I've seen an insurer

process a claim incorrectly as out of network when we are in the network, thus listing the patient responsibility as much higher than it should be. When I received an incorrect medical bill, I immediately called the provider. For the next two months, I made 20 phone calls—to the provider and the insurer. They each acknowledged the error but told me it was the other's responsibility to fix it. Neither one would simply call the other to straighten it out, saying it “wasn't their policy.” I'm almost embarrassed to say that I too ended up paying something I knew I shouldn't, to prevent it from going to collection and possibly affecting my credit.
—Loretta Guyette, Londonderry, NH

ONE POINT you neglected to mention is how valuable an employer's employee assistance program (EAP)

can be in helping to handle claims, researching in-network providers, and contacting billing departments. This is often a completely free service that employers offer, yet is often underutilized.
—Michelle Clark, Newport Beach, CA

IN REGARD TO your article on confusing medical bills: Be aware of providers charging for services not rendered. My husband, as the executor of an estate, received a bill from a provider claiming they had seen the deceased on a date that would have been after the person had passed away. We looked at the explanation of benefits from Medicare and supplemental insurance, and the claim had been denied since the patient was no longer living on this date of service. Needless to say, the provider was contacted and the bill was not paid. I guess they were

hoping the grieving people would not notice, and pay.
—Margaret Finelt, Richmond, TX

WHEN THE PRESCRIPTION medicine law took the patient out of the loop of cost awareness, it was a fatal mistake. Every physician needs to be aware of the cost of drugs they prescribe, and give a prescription copy to the patient, who then can research where to buy the drug or its alternative. Where do we begin?
—David B. Levine, M.D., New York, NY

Musical Musings

I ENJOYED YOUR “Face-Off” review of music streaming services (CR Insights, September 2018). However, it neglects an important piece of information that I considered when I chose a service: the amount the service pays the artist per song. In a world where artists frequently receive fewer and fewer royalty payments, this takes on greater urgency—at least to amateur musicians like me. A Google search can uncover this information, as can a visit to musician and music industry activist David Lowery's website, The Trichordist. Thanks for producing a great product!
—Phil Sumida, Downers Grove, IL

IN TERMS of sound quality, streaming service formats are very compressed and you'll never ever be able to hear all the instruments and vocals in great detail—unless you have an audiophile-grade sound system. The subscription services are good for certain electronic/pop music but not great for jazz, or anything with real instruments.
—Yong Dong, via Facebook

SPOTIFY FAMILY IS a no-brainer for me. Six accounts for \$14.99 a month. Twenty years ago I used to spend that on at least one CD a month.
—Gary Jordan, via Facebook



WRITE

Go to CR.org/lettertoeditor to share your comments for publication.

Healthy Discourse

IN “EAT YOURSELF HEALTHY” (September 2018), you mention salmon in regard to omega-3 content, but you fail to distinguish between wild salmon and the farmed Atlantic version. The Atlantic is a poor substitute, low in good omega-3s! To top it off, they are almost tasteless compared to wild!

—Thomas Tizard, Kailua, HI

EDITOR’S NOTE *There is some controversy over wild vs. farmed salmon, involving different types of farming and fishing methods and different species of salmon. (The Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch program, at seafoodwatch.org, is a good source on this.) When it comes to omega-3s, both have plenty, but wild salmon tends to have a slight edge. Although it’s lower in total fat, usually a greater percentage of that fat is omega-3 than in farmed salmon. For example, 3½ ounces of cooked wild coho salmon has 7.5 grams of total fat, with 1.68 grams (22 percent) being the omega-3 type. The same amount of farmed coho salmon has 8.2 grams of total fat, 1.3 grams (16 percent) of which is in the form of omega-3s. Sockeye salmon, which is always wild, has 5.6 grams of fat and 952 mg of omega-3s in 3½ ounces cooked (17 percent). Atlantic salmon, which in the U.S. is always farmed, has 12.3 grams of fat and 2.3 grams of omega-3s (19 percent).*

IN “STAYING HAPPY, Healthy & Hydrated,” why not recommend that people drink water? Yes, you can get antioxidants from tea, and nutrition from this and that, but the first answer should be “water.” And why not tap water, instead of flushing money on bottled water?

—Senya Means, via CR.org

What the Fee?!

REGARDING “FIGHTING CABLE & Other Fees” (Building a Better World, Together, September 2018): Fees in and of themselves are not bad.

Transparency in pricing is what is needed. That, and a little personal responsibility to look at the terms to which you are agreeing. Fees are used more because many people buy based on lowest initial price, without digging into the details. The seller simply moves money from the base price to fees in response to buyer behaviors. Yes, there are cases where fees are deceptive and truly predatory, but in other cases it is as simple as the total price being split into components. Airlines are not going to get rid of all fees and not raise ticket prices. They would lose money. What I hope CR fights against are the ones that are truly deceptive.

—Tim Collieran, Parker, CO

Undercarriage Woes

IN ASK OUR EXPERTS (Road Report, September 2018), you suggest not buying protective undercoating from a dealer when purchasing a vehicle. My 2009 car, after enduring nine years of harsh winters, has recently been retired to a junkyard because I followed your advice. I could see pavement through the holes in the floor, and parts were falling off due to rust-out. Lesson learned.

—Alexandre Bredikhin, Pittsburgh

EDITOR’S NOTE *It’s certainly upsetting when salt and rust ruin your undercarriage, but we don’t believe that buying an aftermarket undercoating would have helped. In fact, sometimes it can make things worse. What does help to prevent this kind of damage is cleaning the car’s undercarriage periodically and removing salt. Also keep in mind that where you park regularly can be a contributing factor to rust risk. For example, parking in a garage is preferable to parking outside on an unpaved driveway.*

Generator Safety

IN “MORE POWER TO YOU!” (September 2018), you

ON HEALTHY EATING

When it comes to omega-3s, farmed salmon and wild salmon have plenty, but wild salmon tends to have a slight edge.

—The editors

indicated that a generator should be placed about 20 feet from a home but did not say why. Is it strictly noise level or for a safety reason?

—William Zelley, Kennesaw, GA

EDITOR’S NOTE *While keeping your generator a minimum of 20 feet from your house will certainly help make the noise more tolerable, the real reason to follow this recommendation is safety. Generators produce carbon monoxide as a byproduct of combustion, and on average, more than 60 people die each year from carbon monoxide poisoning from a generator. This guideline helps ensure that carbon monoxide won’t travel into your home during normal use.*

YOUR REVIEW of home generators was helpful, but I think there was an oversight about an important benefit of owning an inverter-style generator. The fact that my generator powers down saves me fuel and therefore cost, but as your article mentions, it will never save enough fuel to justify the higher cost. But, because I use so little fuel, I typically won’t have to join the line of people at the gas pumps every day as their 5,000- to 10,000-watt generator is screaming at full throttle. My inverter generator is a fuel-miser, saving me precious time, money, and frustration. This is worth the upcharge.

—Benjamin Ran, Ridgewood, NJ

EDITOR’S NOTE *You make an excellent point. A big benefit of fuel-efficient inverter generators is that you don’t need nearly as much gas to keep your essentials running. That said, you’ll still need to store gasoline, mixed with fuel stabilizer, if you want to avoid long gas lines. Inverter generators also tend to have smaller gas tanks, so their run times on a single tank tend to be similar to those for traditional generators. Whichever type you own, it’s still best to buy the fuel you anticipate needing before the storm hits.*

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What We're Testing in Our Labs ...

In our 63 labs, we continually review and rate products. Here, timely picks for this month.

Humidifiers

WE TESTED: 18 models with a range of 300 to 499 sq. ft.
WE TEST FOR: Daily output, ease of use, energy efficiency, noise, and how the unit works with hard water.

ABOUT THE SCORES:

Median: 68
 Range: 37-86

Best Overall Performance
 Vicks V5100NS
 \$50

86
 OVERALL
 SCORE



Dual Misting & Antimicrobial
 Hunter 33520
 \$70

80
 OVERALL
 SCORE



Bargain Buy
 Honeywell HEV320
 \$35

77
 OVERALL
 SCORE



Drip Coffee Makers

WE TESTED: 89 models
WE TEST FOR: Performance, including brew temperature and coffee concentration; convenience, including controls and more; carafe handling; and brew time.

ABOUT THE SCORES:

Median: 64
 Range: 39-84

Thermal Carafe
 Mr. Coffee Optimal Brew
 BVMC-PSTX95
 \$80

72
 OVERALL
 SCORE



Built-In Bean Grinder
 Black+Decker Mill & Brew
 CM5000B
 \$70

67
 OVERALL
 SCORE



Makes Espresso, Too
 DeLonghi BCO 320T
 \$150

63
 OVERALL
 SCORE



Ask Our Experts

How important is it that I descale my coffee maker?



DESCALING, SOMETIMES CALLED decalcifying, is a deep cleaning. It gets rid of residue and mineral buildup that can affect taste, slow down brewing time, or even clog your appliance, causing it to malfunction and require a repair that may not be covered under warranty. “It’s especially important to descale if you have hard water, because the buildup happens faster,” says CR test engineer Ginny Lui. Some models indicate when to descale (such as the Mr. Coffee model above). If yours doesn’t, consult your manual. Descaling is easy, says Lui. Simply run equal parts of water and white vinegar through your appliance. Some manufacturers suggest a different ratio or a specific cleaning solution. After descaling, run at least one or two cycles of plain water before brewing your next pot of coffee.

ILLUSTRATION: SERGE BLOCH

For the latest ratings of these and other product categories, readers with a Digital or All-Access membership can go to [CR.org](https://www.consumerreports.org).

Fitness Trackers Under \$200

WE TESTED: 13 models

WE TEST FOR: Ease of use, interaction and pairing with another device, step count and heart-rate monitor accuracy, water resistance, readability, and more.

ABOUT THE SCORES:

Median: 79

Range: 50-85

Leader of the Pack

Garmin Forerunner 35
\$170

85
OVERALL
SCORE



Nice Price

Fitbit Charge 2
\$100

83
OVERALL
SCORE



Large Analog Display

Nokia Steel HR
\$160

79
OVERALL
SCORE



Single-Flush Toilets

WE TESTED: 36 models

WE TEST FOR: The ability to move simulated solid waste through the bowl and trap, noise level of flushing, how well flushing cleans the bowl, gallons per flush, and more.

ABOUT THE SCORES:

Median: 67

Range: 38-78

A Royal Flush (Best Overall)

St. Thomas by Icera
Richmond ECO 6123.218,
6125.028
\$350

78
OVERALL
SCORE



Very Quiet Commode

Zurn Z5551-K
\$250

75
OVERALL
SCORE



Conserves Water

Niagara Conservation Stealth
(Home Depot only)
77000WHA1/N7714 N7717
\$170

68
OVERALL
SCORE



Toaster Ovens

WE TESTED: 30 models

WE TEST FOR: How evenly a model bakes muffins and cookies, how well it reheats lasagna, how quickly and evenly it toasts a slice of bread or a full batch, and more.

ABOUT THE SCORES:

Median: 58

Range: 45-76

Tops in Toasting

Breville BOV650XL
\$180

76
OVERALL
SCORE



Easy to Use, Plus Convection

KitchenAid Digital
Convection Countertop
KCO273SS
\$250

71
OVERALL
SCORE



Hot Price

Hamilton Beach 6-Slice 31411
\$50

66
OVERALL
SCORE



Prefinished Wood Flooring

WE TESTED: 13 products

WE TEST FOR: How well the wood withstands scratches, stains, dents, and sunlight; how quickly surface wear is noticeable; and more. (Prices are per square foot.)

ABOUT THE SCORES:

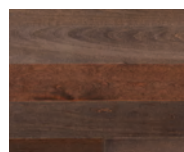
Median: 48

Range: 34-75

Star Performer & Great Price

Lumber Liquidators
Builder's Pride Select
Pewter Gray Maple
10040807
\$4.50

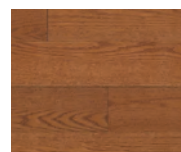
75
OVERALL
SCORE



Stands Up to Sunlight

Armstrong Paragon
Original Ember SAKP59L401
\$7

71
OVERALL
SCORE



Super Scratch-Resistant

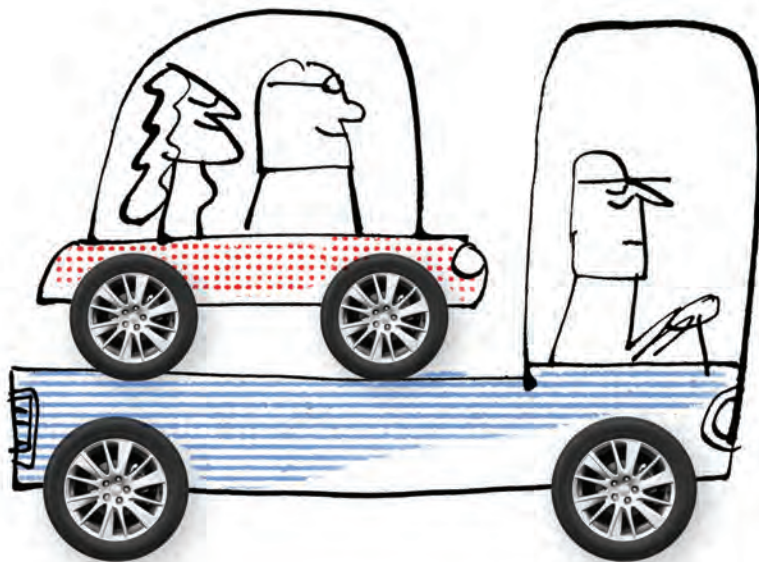
Teragren Portfolio
Naturals Wheat
TPF-PORTTG-WHT
\$7.50

68
OVERALL
SCORE



Note: We rate different products according to different testing protocols. As a result, Overall Scores of one product category are not comparable with another.

COMING NEXT MONTH Desktop Computers & More



My husband and I need to transport our car south this winter. How can we get a good deal?

Saving on car transport is like saving on airline tickets, says Tobie Stanger, senior money editor. Popular routes tend to be less pricey on a dollar-per-mile basis. Reserving in advance costs less than booking last-minute; peak season is pricier than off-peak. And flexibility helps: “If you don’t need to have your car delivered by a certain day, the carrier may reward you with a lower rate,” Stanger says. “And if you’re okay ‘going standby’—having your car available at the carrier’s convenience—you can save hundreds of dollars.”

Be aware that door-to-door delivery can cost more. If

the truck can’t travel local roads, you may pay extra to have your car towed or driven those last few miles, notes Drew Wash, owner of TransportReviews.com, which gathers prices and reviews of auto transporters. Rather, meet at a designated public spot.

Save, too, by booking an open-transport truck, which may save you 20 percent or more than enclosed ones, Wash says. “But know that your car may be more at risk to hail or road debris,” says Mel Yu, CR’s automotive analyst.

Beware of lowball quotes on transport websites. “On a competitive route, every company should be charging about the same amount for your desired route, with a fluctuation of roughly 10 percent,” Wash says. But know that some sites are brokers that act as a booking intermediary and take a fee, Yu adds. “Even though broker prices are often competitive,

you may prefer to book directly with a licensed carrier to know exactly what trucks you’re using,” Yu says. Ask for the carrier’s Department of Transportation number. Then look up a carrier’s insurance record and any complaints on safer.fmcsa.dot.gov using its DOT or motor carrier (MC) number. It’s also preferable if the carrier has at least a decade of experience and multiple trucks in its fleet.

Do OLED screens on a phone really make a big difference?

OLED (organic light-emitting diode) screens are capable of creating higher-quality images—mainly because they’re able to produce significantly deeper black levels—compared with LCD (liquid crystal display) screens. This means that when you look at an OLED screen, colors pop and dark details are more clearly defined. You’ll find these screens on more expensive models, such as the Samsung Galaxy S9, \$620, or the iPhone X, \$1,000.

But OLED screens can suffer from burn-in (traces of old images that linger on the screen). And when displaying brighter images (such as a

sunny sky), they may dim, says Richard Fisco, CR’s head of smartphone testing.

“Even so, OLEDs are certainly the best looking screens out there,” says Fisco, but phones with LCD screens still offer smooth, crisp high-resolution displays at budget-friendly prices, such as the LG G6, \$500.

Should I flip my foam mattress?

Most foam mattresses are made up of several layers, each with different types and densities of foam, says Chris Regan, who oversees CR’s mattress testing.

What’s more, each manufacturer tends to layer foam in a distinct order, which gives it a defined top and bottom. And, of course, many innerspring and a few foam mattresses come with a “pillow top” of soft cushy material that’s meant to stay on top.

All of which is to say that flipping your mattress could degrade sleeping comfort—so always check the manual for advice first. For example, the Serta Hotel Beds Concierge Suite II, an innerspring with a layer of gel-infused foam, can be flipped. But a Casper can’t. Instead, you may be able to rotate your mattress from head to toe—except for mattresses that have a specialty zone, such as a firmer lumbar area that should not be repositioned.

Though flipping and rotating may help extend the life of some mattresses, there’s no need to rule out mattresses designed to stay put: CR’s durability testing has found that most models, whether foam or innerspring, don’t sag much, even after we simulate eight years of aging.



We have more than 140 in-house experts who research, test, and compare. Submit your questions at CR.org/askourexperts ... and watch for the answers.

CR Insights

TAKING A TURKEY'S TEMPERATURE

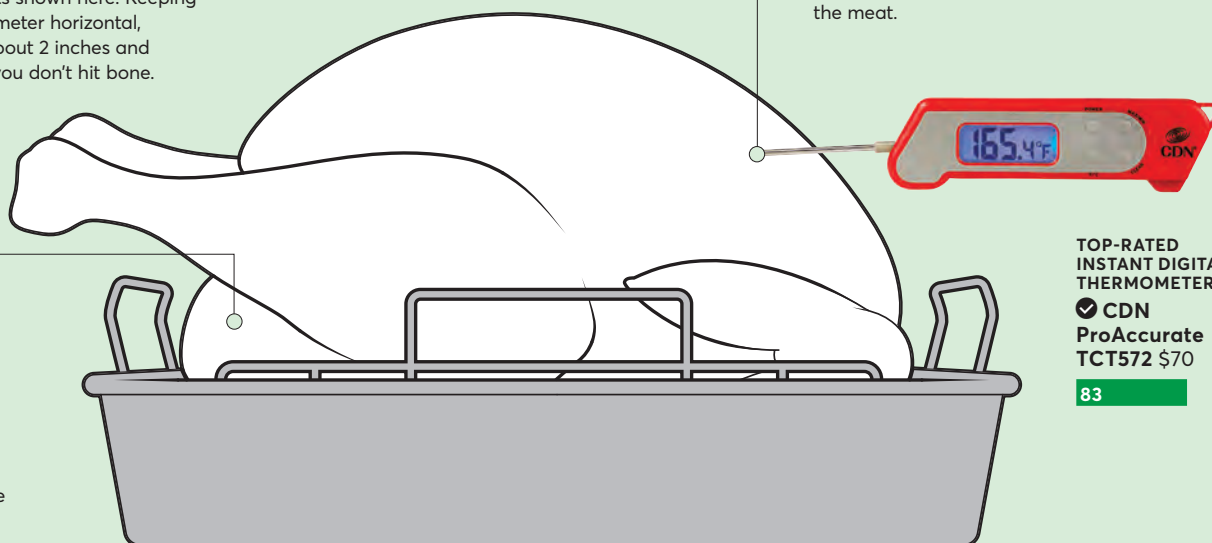
Don't rely on pop-up turkey thermometers. To ensure that your turkey has reached a safe 165° F, insert a digital meat thermometer in both spots shown here. Keeping the thermometer horizontal, push it in about 2 inches and make sure you don't hit bone.

Insert Into Thigh

Push the probe into the fleshiest part (not the drumstick).

Insert Into Breast

Be sure the probe is deep into the thickest part of the meat.



TOP-RATED INSTANT DIGITAL THERMOMETER

✓ CDN
ProAccurate
TCT572 \$70

83

In the Know

How to Safely Cook a Turkey

Thaw it properly. If you buy a frozen bird, plan to thaw it in a refrigerator set to 37° F for 24 hours for each 4 to 5 pounds of meat. “A 16-pound turkey will take about four days to thaw,” says CR food tester Ellen Klosz. “Put the wrapped turkey on a tray on the bottom shelf of the fridge,” she says. “This helps prevent leaking water and juice from spreading bacteria around.”

Forgo bird baths. “You can’t wash off bacteria with water, and rinsing out the

turkey risks splashing its juices all over the sink,” says CR food tester Amy Keating, R.D. Instead, open the plastic wrap carefully and drain any liquid into the sink before discarding the wrapper. Pat the turkey dry, inside and out, with paper towels. Wash your hands and any utensils using hot water and soap.

Don’t stuff it. Stuffing can absorb the juices from the raw turkey, and if it doesn’t get hot enough (165° F), you risk food

poisoning. (Cooking the bird until the stuffing is safe can mean overcooked meat.)

Watch the temperature. A golden brown exterior may be your goal, but it’s the interior temperature that really matters: too low and you risk food poisoning, but too high and your bird may look a lot better than it tastes. CR’s tests showed that pop-up thermometers in turkeys are not always reliable. Use a digital meat thermometer, such as those shown here, instead.

TOP LEAVE-IN MODEL

✓ Oregon Scientific
Wireless BBQ/Oven
AW131 \$30

82



INSTANT DIGITAL FOR LESS

✓ ThermoWorks Pocket
RT600C \$24

80



BUDGET LEAVE-IN

✓ Taylor Classical
Digital 1470 \$17

61



USE-BY

The last date that the manufacturer recommends for the use of the product while at peak quality. It's about safety only on infant formula.



SELL-BY

A manufacturer-set date to tell retailers when to take a product off shelves—but it may still be fine for you. For example, experts advise that properly refrigerated milk shouldn't sour until five to seven days past its sell-by date.

BEST IF USED BY/BEFORE

Indicates when a product is of the best quality or flavor. For instance, crackers may be soft instead of crisp after this date. It's not about safety.



Still Confused By ...

Food Expiration Dates

'TIS THE SEASON for overbuying food—which is why it's also a good time to contemplate that the average American throws out almost a pound of food every day, according to the Department of Agriculture. Why? It's often hard to know how long packaged foods are still safe to eat because there are no federal regulations on date labeling, with the exception of those on infant formula.

You're likely to see one of three designations on food products, though "Sell-By" has a different meaning from "Best if Used By/Before" and "Use-By" (see above). Typically, manufacturers use methods such as lab tests and taste testing

to set label dates, according to a report from the Natural Resources Defense Council and Harvard University. But those dates have little to do with safety. And, in many cases, the date you see is conservative, so if you eat the food after the date, you may not even notice a quality difference.

As a general rule of thumb, most canned foods that are low in acid (canned tuna, soups) can be stored (unopened) for two to five years, and high-acid foods (canned juices, tomatoes, pickles) can be stored for a year up to 18 months, according to the USDA. Deep dents (which can break the seal and let in bacteria) or bulges in closed cans might signal that it's time to toss them.

Although there are still no federally regulated expiration dates on meat, dairy, and eggs, these foods have shorter shelf lives than nonperishable items. The best way to know if a perishable food has spoiled? "Trust your taste buds and nose," says CR's Sana Mujahid, Ph.D., a food safety expert.

If a product has been opened, it may be harder to know whether it's worth saving. But a free app from the USDA, FoodKeeper, can help. Simply look up an item to see how long it will last unopened in the pantry or opened in the fridge. Canned cranberry sauce can last one to two weeks in the fridge after opening. An open jar of gravy? Just a day or two.

PHOTO, TOP LEFT: JOHN WALSH/CONSUMER REPORTS; PHOTOS, BOTTOM, FROM LEFT: MARC TIELEMANS/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; CONSUMER REPORTS

CR Time Traveler CAMERAS



1939 As new photography equipment floods the market, CR tests the American-made 35mm Argus C2, which ranks first for overall performance—"an excellent value" at \$25.

1948 In our holiday gift guide, we recommend the Brownie Reflex Synchro as a good "aim and shoot" camera for \$10.93, though the flash attachment is sold separately for \$4.03.


















1968 Though 35mm single-lens cameras are popular, CR says twin-lens reflex (TLR) cameras still have a lot to offer. The best TLR we test is a Rolleiflex model (below, right), \$350.

1957 After its introduction to the market in 1948, the Polaroid camera continues to be "just plain fun." We evaluate four models and find all acceptable. We also note that pictures should last for years if the coating supplied with each roll of Polaroid film is brushed on promptly using a small squeeze-like applicator.

Face-Off

Which Type of Water Heater Is Best?

Hidden away in your basement, a water heater gets little attention until you find yourself quaking in an icy morning shower. If you need to replace an old heater, there are plenty of options, though most people pick a model powered by the same fuel as before—natural gas or electricity. Typically, tank water heaters heat and store many gallons of hot water so that it's ready when you need it. Smaller, tankless water heaters, which heat water only on demand, are more efficient and are slowly gaining market share. But replacing a tank storage model with a tankless one requires a pro to retrofit your plumbing lines. Still, it's worth considering if you're remodeling. Here are the pros, cons, and costs of five types of heaters from CR's tests.

 GAS STORAGE TANK	 GAS TANKLESS	 ELECTRIC STORAGE TANK	 ELECTRIC TANKLESS	 ELECTRIC HEAT PUMP
Slightly more households heat their water with gas than with electricity or other fuels. In this case, the water is heated by natural gas, which typically costs less to run than electric models. Gas water heaters that are Energy Star certified can use even less energy because they typically use better insulation and have more efficient combustion systems.	These models use a high-powered burner to heat water and reach 120° F, just as tanked models do, though they're cheaper to operate. But a high initial cost means you won't see payback until years after even a long warranty runs out—which may mean never—so our overall rating is a Good, even though gas tankless models are efficient and have low annual costs.	Electric storage tank models operate similarly to gas tanked models: Cold water enters a pipe at the top and exits as heated water via another pipe. But electric tanked models aren't Energy Star certified like an electric heat pump. Still, you can save on operating costs by wrapping the tank, insulating the pipes, and keeping the heater close to the fixtures that use its hot water.	These models may be best in areas with warmer groundwater, such as the South, because in our cold-water tests we found that some could not heat water to the desired 120° F. And because electric whole-house models draw a lot of power (often around 120 to 160 amps), they also tend to be better for homes that have ample electrical service (about 200 amps).	This is the one type of electric water heater that qualifies for Energy Star certification. It captures heat from the surrounding air and transfers it to the water, using about 60 percent less energy than standard electric tank models. And though cost is high up front, payback time is short. But these heaters don't work well in cold spaces and have strict space requirements.
Avg. Price \$600	Avg. Price \$1,000	Avg. Price \$500	Avg. Price \$750	Avg. Price \$1,200
Avg. Annual Operating Cost* \$245	Avg. Annual Operating Cost* \$195	Avg. Annual Operating Cost* \$570	Avg. Annual Operating Cost* \$525	Avg. Annual Operating Cost* \$240
Energy Efficiency 	Energy Efficiency 	Energy Efficiency 	Energy Efficiency 	Energy Efficiency 
Warranty 	Warranty 	Warranty 	Warranty 	Warranty 

*Based on a 'heavy use' industry standard test.



1980 Some new cameras are able to focus automatically. Polaroid's Sonar has the best auto focus in our tests.



1998 We review 18 "new, no-film cameras." Above, a CR tester compares photos of the same seven subjects taken with each digital camera. A Nikon Coolpix 900 secures our top score.

2018 This 50mm Canon (below) is less than a third of the price of our top-rated 85mm SLR camera but is similar in tested performance.



\$ Canon EOS 200D Rebel SL2 w/ EF 50mm \$850

74 OVERALL SCORE



1976 We test 38 pocket cameras that use 110 film, reporting that they're easy to operate, small, and inexpensive but not as good for large prints. This Minolta Pocket Autopak 270 tops our tests.

HOW STUFF WORKS

Incognito Mode

Opening an “incognito” window in your internet browser may sound mysterious, but this tool, which promises a private browsing session, can be an asset when using a shared computer. That’s because, normally, browsers keep a lot of information about you: When you go to websites in a regular, non-incognito window, your browser stores the URL, or web address, of every page you visit—and hangs on to that information even after you close the window as a list of URLs in your browsing history tab. Your browser also stores “cookies,” which are tiny files that websites use to track your online activity from site to site—and to follow you around with ads for items you’ve looked at previously.

How will private browsing help?

All major web browsers—Chrome, Edge, Firefox, and Safari—offer this feature. (Under the File or More menu, simply look for an Incognito or Private option. On a phone, look for it when creating a new browser tab.) When you close a private window, the cookies go away: The websites you visited won’t show up in the History tab, and if you search for a product—blenders, say—you’re not as likely to see kitchenware ads over the next few days. It will also prevent anyone else who might use that laptop from seeing what you searched for or have related ads pop up, says Robert Richter, program manager for privacy and security testing at CR. If you’re using a public computer, incognito mode is useful because it won’t retain personal data, such as your Gmail login, when you close the window.

But don’t let incognito mode lull you into a false sense of security.

You still need to guard your passwords, and close windows when you’re done. And though the data about your session won’t be stored on the computer you used, “it could be stored on the server of any website you visited,” Richter says. Also, if you’re on your employer’s WiFi network, your company will know which sites you visited. Incognito mode also doesn’t protect you from malware, and any bookmarks you make or files you download while in incognito mode will persist after you close the window or browser.

*How to Clean Practically Anything™*

Your Humidifier

WHEN WE ASKED consumers who own a humidifier how often they clean it, 12 percent told us a few times a week and 21 percent said at least weekly. That sounds pretty good, right? But you might be surprised to learn that that’s not frequent enough to keep your humidifier clean. The best answer is daily. Both the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency warn that emissions from dirty humidifiers can cause health problems, especially for those who suffer from asthma or allergies. Microbes can grow in the reservoirs of humidifiers, potentially releasing bacteria into the air as your humidifier mists. “Bacteria grows in a moist environment, so it’s important not only to wash out the base tray and reservoir but also to let it completely dry after cleaning it,” says Doris Sullivan, CR’s associate director for product safety. In our labs, we have found that evaporative models (such as the SPT model above) are the least likely to emit airborne bacteria. Still, no humidifier can protect you from bacteria buildup brought on by a lack of cleaning.

AT THE SEASON’S START

Before using a stored humidifier for the first time, you’ll need to clean it. Don a pair of plastic gloves to disinfect the reservoir with a bleach solution, following the manufacturer’s instructions. Honeywell, for example, says to use 1 teaspoon of bleach mixed with 1 gallon of water (though you

may prefer an even stronger mix of 2 to 4 teaspoons). Then dry thoroughly, and don’t add water before you need to.

EVERY DAY

Even if the manufacturer doesn’t mandate it, we recommend that you clean a humidifier every day. Simply empty, rinse, and dry the base tray or reservoir before refilling.

EVERY WEEK

Remove any mineral buildup in the reservoir using vinegar, then rinse with water before disinfecting with a bleach solution. Never mix vinegar and bleach.

AT THE SEASON’S END

Disinfect the humidifier with bleach, then dry thoroughly before putting it away. Don’t store it with a used filter.

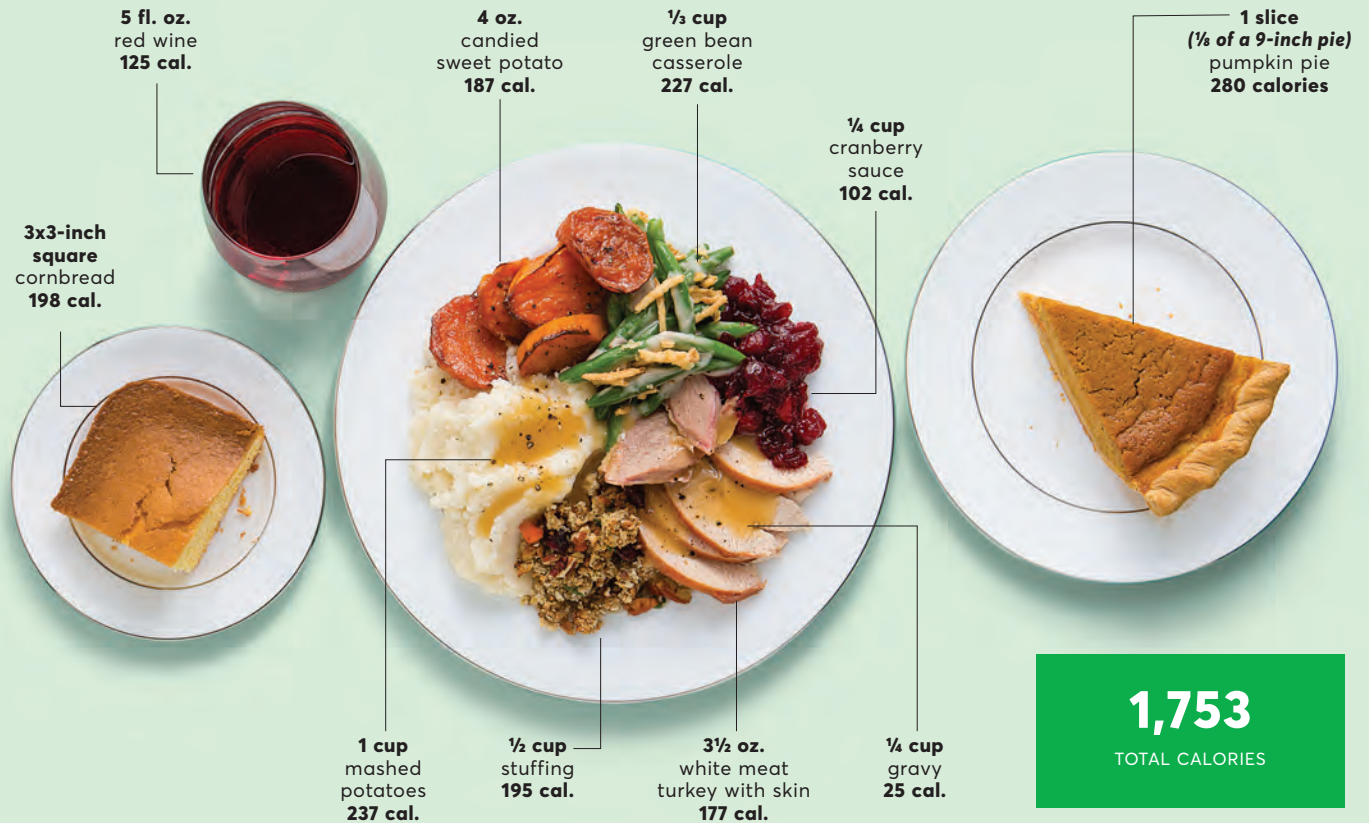
Food Sleuth

Good to the Last Gobble

YOU'VE WAITED ALL YEAR to savor your favorite Thanksgiving dishes—which is why it's all too easy to go overboard when the day finally arrives. According to the Calorie Control Council, Americans may consume more than 4,500 calories at their

Thanksgiving dinner. (Depending on age, weight, and gender, most people should have somewhere between 1,600 and 2,800 calories daily.) Here, we filled up a plate with classic seasonal goodies in sensible portions to help you have a delicious,

filling meal that won't derail your regular diet. At around 1,700 calories, though, even our spread has more than a daily allotment for many, says CR's Amy Keating, R.D. So just be mindful and try to resume your normal calorie intake the next day.



November Is THE BEST TIME TO BUY ...

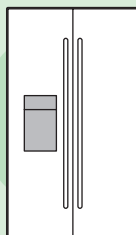
TVs

As Black Friday sales abound, watch for good deals on TVs, especially midpriced models. For more TV buying advice, turn to page 26.



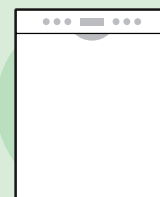
Refrigerators

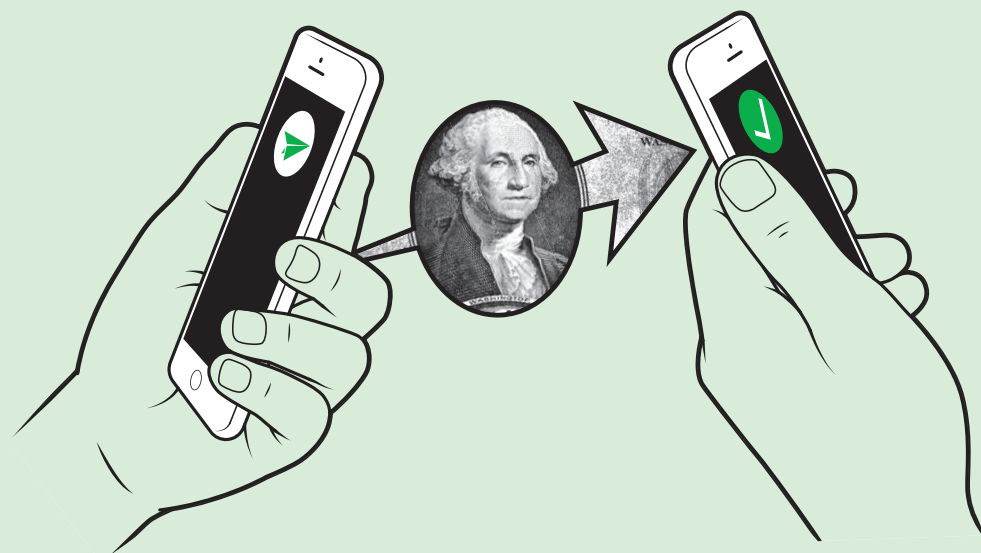
Score good prices on large appliances, such as fridges, this Black Friday and through the holidays.



Dishwashers

Is your old appliance on its last legs? The deepest dishwasher discounts of the year are likely to happen now.





Product Spotlight

Mobile Peer-to-Peer Payment Services

MOBILE PEER-TO-PEER (also known as P2P) payment services, such as Apple Pay, Cash App, and Venmo, can be a convenient way to pay people using your smartphone, tablet, or smartwatch. In a recent CR review of five mobile P2P payment services, we judged Apple Pay tops—in part because it collected and shared less user data. Follow these tips to get more out of a P2P service, with greater safety for your money. **Opt-in to stronger security.** Except for Apple Pay, which automatically requires

users to confirm every payment with a fingerprint or PIN, the services we judged required users to take extra steps to get the highest level of security offered. It takes only a few seconds to set up extra protections, such as a PIN. It's a good idea to take the time to do it. **Send money only to people you know.** Many peer-to-peer transactions are instantaneous and irreversible—a fact scammers know and exploit. **Get all of your recipient's details correct from the get-go.** Before you press "send" or "pay," make sure

that you have the right username, phone number, photo, or other identifier. Some services, such as Venmo, offer the opportunity to receive a special code to confirm that the person you're sending money to is your intended recipient. Choose services that offer these features, and use them. **Don't use P2P services for business purposes.** Most terms of service prohibit commercial use, such as paying for, or getting paid for, goods and services. Instead, use a payment service meant for business users, such as Square

Cash for Business or PayPal. **Confirm that you can find help if things go wrong.** Some P2P services offer limited help to resolve issues. Before using a service, search through the app for customer-service contacts and procedures to learn where to go and what assistance to expect. **Keep your app up to date.** Hackers are always exploiting vulnerabilities, while security pros play nonstop malware whack-a-mole. If you have old software, you're missing the latest protections. Make sure you have auto-updates turned on across the board.

PENNY-PINCHING PRINTER
\$ Canon Pixma G4210
 \$300

70 OVERALL SCORE



CR Money-Saver PRINTERS

Printer ink is the most expensive liquid many people ever buy. At up to \$57 per ounce, it's far pricier than many perfumes or fine wines. Rich Sulin, who leads CR's printer testing program, estimates that printing with an inkjet costs an average of 4.4 cents per page, which adds up to \$500 or so over four years of use. But there's new hope for ink savings: The Canon Pixma G4210 is the latest entry in a line of "supertank" models that dispense with ink cartridges in favor of individual reservoirs that can be refilled with a \$12 bottle of ink—and it's the cheapest of its kind. The cost to print a page of text is less than a penny. (That's just \$20 in ink over four years.) Plus, it has the chops to handle most printing jobs. "The G4210 is the first reservoir-based printer that really shines as a printer, not just a money-saver," Sulin says.



RECALLS

TO STAY INFORMED ABOUT RECALLS FOR YOUR VEHICLES, READERS WITH A DIGITAL OR ALL-ACCESS MEMBERSHIP CAN USE OUR FREE CAR RECALL TRACKER AT CR.ORG.



JEEP AND DODGE VEHICLES

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) is recalling more than 154,000 Jeep and Dodge vehicles because of a brake system issue: A faulty component installed on some vehicles earlier this year may cause bubbles to form in the brake fluid, which could increase stopping distances. The vehicles include 2018 to 2019 Jeep Compass SUVs manufactured between March 17 and June 13; 2019 Jeep Cherokee SUVs manufactured between April 4 and June 21; 2018 to 2019 Dodge Grand Caravan minivans manufactured between April 11 and June 14; and 2018 Dodge Journey SUVs manufactured between April 12 and June 14. There have been no reports of accidents or injuries due to this issue, FCA said. **What to do:** Owners can call FCA at 800-853-1403 or contact their local dealer. Dealers will bleed, or drain, the vehicle's brake-fluid system and refill it, NHTSA said, at no charge to owners.



SPACE HEATERS

Vornado is reissuing a recall of about 350,000 Personal Vortex electric space heaters because they can overheat when being used, posing fire and burn hazards. (The heaters were first recalled in April 2018.) They were sold in stores

and online from August 2009 through March 2018 for about \$30.

What to do: Stop using the heater and call Vornado at 855-215-5131 or go to vornado.com to get a full refund or replacement unit.



HAIR DRYERS

Xtava is recalling about 235,000 Allure and Allure Pro hair dryers because the dryer and power cord can overheat, posing fire, burn, and electrical shock hazards. The hair dryers were sold online from October 2014 through August 2018 for \$15 to \$60 when sold separately, and for \$20 to \$80 when sold as part of a hair care kit.

What to do: Stop using the hair dryer and call Xtava at 877-643-8440 or go to xtava.com to get a free replacement.



POWER SUPPLIES

Zebra Technologies is expanding a December 2016 recall of 166,000 power supply units for Zebra brand thermal printers to include a total of 1,370,000 units, because they can degrade and corrode over time when exposed to moisture and can overheat, posing a risk of fire.

The power supply units were sold through direct sales from Zebra and through Zebra distributors and resellers from October 2006 through June 2013 for \$340 to \$2,000 with Zebra printers and for about \$130 as an aftermarket accessory.

What to do: Stop using the unit and call Zebra at 800-658-3795 or go to zebra.com to get a free replacement power supply.



BLENDER CONTAINERS

Vitamix is recalling about 105,000 Ascent and Venturist Series 8- and 20-ounce blending containers because they can separate from the blade's base, exposing the blade and posing a laceration hazard. The blenders (with containers) were sold at Costco and Williams-Sonoma stores and online at vitamix.com from April 2017 through July 2018 for \$24 to \$500.

What to do: Stop using the blender and call Vitamix at 888-847-8842 or go to vitamix.com for a free repair kit.



POOL EQUIPMENT

Confer Plastics is recalling about 100,000 Curve in-pool step systems because children's

limbs can be trapped in the side openings, posing a drowning hazard. The systems were sold at stores nationwide and online at conferplastics.com from January 2013 through July 2018 for \$200 to \$400.

What to do: Stop using the system and call Confer at 800-635-3213 or go to conferplastics.com to get a free repair kit.



HANDGUN SAFES

Harbor Freight Tools is recalling about 25,000 electronic handgun safes because they can open upon impact without using a key or combination, allowing access to the contents of the safe and posing risk of serious injury to children and others. The safes were sold at Harbor Freight Tools stores and online at harborfreight.com from November 2014 through February 2018 for about \$65.

What to do: Stop using the safe and return it to any Harbor Freight Tools location for a full refund in the form of a Harbor Freight Tools gift card. Call Harbor Freight Tools at 800-444-3353 or go to harborfreight.com for more details.



RECLINER CHAIRS

Nemo Equipment is recalling about 7,500 Stargaze recliner chairs because the plastic joint supports attached to the legs can break and pose a fall hazard. The chairs were sold at REI and specialty outdoor stores and online at nemoequipment.com and rei.com from November 2017 through May 2018 for \$180 to \$220.

What to do: Stop using the chair and call Nemo at 800-997-9301 or go to nemoequipment.com to arrange for a free inspection and, if necessary, a free replacement chair.

Product Update

The latest ratings from our labs

The 5 U.S. cities/villages with the most days of snow per year

91 DAYS	79 DAYS	66 DAYS	66 DAYS	66 DAYS
HANCOCK, MICH.	SAULT STE. MARIE, MICH.	SYRACUSE, N.Y.	PELLSTON, MICH.	ROCHESTER, N.Y.

Source: The Weather Channel. Numbers are rounded.

How to Prep for Winter Storms

Protect your house from plunging temps and snowy hazards, plus use our expert advice on shovels and ice melts. And if you're in the market for a new snow blower, check our exclusive ratings.

by Paul Hope

HUSQVARNA
ST 224P
\$900

70

OVERALL
SCORE



INSIDE
CR'S LABS

Wet sawdust stands in for heavy snow, giving CR test engineer Dave Trezza a way to test snow blowers even when there's no snow.

SINGLE-DIGIT TEMPERATURES AND freezing water can wreak havoc on your house and yard. According to insurance provider Munich Re, winter weather caused \$1 billion in insured losses in 2016. It didn't have to. Here's our 10-point checklist of things to do in and around your house before we're in the thick of whiteout conditions.

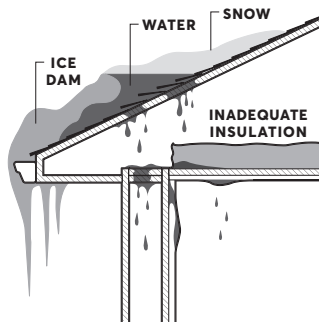
SWAP IN STORM WINDOWS. Remove and store all window screens. Install instead glass storm windows, creating an insulating layer of air between your windows and the cold outside air. These also provide an added layer of protection against driving rain and snow during a heavy storm, even if you have newer, double-paned windows.

INSULATE YOUR ATTIC OR CRAWL SPACE. Spending money to insulate your attic—exactly how much insulation you need varies by temperatures in your region—will save you money in the long run in two ways. You'll keep your home's heat out of the attic and in living quarters, where it belongs, and by keeping the attic cooler, you may prevent damaging ice dams from forming on your roof.

PROTECT INDOOR PIPES. According to the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS), a burst pipe can cause \$5,000 or more in damage. Fortunately, pipe insulation, which you can install yourself over any exposed copper or PVC water pipe, costs as little as 50 cents per linear foot. Use it under sinks; in basements, attics, and crawl spaces; and on pipe along exterior walls.

SERVICE YOUR FURNACE AND CHIMNEY. Fireplaces, chimneys, and heating equipment are some of the biggest causes of home fires, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Have them serviced and inspected annually. Make sure the inspector examines the condition of the chimney—brick periodically needs upkeep to prevent water from leaking in—as well as the cap, which keeps heat-seeking animals out.

REPAIR LOOSE ROOFING SHINGLES. If you suspect your roof has loose, damaged, or missing shingles, have a



THE DANGERS OF ICE DAMS

Ice dams are slabs of snow and ice that stick out at cartoonish angles from the eaves of a house. They may look funny, but the damage they can cause isn't.

These expensive hazards form when heat from inside the attic melts snow blanketing the roof, sending water trickling down toward the gutters. When the stream reaches the eaves—the bit of the roof that extends past the side of the house, out into cold air—it refreezes, creating a dam. More meltwater from the peak keeps coming and refreezing, and that results in the dam growing even bigger.

Ice dams can weigh more than gutters may be able to support. The snowy mass can rip them right off the house. Water can also pool behind the dam and could find its way into the attic or down the walls of your house.

Removing an ice dam is not a do-it-yourself job. Between 2014 and 2016, there were an estimated 1,600 emergency room visits related to homeowners attempting to remove snow from their roofs. Instead, hire a licensed roofing contractor. Removal costs vary, but expect pros to charge \$100 to \$150 per hour for this kind of hazardous work.

Better: Help prevent ice dams from forming in the first place by adding insulation to your attic. See "Insulate Your Attic or Crawl Space," at left, for more.

licensed roofing contractor perform an inspection and make repairs before the first snow. According to the IBHS, a single cubic foot of snow or ice can weigh anywhere from 20 to 25 pounds. That pressure can cause loose shingles to shift further, allowing water or moisture to permeate your roof and leak into your home.

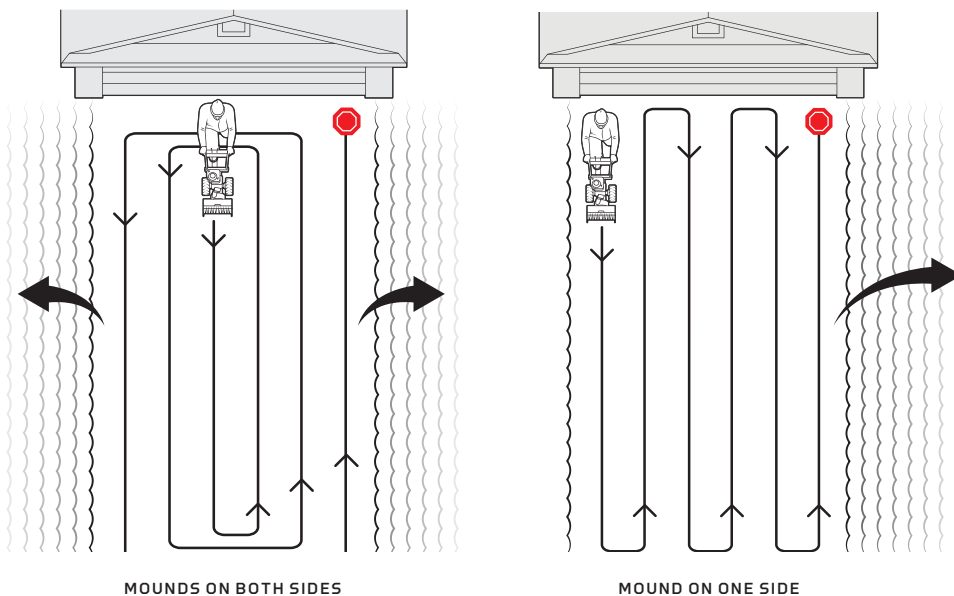
CLEAN AND INSPECT GUTTERS. Clogged gutters can cause water to back up and then freeze once temperatures drop. Keep gutters clear and properly connected to ensure that melting snow runs off your roof and through downspouts.

REPAIR PATIOS AND PAVERS. A loose patio stone or paving stone will only get worse over the winter, as the natural freeze and thaw cycle of the soil hoists it farther out of place in a process called frost heave. Have loose stones reset by a mason or handyperson in the fall.

LOOK FOR AILING TREE LIMBS. A dead branch covered in snow can easily snap, endangering people below and potentially causing thousands of dollars worth of damage if it strikes a roof, a porch, or siding. Before the first snow, have a reputable tree service, landscape contractor, or arborist remove any dead or ailing limbs.

SECURE OUTDOOR WATER SOURCES. Drain and store any garden hoses or sprinklers before the first frost to eliminate the chance that they'll freeze and burst. For hose bibs, shut off the water supply valve inside your house or basement that feeds the line, then open the outdoor spigot—any water trapped inside will drain out. If you simply shut off the spigot itself, trapped water can freeze and cause a burst pipe inside.

MARK GARDEN BEDS, PATHS, AND DRIVEWAYS. After a heavy snowfall, it can be tough to see where driveways, flower beds, or walkways end and your lawn begins. Use fiberglass snow poles or driveway markers every several feet to line the edges of these areas. That helps provide a clear path whether you're blowing or shoveling yourself, or hiring a professional plow driver.



Two Paths to Snow-Clearing Success

A snow blower can be a powerful weapon in your winter arsenal—if you know the best way to use it. Dave Trezza, who oversees snow blower testing at Consumer Reports, shares his expertise.

GET READY ... Assuming you stored your gas-powered machine in the off-season with the fuel tank empty, as we recommend, all you need to do is fill it up with gasoline that you have mixed with fuel stabilizer (available at most hardware

stores and some gas stations), to protect the fuel system from oxidization that can form between uses. If fuel from last year is still in the tank, use a siphon to remove it before adding new fuel. Inspect and fill the tires (unless your snow blower has airless wheels) and check the engine oil.

GET SET ... Take a minute to scan your driveway for branches, newspapers, and other detritus that could clog and damage

the machine. Make sure kids and pets are safely indoors: Snow blowers can hurl debris such as small stones—at high speeds—30 feet or farther.

If you're in for a big storm, plan on making several passes rather than one sweep. Single-stage snow blowers typically max out at a depth of 6 to 9 inches, and even the strongest machines will struggle when snow is over 16 inches deep.

BLOW! To clear more efficiently, plan your route in advance.

There are two approaches, depending on the orientation of your driveway.

If you want all the snow to end up along one edge of the driveway, as in the illustration at near left, start on the opposite edge and work your way toward the side where you want snow to land. That way, you'll clear any snow that falls short of its intended resting place as you work your way across. Each time you turn around at one end of the driveway, adjust the discharge chute 180 degrees to keep the snow flying in the right direction.

If you want to deposit the snow on both sides of the driveway (see illustration at far left), start by cutting a single swath down the center, then work your way out toward the edges.

Now, what about the huge drift the town plow left at the end of the drive?

Tackle that mess right away, before it melts, refreezes, and becomes a rock-hard glacier. "Turn your snow blower to the slowest possible speed and work very slowly," Trezza says. "As you approach the pile, lift up on the handles, forcing the nose of your machine down into the snow, so the auger can dig into the mass rather than just skimming over the top." Clear a couple of feet by blowing it into your yard, move over, and repeat until you have an open path.

Repeat each time the plow returns, blocking you in.

THE COLD TRUTH ABOUT ICE MELTS

Blue Heat, Safe-T-Salt, Snow Joe, Ice Slicer, Ice Eater. These evocative names are pretty much all you have to go on when choosing an ice melt. Which is best? Will it damage the concrete? What about your dog's paws?

Most ice melts are blends of sodium

chloride, calcium chloride, or magnesium chloride. "But they're all salts," says David P. Orr, director and senior engineer of the Cornell Local Roads Program. And any salt will seep into porous pavement, which can be problematic.

Here's what else you should know:

Mix it up. "Chlorides cause concrete to rust, crack, and deteriorate," Orr says. He recommends mixing your ice melt with an abrasive such as sand, which reduces the amount of salt on your pavement and provides traction.

Lay it in layers. Always use a gentle hand when

applying any type of ice melt to concrete. Lay down a thin layer before a storm, then another light layer during the storm.

If the temperature is 5° F or warmer, regular rock salt is as good as anything. Salt lowers the freezing point of water to this temperature.



DIGGING IN

Discover the one snow shovel everyone needs, plus three to make faster work of various conditions.

D-Shaped Grip

Provides control and leverage.

Straight, Ribbed Handle

Lightweight, with ribs that provide the strength not to flex under the weight of snow.

Wide Blade

Cleaves a broad path, cutting down on the number of passes you'll have to make.

Steel Wear Strip

Cuts through compacted snow and scrapes the pavement without damaging it.

THE ALL-PURPOSE WORKHORSE

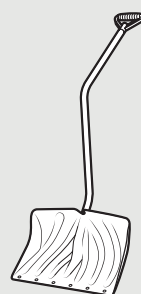
Best for a variety of conditions, these lightweight metal or plastic shovels can toss the fluffy stuff or push through heavy accumulation. If you own one shovel, this should be it.

THE CORN SCOOP



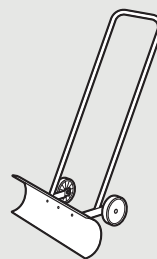
Narrower than an all-purpose shovel, this typically has a wood or fiberglass handle and a metal scoop, which is more rigid than plastic. The result is an effective tool for a pile of wet snow, but the short handle doesn't lend itself to plowing.

THE BACK-SAVER



The ergonomic handle of this all-rounder is bent at roughly 25 degrees, putting the scoop flush with the ground without putting your back out of whack. The trade-off is that you can't settle into your own angle for shoveling, which means your arms may tire faster. Look for a metal lip for most surfaces, but go with an all-plastic version for use on a wood deck, which metal can nick.

THE PUSHER



This design lets you cover a lot of ground after a light dusting. The broad face clears an extra-wide path, and wheels make it easy to roll around while you clear a large driveway or walk.

Below 5° F, opt for a salt blend. Look for a product containing calcium chloride, which can melt ice in temperatures as low as -25° F.

Take specialty claims with a grain of—ahem—salt.

Some manufacturers tout their ice melts as "environmentally friendly"

because they contain calcium magnesium acetate. CMA is sometimes used as a coating on rock salt. Manufacturers claim it's less damaging than other ice melts, but practically speaking, it's not: The coating melts off, leaving you with rock salt.

Scoop up salt and throw it away once the ice melts. Salt can harm plants' ability to soak up necessary nutrients. So you don't want to shovel salty mush onto your lawn—but you also don't want to leave it sitting on your driveway. Scrape up what's left and trash it.

Be dubious of "pet friendly" claims on ice melts. The expert we consulted couldn't confirm that pet-safe ice melts are safer for pets (and they're pricey, too). A better plan: Lead pets through a "rinse tray" after a walk. "Salt irritates dogs' feet," says retired

veterinarian Robert Sharp of Hillsboro, Ohio. "It can cause burns and inflammation. Licking can worsen irritation." Sharp suggests a water-filled pan at the entry to your home, with a towel nearby. In consideration of your pets (and your floors), be sure not to track in salt yourself.

Ratings ➤ **Blown Away** To choose the type of blower that's right for you, consider the average amount of snow you get.

			Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results							
	Rec.	Rank				Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Removal speed	Plow-pile removal	Throwing distance	Surface cleaning	Handling	Controls	Noise	Width (in.)

THREE-STAGE GAS

Best for up to 18 inches of heavy snow, three-stage models have an auger and impeller, like two-stage models (see below), but also an accelerator that's unique to this type. This helps move snow into the machine—which is key to clearing the snow pile left at the end of your driveway.	✓	1	Cub Cadet 3X 30" Pro H	91	\$2,400	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	30
	✓	2	Cub Cadet 3X 30" HD	91	\$1,600	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	30
	\$	3	Troy-Bilt Vortex 2890	90	\$1,300	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	28
	✓	4	Cub Cadet 3X 26" Trac	87	\$1,600	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	26
	✓	5	Craftsman 88874	85	\$1,400	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	28
	\$	6	Troy-Bilt Vortex 2490	83	\$1,100	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	24
		7	Craftsman 88870	77	\$1,200	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	24

TWO-STAGE GAS

Best for up to 16 inches of medium to heavy snow, these feature an auger, which sucks up snow, and an impeller, which helps throw the snow farther than a single-stage blower.	✓	1	Ariens 926060	91	\$3,100	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	28
	✓	2	Troy-Bilt Arctic Storm 30	91	\$1,500	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	30
	\$	3	Cub Cadet 2X 28" HP	87	\$1,000	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	28
	✓	4	Craftsman 88976	87	\$1,500	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	30
	\$	5	Briggs & Stratton 1227MDS	84	\$1,000	—	—	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	27
	✓	6	Ariens Deluxe 28 254CC 921046	82	\$1,100	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	28
	✓	7	Cub Cadet 2X 26" HP	81	\$1,000	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	26
	\$	8	Troy-Bilt 2860	80	\$900	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	28
		9	Troy-Bilt Storm 2625	77	\$800	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	26
		10	Craftsman 88394	74	\$1,000	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	28
		11	Toro Power Max 826 OXE 37781	71	\$1,100	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	26
		12	Yard Machines 31AM6CFG752	71	\$800	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	26
		13	Troy-Bilt Storm 2660	69	\$800	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	26
		14	Troy-Bilt Flex 23ABA6X711	64	\$400	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	26
		15	Husqvarna ST227P	57	\$1,000	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	27
		16	Husqvarna ST230E	57	\$1,300	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	30

HOW WE TEST: Overall Score combines test results with survey data for predicted reliability and owner satisfaction. **Predicted reliability** estimates the likelihood that newly purchased models from a given brand will break within the first five years. **Owner satisfaction** reflects the proportion of CR members who are extremely

likely to recommend the snow blower they bought. In cases where we have insufficient survey data to provide a brand-level rating, indicated by a gray dash (—), we assume the model has average reliability and satisfaction. "NA" means we have no data. For **Removal speed**, we time how long it takes models to clear a highly

controlled mixture of wet sawdust packed in standardized piles. **Plow-pile removal** is an assessment of how quickly, and thoroughly, models cut through a large mound of wet sawdust designed to simulate a plow pile. **Throwing distance** is how far each model throws the mixture. **Surface cleaning** reflects how much of our mixture each model leaves

behind on a blacktop driveway. **Handling** denotes how easy each machine is to push, pull, and turn. **Controls** is our assessment of how easy it is to change speeds, adjust the discharge chute, and move the handlebar. **Noise** is measured in decibels at the ear of the operator; a rating lower than ⬇ means you'll need hearing protection.

			Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results	Test Results								
	Rec.	Rank				Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Removal speed	Plow-pile removal	Throwing distance	Surface cleaning	Handling	Controls	Noise	Width (in.)

COMPACT TWO-STAGE GAS

Good for medium to heavy snow up to 16 inches deep, these are narrower, more nimble versions of two-stage blowers. Their smaller size makes them a bit easier to store but also means you'll have to make more passes when clearing snow.	✓	1	Toro Power Max 824 OE	77	\$800	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	24
	✓	2	Honda HSS724AW	74	\$2,200	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	24
	✓	3	Craftsman 88640	74	\$800	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	24
	💰	4	Troy-Bilt 2410	73	\$600	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	24
	✓	5	Ariens 920025	70	\$700	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	24
		6	Husqvarna ST 224P	70	\$900	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	24
		7	Power Smart DB 7651-24	51	\$560	—	—	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	24
		8	Poulan Pro PR241	40	\$650	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	24

SINGLE-STAGE GAS

For up to 9 inches of medium snow, a single-stage snow blower uses only an auger to suck up snow and generally won't throw it as far, or as fast, as a multistage snow blower.	✓	1	Toro Power Clear 721 QZE 38744	75	\$700	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	21
	✓	2	Honda HS 720AS	72	\$700	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	20
		3	Toro Snow Master 724 QXE	62	\$750	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	24
		4	Briggs & Stratton 1022EX	62	\$550	—	—	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	22
		5	Simplicity 1022EE	59	\$600	—	—	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	22
		6	Troy-Bilt Squall 208XP	49	\$500	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	21
		7	Troy-Bilt Squall 123R	48	\$360	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	21
		8	Toro Power Clear 518ZE	43	\$400	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	18
		9	Ariens 938032	41	\$500	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	21
		10	Husqvarna ST 131	39	\$500	—	—	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	21
		11	Ariens Pro Path 938033	33	\$600	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	21
		12	Ariens Pro Path 938034	27	\$450	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	21

SINGLE-STAGE ELECTRIC

These corded blowers are best for up to 6 inches of light snow but can't match the power of a gas machine. They're best for walkways and decks.		1	Toro Power Curve 1800 38381	50	\$300	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	18
		2	Toro 1500 Power Curve 38371	44	\$180	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	15
		3	Toro Power Shovel 38361	42	\$110	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	11
		4	Snow Joe SJ623E	35	\$250	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	18
		5	Greenworks 26022	25	\$150	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	16

SINGLE-STAGE BATTERY

The top battery-powered units outperform corded models. They're best for light snow of no more than 6 inches.	✓	1	Ego SNT2102	60	\$600	NA	NA	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	21
		2	Snow Joe iON18SB	24	\$250	NA	NA	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	18
<div>➤</div> Readers with a Digital or All-Access membership can find the latest ratings at CR.org/snowblowers1118 .															

GET THE MOST TV FOR YOUR MONEY

Fall is prime time for TV shopping, with some models reduced as much as 50 percent from their original prices. But it takes consumer smarts to navigate Black Friday hype and come away with a great deal.

BY JAMES K. WILLCOX

**BLACK
FRIDAY**

*This year it falls
on Nov. 23.*





It's a Big Purchase
But that doesn't mean
your new TV needs to
kill your budget.

S

SAVVY SHOPPERS KNOW that timing can be everything if you want a great price. That's especially true when you're shopping for a new TV.

And fall is one of the best times to get a deal on a new set as retailers scramble to lure in shoppers during the long run-up to Black Friday.

"New TVs come out every year in the spring, and their pricing starts to decline quickly," says Deirdre Kennedy, senior analyst for TVs at the retail market research firm GAP Intelligence. "But they tend to really drop in October, and then even more sharply by the time Black Friday comes around. It's not just hype; this really is a great time for consumers to shop for a new set."

But you'll need some know-how to find the best deal on a TV you'll love without getting confused or misled by the avalanche of sales come-ons that materialize this time of year.

Check Out 'Look-Alike' Models

Retailers offer plenty of bargains this time of year, but they don't make their sales simple to navigate.

For starters, those eye-popping, too-good-to-be-true deals you see around Black Friday (known as "doorbuster specials") are usually available only in limited quantities. They may inspire you to head to the stores or a retailer's website, but supplies run out quickly, and most people won't be able to take advantage of the deal.

But don't worry if you fail to snag one of those super-cheap televisions. You'll still be able to find a great deal.

And many doorbuster models are very basic sets that could leave you feeling unsatisfied, anyway. For instance, last year we saw a \$125 39-inch Element set and a \$250 55-inch Westinghouse set. Those are very low prices, but TVs from those brands usually haven't fared well in our ratings.

You'll also see low-priced TVs made specifically for Black Friday and often available through a single retailer. These sets are called "derivatives" in the TV industry because they're similar to the mainstream models we see all year but with different model numbers and often fewer features. For example, they may have fewer HDMI inputs or come with a simpler remote control.

Some of these TVs can be a good deal depending on which features are missing. In 2017, a 55-inch Samsung derivative we tested was about \$170 cheaper than the TV it was based on and performed equally well in CR's tests. (See the facing page for details.)

"We've seen more of these derivative models in recent years" Kennedy says. "These models tend to stick around past the holidays and become part of the brands' regular assortment." In addition to derivative models, you may see completely fresh low-end models appear at this time of year.

Derivatives and new-for-the-holidays models can make it tough for consumers to judge the quality of many TVs being advertised. It can be difficult to compare prices, too. After all, if a set is being sold at only one retailer, you can't shop around or ask a store to honor a price-match guarantee.

Pick Your Timing

You've always been able to score a great deal on a mid-tier TV around Black Friday and Cyber Monday, both of which fall right after Thanksgiving. But years ago there were fewer steep discounts on fully featured top-performing sets from major brands.

That's starting to change. In fall 2017, for example, prices of some expensive

LG OLED TVs dropped by as much as 40 percent from their high points, according to GAP Intelligence.

That means consumers looking for a high-end set might find one at a great price this fall. If you can't—or you're just not ready to buy—it's fine to wait a couple of months. You'll have another chance at a deal during the promotions that traditionally start just before the Super Bowl, in early February.

An analysis of two years of pricing data, conducted by Consumer Reports and GAP, showed that TV prices on many retail sites climbed sharply in early January. But then Super Bowl sales pushed prices back down to around their Black Friday levels. And those deals included many crowd-pleasing large-screen sets.

If history is a guide, prices on leftover 2018 TVs will stay low into the spring as retailers try to make room on the shelves for 2019 models.

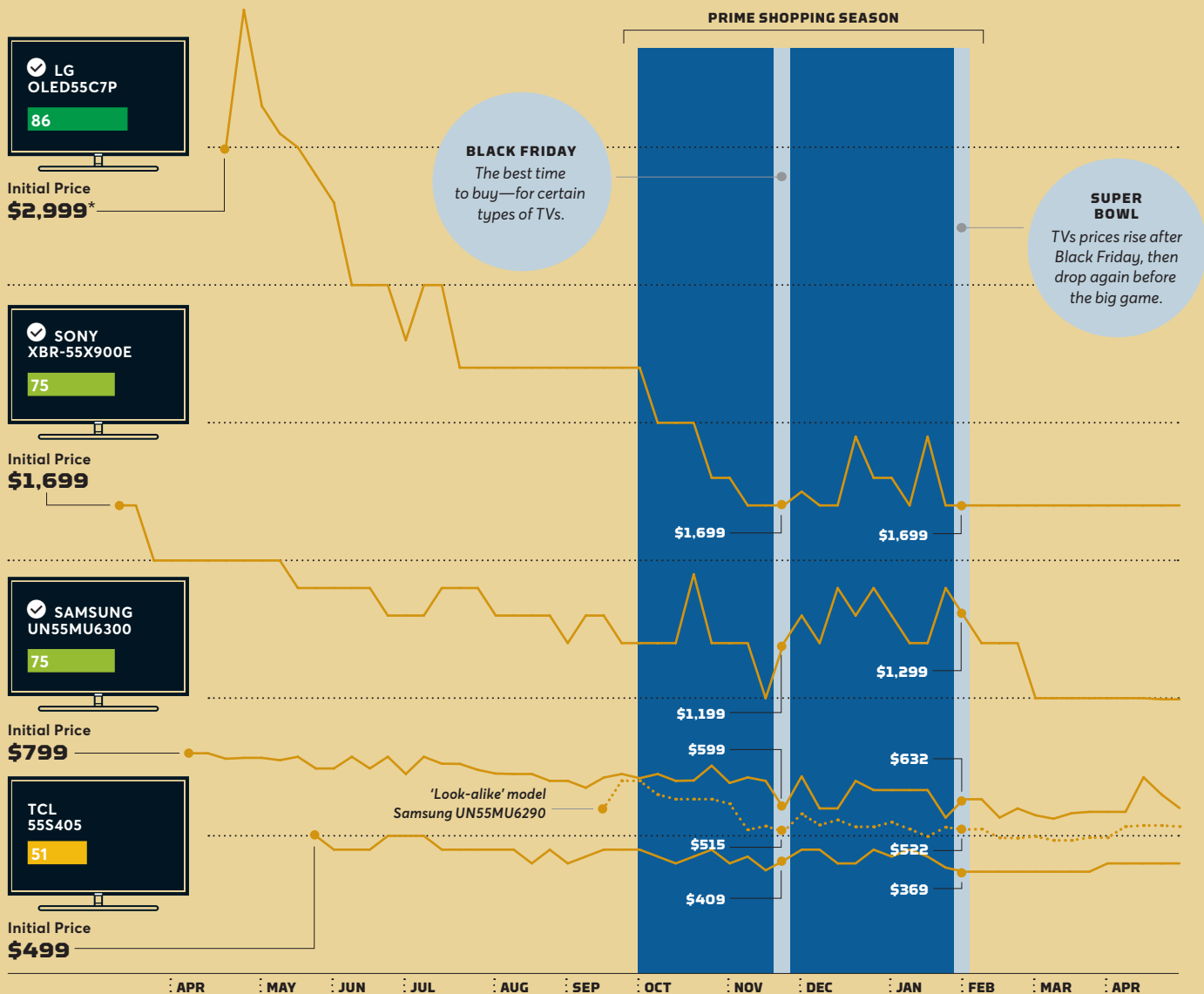
Explore Your Buying Options

In recent years, when we've asked Consumer Reports members about their experience shopping for electronics, those who shopped online were more satisfied than those who walked into a store regarding things like ease of checkout, product quality, selection, customer support, and price. But consumers had good experiences in walk-in stores, too.

Each approach has advantages. The web makes it easy to compare prices and can help you avoid holiday-season crowds. Going to a store lets you really see what you're buying and provides instant gratification if you bring your new TV home or arrange for same-day delivery.

Our most recent member survey on electronics retailers reflects tens of thousands of shopping experiences at dozens of outlets. One takeaway from all that research: If you don't like the service or selection at one store, keep looking, because a number of retailers get high marks. Among the online

WHEN TO GET THE BEST PRICES ON TVs



MONEY-SAVING TACTICS

CHECK BLACK FRIDAY WEBSITES

Black Friday print ads get leaked and posted at bfads.net, bestblackfriday.com, dealnews.com, gottadeal.com, and theblackfriday.com.

USE PRICE AND COUPON TOOLS

You don't have to go retailer-by-retailer to compare prices. Try Google Shopping, plus services such as NexTag, PriceGrabber, Pricewatch, and Shopzilla. In the store, apps such as BuyVia, ShopSavvy, and Shopular let you scan bar codes to compare prices, get discounts, and score coupons.

SIGN UP FOR STORE LOYALTY PROGRAMS

This will get you members-only alerts for sales and promotions, and help you earn rewards if you buy.

AVOID PRICEY ACCESSORIES

You've just scored an awesome giant-screen 4K TV at an all-time low price,

so don't blow your savings by splurging on pricey accessories. If you know you'll need an HDMI cable, for instance, buy it in advance from an online retailer.

CHECK STORE POLICIES IN ADVANCE

Some retailers may suspend price-match guarantees or return policies on some Black Friday deals.

'LOOK-ALIKE' TVs

Samsung's UN55MU6290, launched in September 2017, was a "derivative" TV based on the UN55MU6300. The derivative was cheaper, but the two sets performed almost identically in CR testing, with Excellent HD picture quality, Very Good UHD performance, and Very Good sound. (The pricier MU6300 had a more sophisticated remote, voice control, and Bluetooth.) The price difference? About \$170.

and walk-in retailers that sell TVs, Abt Electronics, B&H Photo, Crutchfield, and independent walk-in stores as a group all rated well for product quality and customer service.

Don't Hesitate to Haggle

You can ask for a better deal whether you're shopping online or at a walk-in store. Our surveys on electronics shopping show that many consumers don't try to bargain, but that the majority of people who do try succeed in getting a better deal. You can ask in person at a walk-in store or by picking up the phone or opening a chat window if you're shopping online.

Haggling may seem intimidating, but you don't need expert negotiating skills. Thirty-one percent of the in-store shoppers who negotiated said they simply asked for a better deal.

It can be helpful to come in armed with competitors' prices. And if you can't get a break on price, ask for something else. For instance, Karen Jaffe, a manager in Consumer Reports' survey research department, notes that 57 percent of shoppers who negotiated for a free warranty or warranty extension were successful. "So it's always worth trying to haggle," she says, "and more often than not you'll have some level of success."

Pick Your Priorities

A steep discount on a high-end set can still have you spending \$1,500 or more. Even if that fits in with your budget,

you won't know if it's a worthwhile purchase until you decide what you're looking for in a television.

Would you rather skimp a bit on picture quality to buy a set with a bigger screen, or get the best possible picture on a smaller set? Do you plan to use an external sound system or sound-bar speaker? If you do, don't pay extra for a TV with great sound.

The viewing angle is especially important if you plan to invite friends to watch movies or sports with you. The wider the viewing angle, the better the picture looks for anyone sitting off-center.

These decisions can help you use our ratings more effectively. Not all of the columns, which cover different features and tests, matter as much to all people.

Don't Be Afraid to Go Big

Bigger screens tend to take a bigger bite out of your budget, but not as much as they used to. Prices for TVs in the 55- to 65-inch range have dropped considerably. You can still spend \$3,000 or more for a 65-inch set, but there are also models that size that deliver a satisfying experience for \$700 or even a bit less.

If you have the room for it, a mega-screen TV can be inspiring, really showcasing your favorite movies and TV shows. Just make sure that the seating distance from the TV puts the whole image comfortably within view.

The TVs in our ratings are divided by screen size because this is such an important factor for most shoppers.

Consult Our HDR Scores

A majority of the models in our ratings can deliver a satisfying TV-watching experience, but there are some clear differences between the top-performing models and those in the middle of the pack. And right now, the biggest differentiator in performance is HDR, or high dynamic range. Among TVs that support HDR, the more expensive models tend to do better.

"When done well, HDR represents a more natural illumination of image content," says Claudio Ciacci, who heads up TV testing at Consumer Reports. "That includes the TV's ability to retain the vibrancy of colors as a scene gets brighter."

TVs with good HDR performance can display finer gradations from black to white. You'll see more nuanced detail in the shadows of dark scenes—such as nighttime in a garden—that otherwise might just look black. And you'll be able to discern more detail in bright scenes, such as a daytime sky with both the sun and clouds. The best HDR TVs have high peak brightness levels that can deliver more realistic "specular highlights," such as the sun glinting off a truck's chrome bumper. The result looks more like what we see in real life.

The TV show or movie you're watching has to be shot and transmitted to your set in HDR for this feature to work. (If you're streaming a movie, you'll usually see a flag on the title that lets you know it's in 4K HDR.) There's a growing selection of this content

STOP YOUR TV FROM SNOOPING

How much does your TV know about you? If it's a smart TV, one that connects to the internet, probably quite a bit.

These sets often use automatic content recognition (ACR), technology

that can tell the TV maker about the shows you watch, whether it comes from network TV, a streaming service, or even your own Blu-ray disc. That data can be used to target you with ads

not just on the TV but also on your mobile phone and laptop.

Companies need to get your permission to collect this data; in fact Vizio got in trouble with federal and

state regulators in 2017 for failing to do so. But when we analyzed TVs for privacy protections earlier this year, we found that it can be difficult to figure out how to turn off ACR when you're first

setting up your TV—and even harder later on.

During setup, read each screen carefully. You must agree to basic privacy policies and terms of service if you want to access

SOUND DECISION-MAKING

available, especially from streaming services such as Amazon and Netflix, and on 4K Ultra HD Blu-ray discs.

But not all TVs that tout HDR do a great job presenting these images in all their lifelike glory. That's why our ratings (starting on page 32) show a separate column for the HDR score. TVs with low scores don't make HDR movies look much different from TVs that lack the capability entirely.

Factor In Sound Quality

A TV's sound is an afterthought for many shoppers, but a set with satisfying sound can add visceral excitement to what you see on screen. After all, a movie's soundtrack often gets as much loving attention as any other part of the production.

Further, if your new TV has Bluetooth, like an increasing number of sets, you may want to use it to play music beamed from a phone or tablet.

After years of declining sound quality—a consequence of ever-slimming TV profiles—we're starting to see improvements.

These days, a number of sets in our ratings have Very Good or even Excellent sound quality, especially if you're looking for a larger TV. (Most TVs, especially smaller sets, still produce mediocre sound.)

There's an easy remedy for a TV with so-so audio: a sound-bar speaker. Learn more at right. Then use our TV ratings charts and Black Friday shopping tips as you hit the sales this holiday season.

streaming services. But you can say no to ACR, which goes by names such as LivePlus (for LG), or Viewing Information Services or SyncPlus (for Samsung).

If you've already set up your TV, dive

into the settings—and be prepared to go several menus deep. Even if you turn off ACR, the TV maker may still see data such as your location and which streaming apps you open.

Most of the 200-plus TVs in our ratings earned no more than a Good score for sound. That's fine for many sitcoms, talk shows, and the like. But with movies and TV dramas, you might want a bit more sonic oomph.

You can buy a TV with an Excellent rating for sound quality, but you may have to pay more and perhaps buy a larger TV than you really want. An alternative is to add a sound bar to the TV of your choice.

Most sound bars have several speakers in a thin enclosure that can be mounted on a wall or placed on a shelf above or below the TV. Pedestal-style sound bases can support the set.

Sound bars are often sold with a wireless subwoofer to help with bass, and a few have rear speakers for surround-sound.

Many have Bluetooth, letting you stream music from a phone. And some advanced models offer access to streaming video and music services.

Prices range from \$100 to more than \$1,000, but many sell for \$200 to \$600.

Here are tips for when you're shopping:

Make sure you can return or exchange your pick. A model may sound very different in your home than the in-store demo.

Determine how many channels of sound you want.

To simply enhance your TV sound, 2.1 channels (two front channels and a separate subwoofer) will do nicely. But if you want true surround sound, choose a 5.1-channel system with rear speakers.

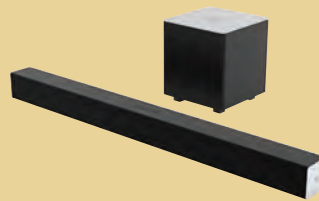
Decide whether to spring for Dolby Atmos or dts:X.

These technologies are built into several models and can give movies with specially encoded soundtracks a feeling of height.

"When done well, especially with models that have front and rear height-enabled speakers, listeners can really get a three-dimensional sound experience," says Maria Rerecich, who leads electronics testing at CR.

\$ VIZIO SB3821-C6
\$150

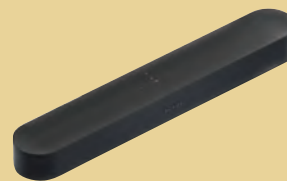
55



Despite its low price, this basic 2.1-channel system delivers Good overall sound. It has a wireless subwoofer and Bluetooth for streaming audio.

\$ SONOS BEAM
\$400

69



Sonos' first smart sound bar delivers Very Good sound, along with voice control, courtesy of the built-in Amazon Alexa digital assistant.

✓ SAMSUNG HW-K950
\$1,500

74



This pricey, top-rated, full-blown Dolby Atmos surround-sound system delivers Very Good sound. It has wireless rear speakers and a large subwoofer.

Ratings ➤ **Televisions** Consumer Reports' TV ratings now include a separate score for how well a model can present HDR images. In addition to overall ratings, check the scores for HDR, sound, and other factors that matter most to you.

		Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Test Results				
Rec.	Rank				Ultra HD performance	HDR score	HD picture quality	Sound quality	Viewing angle
60-INCH AND LARGER TVs ⓘ									
✓	1	LG OLED65B8PUA	88	\$2,800	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	2	LG OLED65C8PUA	88	\$3,000	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	3	Sony XBR-65A8F	88	\$3,800	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	4	LG OLED65E8PUA	88	\$3,500	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	5	LG 65SK9500PUA	83	\$2,200	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	6	Samsung QN65Q9FN	83	\$3,800	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	7	Samsung QN65Q7CN	81	\$2,700	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	8	LG 65SK9000PUA	81	\$2,200	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	9	Samsung QN65Q7FN	80	\$2,600	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	10	Samsung QN65Q75FN	79	\$1,700	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	11	Samsung QN65Q65FN	79	\$1,800	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	12	Samsung QN65Q6FN	78	\$2,200	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	13	Samsung QN65Q8FN	78	\$3,000	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	14	Sony XBR-65X900F	78	\$2,200	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
💰	15	Samsung UN65NU800D	77	\$1,580	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
💰	16	Samsung UN65NU8000	77	\$1,700	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	17	Samsung UN65NU8500	77	\$1,800	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	18	LG 65SK8000PUA	73	\$1,600	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
💰	19	Vizio PQ65-F1	73	\$1,200	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
💰	20	LG 65UK7700AUB	72	\$1,250	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	21	LG 70UK6570PUB	72	\$1,300	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	22	Sony XBR-70X830F	71	\$2,200	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	23	Sony XBR-65X850F	71	\$1,800	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	24	Sony XBR-60X830F	71	\$1,400	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
💰	25	LG 65UK6500AUA	71	\$985	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
💰	26	Samsung UN65NU7100	70	\$1,100	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	27	Hisense 65H9EPLUS	70	\$1,200	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	28	Samsung UN65NU710D	69	\$1,080	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	29	Vizio P65-F1	69	\$1,300	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
💰	30	TCL 65R615	69	\$970	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	31	Samsung UN65NU7300	69	\$1,200	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆

		Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Test Results				
Rec.	Rank				Ultra HD performance	HDR score	HD picture quality	Sound quality	Viewing angle
60-INCH AND LARGER TVs <i>Continued</i>									
✓	32	TCL 65R617	68	\$1,000	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇
✓	33	Vizio M65-F0	68	\$1,000	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇
✓	34	LG 65UK6300PUE	65	\$1,000	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	35	Vizio E65-F0	65	\$800	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇
	36	Vizio M70-F3	64	\$1,400	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇
	37	TCL 65S517	63	\$890	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇
	38	Sharp LC-65Q7000U	61	\$850	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇
	39	Hisense 65H6E	60	\$650	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇
	40	Vizio D65-F1	59	\$780	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇
	41	Hisense 60H6E	58	\$550	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆
	42	Hitachi 65R80	58	\$650	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬆
55- TO 59-INCH TVs									
✓	1	LG OLED55C8AUA	89	\$2,300	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	2	LG OLED55C8PUA	88	\$2,500	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	3	LG OLED55E8PUA	87	\$2,700	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	4	Sony XBR-55A8F	87	\$2,800	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	5	LG OLED55B8PUA	87	\$1,995	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	6	Samsung QN55Q7FN	81	\$1,900	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇
✓	7	Samsung QN55Q7CN	80	\$2,000	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇
✓	8	LG 55SK9000PUA	80	\$1,500	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	9	Samsung QN55Q8FN	79	\$2,200	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇
✓	10	Samsung QN55Q6FN	77	\$1,300	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇
💰	11	Samsung QN55Q65FN	76	\$1,100	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇
💰	12	Samsung UN55NU8000	76	\$1,200	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇
💰	13	Samsung UN55NU800D	76	\$1,080	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇
✓	14	Samsung UN55NU8500	76	\$1,300	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇
✓	15	Sony XBR-55X900F	76	\$1,500	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇
💰	16	LG 55SK8000PUA	75	\$1,000	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆
💰	17	LG 55UK7700PUD	72	\$895	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆
💰	18	Samsung UN55NU7100	72	\$700	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇
💰	19	Samsung UN55NU7300	71	\$800	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇
💰	20	TCL 55R617	69	\$650	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇
💰	21	TCL 55R615	69	\$600	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇

Rec.	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Test Results				
					Ultra HD performance	HDR score	HD picture quality	Sound quality	Viewing angle

55- TO 59-INCH TVs Continued

\$	22	LG 55UK6500AUA	68	\$600	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
\$	23	Samsung UN55NU710D	68	\$630	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	24	Hisense 55H9EPLUS	66	\$700	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	25	Vizio P55-F1	65	\$900	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	26	LG 55UK6300PUE	64	\$595	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	27	TCL 55S517	63	\$475	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	28	TCL 55S515	62	\$450	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	29	Hisense 55H8E	61	\$470	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	30	Hisense 55H6E	60	\$380	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	31	Vizio M55-F0	60	\$700	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	32	Sharp LC-55Q7000U	59	\$500	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	33	Vizio D55-F2	59	\$500	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	34	Toshiba 55LF621U19	57	\$480	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	35	Philips 55PFL5703	57	\$500	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆

46- TO 52-INCH TVs

✓	1	Samsung UN49NU8000	75	\$1,000	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	2	Sony XBR-49X900F	74	\$1,200	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	3	LG 49SK8000PUA	69	\$900	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
\$	4	LG 49UK6300PUE	69	\$495	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
✓	5	Samsung UN50NU7100	67	\$600	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
\$	6	Samsung UN50NU710D	67	\$530	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	7	LG 50UK6300BUB	64	\$500	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	8	LG 50UK6500AUA	64	\$490	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	9	TCL 49S517	60	\$430	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	10	TCL 49S515	60	\$400	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	11	Vizio D50-F1	60	\$430	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	12	Hisense 50H6E	59	\$300	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	13	Sharp LC-50Q7000U	58	\$430	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆

HOW WE TEST: The Overall Score is out of a total of 100 points. **Ultra HD performance** is an evaluation of how well a TV reproduces full-quality ultra high definition (or 4K) using 4K content. The **HDR score** reflects how effectively the

TV can show high dynamic range when playing HDR content. HDR heightens the difference between the darkest blacks and brightest whites in an image, allowing for more nuanced detail in both the shadows and bright parts of a scene.

Rec.	Rank	Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Test Results				
					Ultra HD performance	HDR score	HD picture quality	Sound quality	Viewing angle

46- TO 52-INCH TVs Continued

	14	Hisense 50R7050E	57	\$300	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	15	Insignia NS-50D510NA19	57	\$250	NA	NA	⬆	⬆	⬆
	16	Hisense 49H6E	57	\$375	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	17	Hisense 50R7E	57	\$350	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	18	Sharp LC-50LB601U	55	\$300	NA	NA	⬆	⬆	⬆

39- TO 43-INCH TVs

\$	1	LG 43UK6500AUA	65	\$390	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	2	LG 43UK6300PUE	64	\$395	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	3	Samsung UN43NU710D	63	\$460	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	4	Samsung UN40NU7100	62	\$450	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	5	Samsung UN43NU7100	61	\$480	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	6	TCL 43S517	61	\$380	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	7	TCL 43S515	60	\$350	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	8	Vizio D43-F1	60	\$350	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	9	Vizio D39F-F0	60	\$250	NA	NA	⬆	⬆	⬆
	10	Hisense 43H6E	59	\$290	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	11	Vizio E43-F1	58	\$350	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	12	Vizio D40F-F1	57	\$260	NA	NA	⬆	⬆	⬆
	13	Philips 43PFL5703	57	\$380	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	14	Sharp LC-43Q7000U	56	\$380	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	15	Hisense 43H6080E	56	\$350	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	16	Toshiba 43LF621U19	56	\$330	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	17	Sharp LC-43LB601U	54	\$300	NA	NA	⬆	⬆	⬆
	18	Hisense 43R7E	54	\$300	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
	19	Sanyo FW40D48F	50	\$200	NA	NA	⬆	⬆	⬆
	20	Hisense 40H3080E	49	\$240	NA	NA	⬆	⬆	⬆
	21	Magnavox 40ME338V	48	\$230	NA	NA	⬆	⬆	⬆

Readers with a Digital or All-Access membership can find the latest ratings at [CR.org/tvs](https://www.crd.org/tvs).

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distortion for dialogue and music. **Viewing angle** reflects clarity and color accuracy from various horizontal and vertical angles.

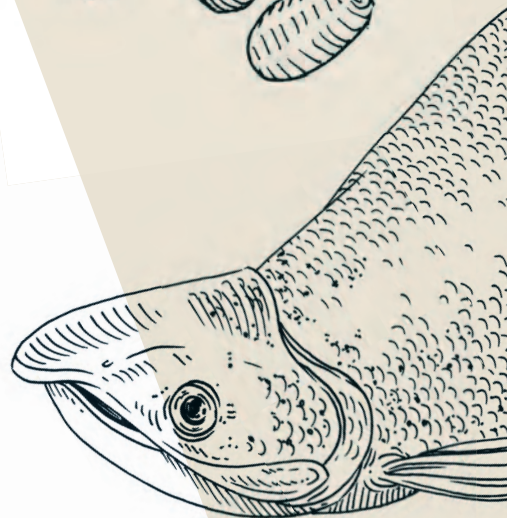
NATURAL

CURES



TEA
P. 43

BERRIES
P. 37



YOUR



FEVERFEW
P. 38

PROBIOTICS
P. 42



GREEN
COFFEE
P. 40



APPLE
CIDER
VINEGAR
P. 37





OMEGA-3
(SALMON)
P. 42



YOGA
P. 43



TURMERIC
P. 43

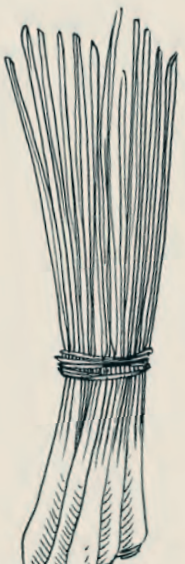


CBD
P. 37




WILD
YAM
P. 43

GUIDE



ESSENTIAL
OILS
P. 43



LIGHT
THERAPY
P. 41

To treat pain, sleeplessness, stress, and other ills, people are increasingly turning to supplements, superfoods, detoxes, herbs, and more. Which provide real relief? Which are risky, harmful, or a waste of money? Here, what to know before you try. **by Hallie Levine**

TO UNDERSTAND WHY the world of alternative medicine is so vexing, consider two of its most well-known examples: homeopathy and yoga.

Homeopathy is based on the idea that whatever causes an ailment will also cure it—using products diluted to the point where the key ingredient is undetectable. In spite of numerous studies showing that

homeopathy doesn't work and you may as well just drink a glass of water, the practice persists. In 2017 consumers in the U.S. spent more than \$1.3 billion on homeopathic remedies, according to the Nutrition Business Journal (NBJ).

Yoga, on the other hand, which has its roots in ancient Indian spiritual practices, has been adopted by millions to help with crippling medical problems. And unlike homeopathy, there's good evidence that it works. Last year, for example, a comprehensive review found that regular yoga practice helps to relieve back pain, one of Americans' most common and hard-to-treat health complaints.

A third of Americans say they have used alternative treatments in the past year—and more than half of these people say they prefer such approaches over mainstream medicine, according to a new nationally representative Consumer Reports survey of 1,003 adults. But in the crowded landscape of alternative treatments, it's almost impossible to determine which are worth trying.

Americans spent \$42 billion in 2017 on dietary supplements, according to an analysis from the NBJ. And the most recent figures available pegged spending at nearly \$15 billion for appointments with practitioners such as chiropractors, acupuncturists, and massage therapists.

It's not surprising: Conventional treatments, such as prescription drugs and invasive surgeries, can't always solve a wide array of common health problems. That's frustrating not just to patients but also to physicians. In fact, according to CR's recent survey, 29 percent of Americans who used alternative medicine or treatments in the past year did so because their doctors recommended it.

Often these approaches are used not instead of conventional regimens but with them, giving rise to the term "complementary medicine," or "integrative medicine." Some medical schools now teach integrative medicine, and Veterans Affairs doctors have also adopted it, prescribing acupuncture, yoga, or tai chi, for example, to treat pain.

But even physicians who embrace alternative medicine urge caution. "In theory, I love the idea of using a natural, less medicalized approach to illness, especially since there is so much medication overuse in our country," says Michael Hochman, M.D., director of the Gehr Family Center for Health Systems Science at the Keck School of

Medicine at the University of Southern California. "But when it comes to those therapies where the evidence isn't so rigorous, it can be damaging to your pocketbook and your health if you forgo more evidence-based treatment."

Case in point: Cancer patients who opted for complementary therapies and refused treatments such as chemotherapy were twice as likely to die as those who used conventional methods, according to a July 2018 study in the journal JAMA Oncology.

Even when research suggests that alternative treatments work, it's not always clear why—and could stem from the placebo effect. That's when your expectation that a treatment will help actually triggers a healing reaction. And it's powerful enough to get results. One trial of osteoarthritis patients, for example, compared a group taking supplements with one taking placebo pills. Most people in both groups reported significant reductions in pain.

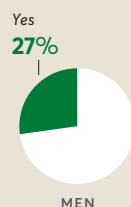
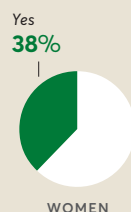
To make the situation even more confusing, many staples of alternative medicine aren't subject to the same rules that govern doctors' offices and prescription and over-the-counter drugs. That means manufacturers don't have to prove that their treatments contain what their labels claim, or that they are effective or safe.

Still, consumers are right to be curious about alternative medicine. Practices such as yoga, meditation, and tai chi have stood up to the standards of modern medical research. Other alternative treatments can help people feel in control of their health and reduce their reliance on medication.

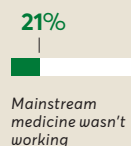
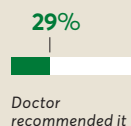
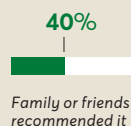
How can you tell the difference between alternative treatments that are worth trying and those you should stay away from?

Here, we'll give you our take on an A-to-Z grab bag of alternative treatments, along with tips to help you figure out which are safe and effective. (Want to see our sources for each entry? Go to [CR.org/altmedsources](https://www.consumerreports.org/altmedsources).)

Have you used alternative medicine in the past year?



Why did you use alternative medicine or treatments?



Source: Consumer Reports nationally representative survey of 1,003 U.S. adults.



A

Acupuncture

This ancient Chinese treatment is based on the belief that blocked qi, or energy, triggers pain and that inserting thin needles into specific spots on the body can relieve it. Some research shows that it works, especially for osteoarthritis, chronic headaches, and chronic back or neck pain. In a nationally representative 2017 Consumer Reports survey, nearly three-quarters of back pain sufferers who tried acupuncture said it helped. It may even ease depression, according to a 2018 review from the Cochrane Collaboration, an independent panel of experts. How it might do all that, though, is still a mystery. “One theory is that stimulating these points releases some of your body’s natural painkillers, like endorphins,” says Benjamin Kligler, M.D., national director

of the Integrative Health Coordinating Center at the Veterans Health Administration. Another possible factor: the placebo effect. A number of studies have found that “sham” acupuncture, where needles don’t pierce the skin, can provide some relief, too.

Apple Cider Vinegar

With proponents claiming that just a tablespoon or two a day can help regulate blood sugar, promote weight loss, lower cholesterol, and reduce the risk of cancer, apple cider vinegar—also touted as a cure for skin problems and body odor—begins to sound a bit like a magic potion. But while it can add tang to a salad dressing, “there’s little scientific evidence to support these health claims,” says William Chey, M.D., a gastroenterologist and professor of medicine and nutrition at

the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. In fact, it may harm you: For some people with heartburn, drinking the vinegar is like “throwing gas on a fire,” Chey says. Regular use can also trigger nausea, damage tooth enamel, and irritate the esophagus.

B

Berries



Whether acai, blue, cran, goji, or straw, berries deserve their reputation as health food superstars. Many contain anthocyanins, “powerful phytochemicals that give berries their rich color,” says Jeffrey Blumberg, Ph.D., senior scientist at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University in Boston. These compounds act as anti-inflammatories, and may provide other health benefits. Certain berries, such as goji, contain other antioxidants.

C

CBD

Thirteen percent of Americans in a recent Consumer Reports survey said they had tried cannabidiol, or CBD, for its potential health benefits, and of those, nearly 90 percent said it helped. Sold as oils, tinctures, vaporization liquids, and pills, CBD comes from marijuana or its cousin, hemp,

but doesn’t get users high. While CBD holds promise—the Food and Drug Administration recently approved the first drug that contains CBD, a treatment for two forms of epilepsy—many claims are still ahead of the science, says Donald Abrams, M.D., a professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. “We need to see firm evidence that using it has benefits and is safe.” And research shows that CBD products might not always contain what their labels claim.

Chelation

This therapy—where a medication known as EDTA is delivered into your bloodstream via an IV—is approved for one thing only: heavy metal poisoning. That can occur when children overload on adult-strength iron vitamins or people are exposed to large amounts of mercury, lead, or arsenic. The chelators bind to these heavy metals so that they’re flushed out in the urine. But a quick internet search shows that chelation therapy is offered as a treatment for everything from Alzheimer’s and autism to cancer and heart disease. Steer clear of these uses, which come with risks (kidney damage, mineral deficiencies, even neurodevelopmental problems and death) but no benefits, according to the American College of Medical Toxicology.

Chiropractic

Chiropractors—with a license and a doctor of chiropractic (D.C.) degree—are trained to do spinal adjustments, one of the most common alternative-medicine practices. A large 2017 review found that these manipulations reduced lower back pain by about 10 points on a 100-point scale, similar to conventional treatments. Research suggests that

they might also help with headaches and neck pain. But consumers should steer clear of using chiropractic for nonmusculoskeletal problems, such as asthma, colic, and hypertension.

Cupping

This 2,000-year-old Chinese practice—which involves applying suction cups to the skin and then yanking them off, theoretically to increase blood flow and support healing—has taken off in recent years, especially since several Olympic athletes and celebrities were spotted with the therapy's telltale suction marks on their skin. A 2015 review in the journal *PLOS One* found that cupping could be effective in short-term relief of chronic neck and low-back pain. But more research that tests how the practice might work is needed. And the National Institutes of Health warns that cupping

can result in bruising, soreness, burns, and skin infections.

D

Detoxes & Cleanses

Drinking only juices for several days, sweltering in temperatures higher than 100° F, and trying a colonic—a procedure in which a machine pumps water into your rectum through a sterile tube—are purported to help people lose weight and rid themselves of toxins. These practices aren't just unpleasant; research shows they're not needed and can be dangerous. "Your body naturally gets rid of toxins on its own, so there's no need to waste time and money on these methods," Hochman says. A research review found that colonics had no benefit and can cause side effects ranging from cramping and nausea to kidney failure and death.

And while fasting for a day is generally safe, a detox diet or cleanse that severely restricts calories can cause headaches, weakness, and dehydration.

E

Ear Candling

This technique—promoted to remove earwax and treat sinus infections, sore throats, colds, and the flu—involves placing a hollow candle into your ear canal and then lighting the tip. "The theory is that the heat creates suction that withdraws the wax from your ear," says Seth Schwartz, M.D., an ear, nose, and throat specialist at the Virginia Mason Medical Center in Seattle. But a 2017 review by Schwartz concluded that candling is ineffective and dangerous, with reports that it can block the ear with wax, damage hearing, and—surprise, surprise—set hair on fire.

F

Feverfew



Some research suggests that this herbal supplement may reduce the frequency of migraines in certain patients. In fact, the American Headache Society says a specific extract from the plant, called MIG-99, should be considered for migraine prevention. Another herb, butterbur, may also help—but only if chemicals called pyrrolizidine alkaloids (PAs), which can harm the liver, have been removed. So use only butterbur products with labels that say they are PA-free. And follow the precautions that apply to all supplements (see "Supplement Savvy," at left).

G

Garcinia Cambogia

This supplement is flying off the shelves—sales have grown 15 percent in the past year alone, according to the *Nutrition Business Journal*—mostly because of claims that it can help people lose weight and burn fat. Trouble is, research doesn't support either claim, and its active ingredient has been linked to serious conditions such as liver failure and mania. It also has a history of worrisome contamination. Last year the FDA advised consumers not to purchase one *Garcinia cambogia* product, *Fruta Planta Life*, because

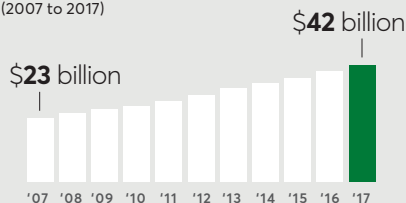
SUPPLEMENT SAVVY

People often assume supplements must be proved to be safe and effective before they can be sold. In fact, they don't undergo the same safety and efficacy testing as prescription and over-the-counter drugs.

Federal regulations allow supplements to have general claims, such as "calcium builds strong bones," but the FDA doesn't vet the claims. And labels can't claim that products diagnose, cure, or prevent any disease. A label can't say ginkgo biloba, for example, will prevent dementia—even if that's why people are buying it. You also can't be sure that supplements contain the listed ingredients or dosages, or that they aren't contaminated. For example, last spring, nearly 200 people were sickened after consuming kratom supplements contaminated with salmonella.

If you choose to take a supplement,

Total U.S. Supplement Sales
(2007 to 2017)

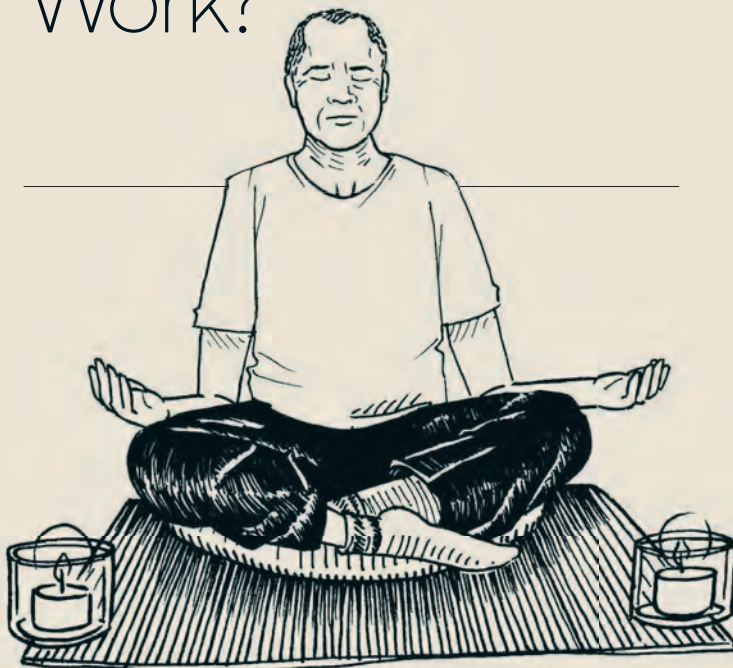


Source: Nutrition Business Journal.

look for a product with a third-party seal, such as NSF International certified or USP Verified. These seals don't mean that a supplement works; they indicate that an independent group has verified that the amounts listed on labels are accurate and that the products are not contaminated.

To see a list of supplements to avoid, go to CR.org/supplementstoavoid.

Pain, Stress, and Insomnia: Which Natural Treatments Work?



Certain health conditions have clear solutions. For a urinary tract infection, for example, you take an antibiotic. For high cholesterol, you're told to eat better, exercise more, and perhaps take a statin. But for some common and persistent ills—chronic pain, stress, and insomnia in particular—it can be hard to pinpoint the exact causes and even harder to treat.

"Sometimes [for these] really chronic problems, medicine doesn't have a very good solution," says Lisa Schwartz, M.D., co-director of the Center for Medicine and Media at The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy & Clinical Practice.

That often leads people to look to alternative medicine. In some cases, the options are untested, or even dangerous (see "Kava" and "Kratom" in our A-to-Z guide). But science has shown that several of these treatments, such as yoga, really can help. Here, some of the most effective alternative therapies for these problems.

Chronic Pain

Meditation, tai chi, and yoga all seem to help back pain, joint pain caused by osteoarthritis, and fibromyalgia. Spinal manipulation, performed by a chiropractor or an osteopathic physician, can also help with back pain. Although experts are unsure how it works, acupuncture may be helpful, too. And cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), a type of talk therapy that's well-studied and isn't technically considered alternative, can often help people cope with chronic pain.

Stress

Try mindfulness, which involves staying focused on the moment, without judgment. In one 2017 study, a group of people with anxiety practiced mindfulness techniques—including certain forms of meditation, deep breathing, and yoga—for eight weeks, and another group attended a class on healthy lifestyle habits. The group that practiced mindfulness techniques had lower levels of stress-related hormones. Learn more about getting started with techniques from the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health at nccih.nih.gov/health/stress.

Sleep Disturbances

Your best bet is healthy sleep habits, such as setting a regular bedtime and, at least an hour before bedtime, dimming the lights and turning off electronic devices. Some evidence suggests that melatonin, one of the most widely used natural products in the U.S., may help adults with specific kinds of sleep problems, such as those related to jet lag or shift work. But for other sleep problems, such as insomnia, melatonin's benefits have been shown to be minor at best: It might help you sleep just 8 additional minutes and could leave you groggy the next day. Cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I), which focuses on changing sleep-disrupting habits, might even be more effective and safer for insomnia than prescription sleep drugs or melatonin.

—Julia Calderone

it contained sibutramine, a prescription weight loss drug that was taken off the market in 2010 after it caused spikes in blood pressure and heart rate.

Glucosamine and Chondroitin

These two substances, which are often combined and pitched as cures for people with aching joints, are among the top-selling supplements in the country. But a 2015 study of 1,625 people with osteoarthritis of the knees found that the combo was no better than a placebo in easing knee pain or preventing cartilage loss.

Green Coffee

Unroasted, or “green,” coffee beans are rich in chlorogenic acid, a substance that preliminary research suggests may help burn glucose and fat, Blumberg says. But the studies behind these claims are too small and poorly designed to support the use of



green coffee, according to the NIH. Supplements have been linked to side effects, including headaches and urinary tract infections, and the Federal Trade Commission has sued at least one company selling them for making deceptive claims.

H

Homeopathy

Taking a substance that's known to cause harm and diluting it to the near-vanishing point is the basis of this centuries-old practice. But be forewarned that numerous scientific studies—and a 2015 review of

176 studies—have shown that homeopathic treatments don't work. And research suggests that certain homeopathic products contain unlisted ingredients or dangerously high amounts of other substances. Last year the FDA vowed to step up enforcement of homeopathic drugs they called “potentially harmful” and “unproven.”

I

Iodine

Some people with hypothyroidism (an underactive thyroid gland) need iodine supplements. And people who live near a nuclear power plant might consider keeping some on hand in case of emergency, because high doses of potassium iodide soon after radiation exposure can limit harm. But extra iodine can't boost metabolism or speed weight loss. Most Americans already get plenty of the mineral from iodized salt and other foods. And getting too much—more than

1,100 micrograms per day, the NIH says—can cause some of the same problems as iodine deficiency.

J

Jellyfish

You may have seen ads for a supplement called Prevagen, pitched as a memory aid derived from jellyfish. But the FTC and the New York state attorney general's office filed a lawsuit in 2017 accusing Prevagen's manufacturer of false advertising, and no independent research backs up the company's claim.

K

Kava

The root and stem of this plant, a member of the pepper family, are used in drinks and supplements to promote relaxation and ease anxiety. But in rare cases, kava has

4 TIPS FOR THE SMART AND SAFE USE OF ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

Do your research. Try to find out what's known about the safety and efficacy of any treatment you're considering. Look for reputable sources, such as the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (nccih.nih.gov/health) and the Cochrane Collaboration (cochrane.org). Ask your primary care provider, too; more and more of them are embracing some forms of alternative medicine, and may be good resources.

Be choosy about practitioners. If you're going to an alternative health practitioner, such as an acupuncturist, make sure he or she is credentialed, with a state license where appropriate. Check with your primary care doctor to see whether he or she can make a referral. And be skeptical of someone who tries to sell you additional products or sign you up for a long-term treatment plan (beyond four to eight sessions), or recommends that you forgo conventional treatments.

Consider the cost. Ask about price up front, and talk to your insurance company if you're not sure whether it's covered; many alternative treatments are not. Also, talk to your provider about nonpharmaceutical options that are more likely to be covered by insurance, such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and physical therapy.

Think holistically. Sometimes alternative treatments can help you reduce your reliance on medication, avoid surgical

intervention, or relieve the side effects of conventional treatments. Just consider how the alternative treatment could affect your health overall, for better or worse. The more serious the health problem, the more cautious you should be about turning to alternative medicine to treat it. Medications you're already taking can also interact with certain dietary supplements, so talk with your healthcare provider or pharmacist before trying something new.

been linked to liver damage, including cirrhosis and hepatitis, and several countries have banned its sale. It can also impair driving, and may exacerbate Parkinson's disease and depression.

Kratom

Promoted as a safe pain reliever, the FDA says it could be as addictive as opioids because it affects the same brain receptors. And there have been reports of kratom being laced with opioids or contaminated with salmonella. At least 44 deaths have been linked to kratom, and hundreds of users have suffered side effects, including seizures, liver damage, and withdrawal.

L

Light Therapy

Sitting in front of a special lamp during the darkest months of the year is a proven treatment for seasonal affective disorder. The sessions should last between 20 and 60 minutes and be done consistently to work best. And at least initially, it should be done under the guidance of an experienced professional. Light therapy may also help with depression and bipolar disorder.

M

Meditation

While there are many types of meditation, most have four things in common: a quiet, distraction-free location; a comfortable posture; a focus of attention (on breathing or a mantra, for example); and an open attitude. Research suggests that meditation may

Massage

A good rubdown can do more than just relax you. Growing research shows that it can help some people with back pain or other kinds of pain, and those recovering from injury.



Deep-tissue massage, which emphasizes strong finger pressure to reach into the muscle, may be particularly good for back pain.

Myofascial trigger point therapy—which focuses on painful trigger points—may be helpful for people with injuries or chronic pain.

Swedish massage—the form most people are familiar with—uses long flowing strokes, circular motions, tapping, and kneading to promote relaxation. **Sports massage**, which can promote recovery and flexibility in athletes, combines deep-tissue and Swedish techniques.

Craniosacral therapy, which involves light touch to the head intended to relieve pain elsewhere in the body, is more controversial. Most research has found that it has no benefit, and one 2016 review said that the technique appeared to be “scientifically unfounded.”

help lower blood pressure as well as ease anxiety, depression, insomnia, and even symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome and ulcerative colitis. Elizabeth Bradley, M.D., medical director of the Cleveland Clinic's Center for Functional Medicine, has her patients try this simple meditation: Breathe in for a count of four, hold for seven, then breathe out for eight while placing a hand on the belly to feel it moving.

Melatonin

Melatonin, a hormone secreted by a gland in your brain, helps set your body's circadian rhythm: the 24-hour “clock” that controls your sleep cycle. People take melatonin supplements to help them sleep, and evidence indicates that it can help certain sleep problems, such as those stemming from jet lag or shift work. But a 2017 study found that the supplements often don't contain what their labels claim; some had serotonin, a chemical that regulates mood, instead.

N

Naturopathy

Naturopathic doctors (N.D.s) believe the body has an inherent self-healing ability, and some focus on questionable practices such as homeopathy (see “H”) and intravenous vitamin treatments. In 20 states plus the District of Columbia, N.D.s can often order certain medical tests and write some prescriptions. While N.D.s have some formal medical education, it isn't as rigorous as that of medical doctors (M.D.s) and doctors of osteopathy (D.O.s). Appointments are rarely covered by insurance.



Neti Pots

Shaped like a tea kettle, these vessels are designed to treat allergies, colds, and sinusitis by rinsing debris and mucus from your nose. And several studies show they may help. But take some precautions, such as using distilled water, because there have been reports of people developing serious bacterial infections after using the pots with unsterilized tap water. You can also try an over-the-counter saline nasal spray. These wash out pollen and other allergens, and loosen up mucus to ease your breathing.

VITAMIN WISDOM

Nearly half of Americans take multivitamins, but these pills, along with other vitamin and mineral supplements, may not be doing much for anyone's health. "Multivitamins have an image of being able to compensate for deficiencies in the diet," says JoAnn Manson, M.D., a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and chief of preventive medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital. "But [they'll] never be a substitute for a healthful and balanced diet."

For one, Manson says, your body can't absorb the nutrients from pills

as easily as it can from food. And vitamins can cause side effects. Too much supplemental calcium, for instance, might increase the risk of kidney stones.

That doesn't mean everyone should avoid supplement. Pregnant women need folate and prenatal vitamins, and breastfed infants need vitamin D and iron. Older adults and people with certain medical conditions may need vitamins, too. If you're unsure whether you need one, talk with your doctor. And try not to exceed 100 percent of your recommended daily value of any nutrient.

O

Omega-3

Omega-3 fatty acids—found in fatty fish, nuts, and seeds—are frequently cited as heart-healthy. A 2017 research review by the American Heart Association concluded that the pills might provide some benefit to people with a history of heart disease. But there wasn't enough evidence to show whether they improve cardiac health in people without existing heart problems.

P

Probiotics

These "good bacteria" are thought to promote a healthy environment in your belly. Consumers in the U.S. spent more than \$2 billion on

probiotic supplements in 2017, according to the Nutrition Business Journal. Some research shows that specific strains of probiotics can help protect against antibiotic-related diarrhea and even *Clostridium difficile*, a dangerous infection often picked up at hospitals. But this year, a study concluded that little research has assessed the safety of probiotic supplements. For general health, you're probably better off getting probiotics from your diet, in yogurt or fermented foods such as sauerkraut and tempeh, Blumberg says. These may offer benefits beyond what you can find in a supplement.

Q

Qi Gong

Like tai chi (see "T"), qi gong is an ancient mind-body practice that uses a variety of postures, movements, breathing techniques, and sound to improve mental focus and promote health. A 2015 Cochrane review hinted that qi gong might help lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, though more study is needed. Other research suggests it can help people with fibromyalgia and other pain conditions.

R

Red Yeast Rice

A daily dose of this supplement can sometimes lower cholesterol as much as the prescription drug lovastatin (Mevacor and generic), according to a research review. That's no surprise: It's chemically similar to that drug. Of course, that means it carries many of the same risks, too, including kidney, muscle, and liver problems. And because it's sold as a supplement, not a prescription

drug, insurance probably won't cover the cost. More important, "consumers have no idea how much of the drug they are getting, and too low of a dose won't do anything, while too high could cause harm," says Pieter Cohen, M.D., an assistant professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. His 2017 study found that amounts of the active ingredient in red yeast rice supplements varied substantially among products.

Reiki

Some folks swear by this technique, in which a practitioner places his or her hands lightly on or even slightly above your body. Supporters claim this somehow stimulates your body's own healing response, but there's little scientific research to back this up or prove that it works.

S

Saw Palmetto

Americans spent \$183 million last year on this herbal remedy, touted to treat symptoms of an enlarged prostate. But a Cochrane Collaboration review of 32 studies concluded that it was no better than a placebo at improving symptoms such as frequent and painful urination.

T

Tai Chi

This centuries-old martial art, which has been dubbed "moving meditation," combines physical exercise with meditation. Research suggests that it cuts the risk of falls in older adults, helps with chronic pain, and may ease symptoms of dementia, depression, osteoarthritis, and Parkinson's disease. Tai chi is

very safe, “and it’s something that you can learn and do on your own, whenever you want,” says Kligler at the Veterans Health Administration. While you can do tai chi with an instructional DVD or online video, it’s best to start with a class because if you don’t position your body properly, you could end up with minor injuries.

Tea

It’s the most widely consumed drink in the world after water, and research has shown that regular tea drinkers have a lower risk of diseases such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Green, white, and black teas are all “rich in flavonoids, which are the antioxidants that give tea its health benefits,” Blumberg says.

Turmeric

This golden spice—a staple of Indian food—contains curcumin, touted for its anti-cancer and anti-inflammatory properties. But much of that research is in mice. When humans eat turmeric, little of the curcumin is even absorbed. Still, go ahead and add turmeric to your food if you like. And check with your doctor if you take turmeric supplements; they could interact with certain medications, such as blood thinners.

V

Vetiver Oil

Extracted from a plant, this essential oil is often used in aromatherapy. A review published earlier this year found that vetiver oil—along with lemongrass, cilantro, cinnamon, and patchouli oils—has antifungal properties. Other research suggests that tea tree oil is an effective

antibacterial. And the National Cancer Institute says that aromatherapy with various essential oils may lessen anxiety and reduce nausea. But these oils can irritate the skin, cause allergic reactions, and increase sun sensitivity. And they should never be consumed. In one study, repeated exposure to tea tree and lavender oil mimicked the effects of estrogen, causing breast growth in boys, though that effect was reversed when treatment stopped.

W

Wild Yam

If you’re in the midst of menopausal hot flashes, you may be tempted to try wild yam, a plant promoted as a

natural alternative to estrogen replacement therapy. “Although it contains a chemical that can be converted into estrogen in a laboratory setting, your body doesn’t have the enzyme you need to do that,” says JoAnn Pinkerton, M.D., division director of the Midlife Health center at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

X

Xylitol

This sweetener, commonly found in sugarless gum, is sometimes touted as a way to help prevent ear infections. And a 2016 Cochrane review concluded that healthy children who got xylitol—through gum, lozenges, or

a syrup—cut their risk of ear infection from 30 to 22 percent. But two caveats: There’s not enough evidence to know whether it helps in children most prone to the infections, and high intakes could trigger diarrhea and upset stomach.

Z

Zinc

Lozenges of this mineral seem to shorten the duration and severity of colds—if you start taking it within 24 hours of your first symptom. Stick with about 80 to 90 mg per day; too much can cause diarrhea, nausea, stomach cramps, and vomiting. A safer bet: Consume zinc-rich foods, including cashews, chickpeas, crab, and yogurt.

Yoga

More than 36 million Americans practice yoga, a steep increase from just 10 years ago. While many do it to promote flexibility or just relax, yoga can have more specific health benefits, too, such as relieving low back pain, reducing blood pressure, and easing depression. Which form should you try?

**BETTER FOR BEGINNERS
OR PEOPLE WITH
PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS**



Iyengar: Slow and gentle; uses props to make poses more accessible.

**BETTER FOR MORE
EXPERIENCED
OR MORE FIT PEOPLE**



Ashtanga: Athletic, often involving moving quickly between poses.

**PROCEED
WITH
CAUTION**



Bikram/hot: Presents risk of overheating.

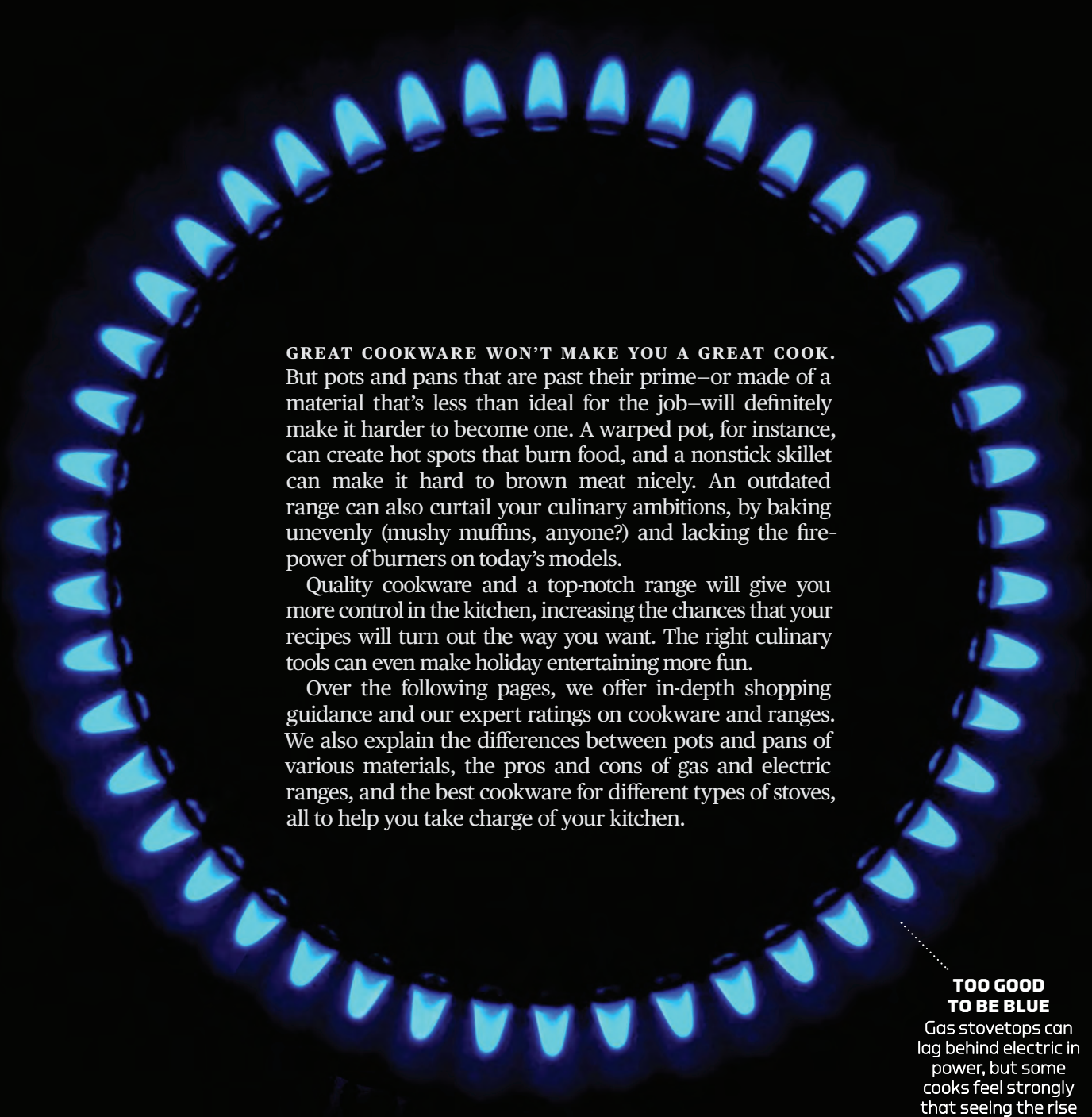
Boost Your Cookware Confidence



A LOT TO HANDLE

Cookware handles are key: Consult our sturdiness and temperature ratings on page 51.

Home chefs rely on pots, pans, and ranges throughout the year, but never more than during the holidays, when the stakes are highest to make winning meals for family and friends. Our buying advice and rigorous lab testing will guide you to cooking essentials that give you an edge in the kitchen. **by Kimberly Janeway and Paul Hope**

A circular gas burner with many small blue flames. The flames are arranged in a ring, creating a glowing blue circle. The background is dark, making the blue flames stand out.

GREAT COOKWARE WON'T MAKE YOU A GREAT COOK. But pots and pans that are past their prime—or made of a material that's less than ideal for the job—will definitely make it harder to become one. A warped pot, for instance, can create hot spots that burn food, and a nonstick skillet can make it hard to brown meat nicely. An outdated range can also curtail your culinary ambitions, by baking unevenly (mushy muffins, anyone?) and lacking the fire-power of burners on today's models.

Quality cookware and a top-notch range will give you more control in the kitchen, increasing the chances that your recipes will turn out the way you want. The right culinary tools can even make holiday entertaining more fun.

Over the following pages, we offer in-depth shopping guidance and our expert ratings on cookware and ranges. We also explain the differences between pots and pans of various materials, the pros and cons of gas and electric ranges, and the best cookware for different types of stoves, all to help you take charge of your kitchen.

**TOO GOOD
TO BE BLUE**

Gas stovetops can lag behind electric in power, but some cooks feel strongly that seeing the rise and fall of the flames gives them more of a sense of control.

COOKWARE SHOPPING SMARTS

MATCH MATERIALS TO YOUR COOKING STYLE AND CHOOSE THE TOP-RATED COOKWARE THAT WILL BE AT HOME IN YOUR KITCHEN.



ONE-POT WONDER

Porcelain enamel cookware is versatile and attractive enough to go from stovetop to oven to table.

Pots, pans, and other cookware can be purchased individually or in sets. For the sake of efficiency, CR tests sets, but you can buy some of the pieces in our rated sets individually. If you do buy a set, keep in mind that the number of pieces often doesn't indicate how many pots and pans it includes. "In boxed sets, manufacturers count a lid as a piece," says Marion Wilson-Spencer, a market analyst covering cookware for CR. "Even utensils and a cookbook may count as pieces." So a

12-piece set may well not contain a dozen pieces of cookware.

Though you might be tempted to shop online, we recommend that you buy cookware at a store. That way you can pick up a fry pan or pot to see whether the grip feels comfortable. You can also decide whether the piece is too heavy—and imagine how much heavier it will be when it's full. Check to see whether handles are welded (preferable) or attached with screws or rivets that can loosen over time.

A box may say cookware is oven-safe, but some pots and pans we have tested should not be placed in an oven hotter than 350° F; other cookware can withstand temperatures up to 500° F. You'll see this information noted in our ratings, along with dishwasher-safe claims.

Materials and care are key considerations that affect how well cookware performs and how long it lasts. Here's a breakdown of the most common types to help you choose the best for your cooking habits and budget.

Aluminum

CHARACTERISTICS: Lightweight and affordable, aluminum is excellent at heating quickly and evenly. But small amounts of aluminum can leach into food, especially acidic foods such as tomato sauce. That's why CR recommends anodized aluminum, or aluminum with a nonstick or porcelain coating that prevents leaching.

PROPER CARE: *If a pot's interior becomes discolored, mix a quart of water with 2 or 3 tablespoons of cream of tartar, lemon juice, or vinegar in the pot (scale up proportionally for a larger pot). Boil for 5 to 10 minutes, rinse, lightly scour with a soapy pad, and dry.*

Cast Iron

CHARACTERISTICS: Remarkably durable, cast iron can last for generations. It stands up to extremely high heat and is ideal for frying, browning, and searing and can also be used in the oven. Because it does not respond quickly to changes in temperature, cast iron is not ideal for recipes requiring precise temperature control.

PROPER CARE: *Wipe clean with a paper towel or rinse with water and dry thoroughly to prevent rust. For tougher messes, add water to your pan and simmer for a minute, then wipe clean. Once dry, rub the cooking surface with a bit of vegetable oil to keep the pan properly seasoned.*

Copper

CHARACTERISTICS: Copper is beautiful and can function as a decorative element in the kitchen. The metal is especially responsive to changes in heat, making it ideal for cooking that requires precise temperature control. Copper is unparalleled when making delicate sauces or caramelizing sugar for baking (aluminum is also good). Like aluminum, copper can leach into foods, so copper cookware is usually lined with stainless steel or tin. Real copper cookware is very expensive, and we do not rate it. (Despite having the look of copper and names like Red Copper and Copper Chef, these brands are made of aluminum.)

PROPER CARE: *Use a soft sponge or cloth and sudsy water, then dry with a soft cloth to prevent water spots. Cleansers with bleach can cause pitting, and abrasives can scratch this soft metal. Don't scour a tin lining—just soak to loosen caked-on food, then wash gently. Polish the exterior with copper cleaner to maintain the warm glow.*

Stainless Steel

CHARACTERISTICS: Stainless steel is durable and should not leach into foods. It can take the prolonged high temperatures required to brown and braise.

PROPER CARE: *Wash and dry stainless pans as soon as you're done using them to reduce the chance of stains and water spots. Use a nylon pad for light scouring. A stainless cleaner will remove stains and may also eliminate that rainbow-like discoloration that can appear on the exterior. Avoid abrasives, which can scratch.*

Porcelain Enamel

CHARACTERISTICS: Classic and colorful, cookware made of porcelain enamel is attractive enough to go from the stove or oven right to the table. Beneath the enamel is cast iron (or aluminum or stainless). Enamel pieces with covers are good for braising, stewing, and slow-cooking. They're also heavy, so store them with care to keep the enamel from chipping.

PROPER CARE: *Use a sponge or nylon scrubber with warm, soapy water. These pots can scratch, so don't use abrasives. For stubborn stains, soak before cleaning.*

Nonstick

CHARACTERISTICS: Nonstick cookware is popular for being easy to clean and for requiring no oil, which lowers the fat content of a dish. It's great for basics like eggs and pancakes, but not so great at browning meat. The nonstick cookware in the ratings is claimed not to contain PFOA, a chemical that the World Health Organization classifies as a possible carcinogen. PTFE is another chemical of concern—if overheated, it can give off toxic fumes. Some nonstick cookware is now labelled PTFE-free. (Consumer Reports does not test PTFE-free and PFOA-free claims.) Regardless, as a safety precaution, take care not to scratch or gouge a nonstick surface, and don't use a pan if its coating is flaky.

PROPER CARE: *Most of the nonstick fry pans in our ratings are labeled dishwasher-safe. But the dishwasher's high heat will degrade a nonstick finish over time. Our tests have found that cleaning by hand with hot water and dish soap is usually very easy.*

TRICKY TERMS, TRANSLATED

Cookware claims and descriptions can confuse. Here's what they really mean.

➤ **Core.** The middle layer of cookware. For example, a pan may be constructed with a stainless exterior around an aluminum core, because aluminum is an excellent conductor of heat.

➤ **Cladding.** Bonding one metal to the surface of another for optimal performance, such as when bonding a stainless exterior to an aluminum core.

➤ **Cool handles.** You might expect handles made of or covered in silicone rubber to stay cooler than metal, but our tests have found that isn't always the case. Be sure to check the handle-temperature scores in the ratings on page 51.

➤ **Hard anodized.** A process that hardens aluminum's surface, and makes it nonreactive, so you can cook acidic foods in the pan without worrying about the metal leaching into food. May or may not also have a nonstick coating.

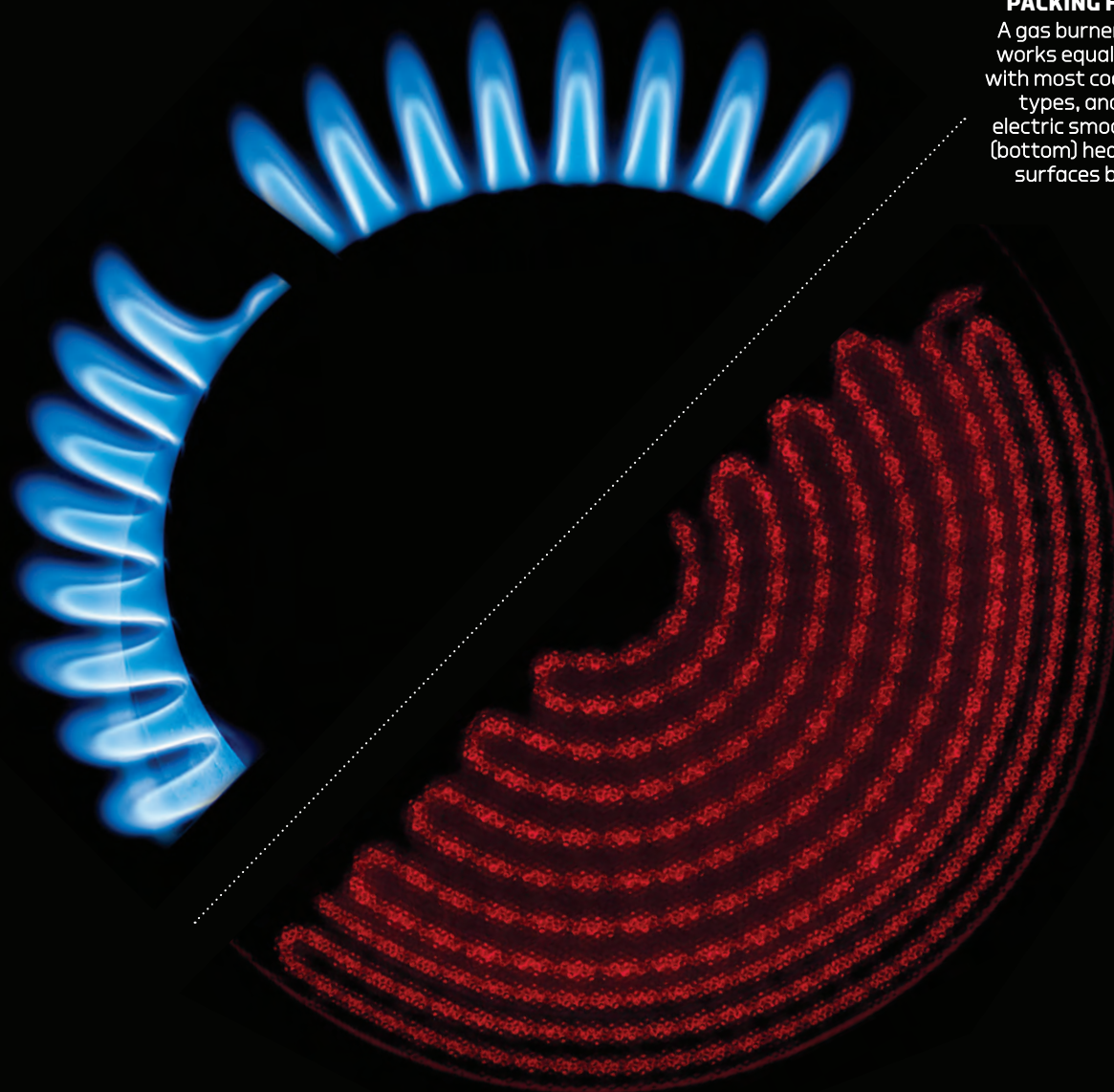
➤ **Induction-ready.** Cookware with magnetic properties, which make it compatible with induction cooktops.

A WIDE RANGE OF RANGES

WHETHER YOU COOK WITH ELECTRIC OR GAS, OUR RATINGS AND BUYING ADVICE WILL LEAD YOU TO THE RANGE THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU.

PACKING HEAT

A gas burner (top) works equally well with most cookware types, and an electric smoothtop (bottom) heats flat surfaces best.



If you're going gray waiting for water to boil or feeling burnt out from burning sheets of sugar cookies, you may be ready for a new range. "You can get 15 or more useful years from a range if performance—not style—is your primary concern," says Claudette Ennis, CR's market analyst who oversees ranges. "But manufacturers are constantly making incremental improvements to features and design, so they can start to look dated after about a decade."

Newer gas and electric models can also have more powerful burners to bring pots to a boil more quickly. If it has been a while since you last purchased a range, you may be surprised to find that convenient features like convection ovens, simmer burners, and warming drawers once reserved for pricey models are now available on even modestly priced versions.

Ranges come in gas and electric models, but it usually doesn't make financial sense to switch

from one type to another unless you're doing a major kitchen renovation. That's because you'll need to hire an electrician or plumber to install an outlet or run a gas line, which can quickly become expensive. Instead, we recommend making the most of the setup you're currently using by referring to our comprehensive ratings on pages 52 to 54 to find a top-rated gas or electric range that will meet your needs. Our buying guidance and reviews can help launch your search.

Cooking With Electric



In general, the highest-output burners on electric ranges heat water faster than those on gas models. (None of the gas ranges in our ratings earns an Excellent for high-heat cooktop performance, but more than half of the radiant electric models do.) They also tend to broil more evenly than gas ranges. The glass smoothtops common on newer electric models are easier to clean than old-fashioned electric-coil burners, but they work best with cookware that is completely flat (see “Choose the Right Cookware for Your Range,” on page 50). If you’re replacing an electric range and looking for a major performance upgrade, consider an induction model. Induction ranges routinely rate best in our tests because of their ability to boil rapidly and simmer steadily.

ELECTRIC SMOOTHTOP SINGLE OVEN

✓ **GE Profile**
PB911SJSS
\$990

85

OVERALL
SCORE



CR’s take: A modestly priced workhorse, this GE earns one of the highest Overall Scores of any radiant electric range in our ratings. It has a convection oven and rates a Very Good in our demanding series of baking tests. It also earns top marks for quickly heating a large pot of water, maintaining steady simmers, and broiling. In our member survey about electric ranges, GE ties with Whirlpool as the most reliable brand.

ELECTRIC SMOOTHTOP DOUBLE OVEN

✓ **Samsung**
NE58F9710WS
\$1,600

83

OVERALL
SCORE



CR’s take: This polished, top-of-the-line range is strong across the board and earns an Excellent rating in our broiling test. But beyond performance, it has features that make it especially functional for an avid cook—convection, a warming drawer, and an oven that can be divided into two cavities, allowing you to bake two different dishes, at separate temperatures, simultaneously.

INDUCTION SINGLE OVEN

✓ **Kenmore**
Elite
95073
\$1,400

85

OVERALL
SCORE



CR’s take: Kenmore demonstrates that you don’t need to pay a lot to get a top-of-the-line range, even with induction burners. Like most induction models, this range rates an Excellent for heating water quickly and simmering steadily without scorching. The electric oven is also superb: It bakes evenly and it’s big, so you can pack it with food if you’re cooking for a crowd.

Cooking With Gas



Many chefs like the sense of control they get watching the flame rise and fall as they adjust a gas burner. Unlike smoothtop electric ranges, gas ranges work well with any type of cookware, including woks and griddles. Pro-style ranges are often beautifully crafted from heavy-gauge stainless steel—they can weigh three to four times as much as a comparably sized gas or electric range—but they generally fare worse than other ranges in our tests and can cost much more. Pro-style ranges won’t boil water any faster than a top-scoring conventional gas range, but that might not matter if the heft of a burner knob or seamlessly hidden oven controls are important to you.

GAS SINGLE OVEN

✓ **Samsung**
NX58H5600SS
\$650

76

OVERALL
SCORE



CR’s take: Among single oven choices, this Samsung lands near the very top of our ratings and costs \$1,000 less than ranges that won’t cook as well. It has five burners and continuous cooking grates across the surface. One drawback: It earns a rating of only Good for its high-power burner, meaning it takes longer to heat water than some other models.

GAS DOUBLE OVEN

✓ **LG**
LDG4315ST
\$1,500

75

OVERALL
SCORE



CR’s take: Loaded with features in a relatively small package, this LG gas range has two ovens (both with convection), an integrated griddle pan, and five cooktop burners covered with continuous grates. Its largest burner boils quickly and simmers steadily. LG is notable for having some of the highest owner satisfaction ratings of any brand in our ranges ratings.

PRO-STYLE

✓ **GE Monogram**
ZGP304NRSS
\$4,700

70

OVERALL
SCORE



CR’s take: This 30-inch pro-style is a stunner that simmers steadily. Its four gas burners, however, are a little sluggish when heating water, and its large gas oven is lackluster compared with some mainstream ranges. If you buy this for the beautiful stainless finish and the heavy construction, you won’t be disappointed, but know that it doesn’t perform as well as less expensive models.

CR PUTS COOKWARE TO THE TEST

OUR LAB TECHNICIANS AND TESTERS PUSH POTS AND PANS TO THEIR LIMITS TO FIND OUT WHICH ONES WILL PERFORM BEST IN YOUR KITCHEN.



SIMMER TEST

To determine whether a pot can maintain a consistent low temperature, CR technicians bring tomato sauce to a near-boil, then reduce the heat and let the sauce simmer for 20 minutes. Thermocouples placed throughout the pot measure temperature uniformity. A pot should be able to maintain a consistent temperature below the boiling point to simmer properly.



NONSTICK SURFACE TEST

To test the nonstick surface of a pan, tester Aminata Ndiaye heats it to a temperature of 325° F, then pours in an egg and lets it cook for 2 minutes before removing it with a spatula. Why an egg? The protein in eggs has a tendency to stick, so it's ideal for this test. Pans score well if no residue is left on the pan and the egg glides off easily.



DURABILITY TEST

Plenty of us have scraped nonstick pans with metal spatulas. That's why testers place steel wool under a 5-pound weight and mechanically drag it back and forth over the surface of a pan up to 2,000 times. We fry an egg after every 400 cycles to test for nonstick ability. If at any point the coating scratches or comes off, it fails the durability test.

Choose the Right Cookware for Your Range

Not every pot works well on every stovetop. Here's how to make the right match so that you get the best performance from your cookware.

FOR SMOOTHTOP RANGES

Choose cookware with a disc base—a dead-flat surface fused to the bottom—to make solid contact and get even heating out of smooth burners. Skip clad cookware because the bottom can be slightly irregular. Also stay away from grill or griddle pans, which do not typically have a flat bottom and won't function optimally on a smoothtop.

FOR GAS RANGES

Skip cookware with a disc base—the flame of a gas burner can overheat the sides, which are made of thinner metal, causing scorching. Instead, look for pieces that are solid metal and of the same thickness throughout, like clad cookware. These conduct heat evenly over flames and tend to perform best on gas stoves.

FOR ALL RANGES

On smoothtop ranges, use a burner that's close to the same diameter as the bottom of the pan. On gas ranges, use the medium-sized burner for most tasks and save the giant power burners for pots and pans with a diameter of about 10 inches. The simmer burner should be used only for simmering; it's not powerful enough for much else.

Ratings ➤ **Now You're Cooking!** The best of the cookware sets and fry pans we've tested. They can take the heat and will hold up for holiday seasons to come.

		Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Test Results														Features		
Rec.	Rank				Set (pieces)	Material	PFOA-free*	PTFE-free*	Cooking evenness	Nonstick food release—new	Nonstick durability	Speed of heating	Ease of cleaning	Handle temperature	Handle sturdiness	Sauté performance	Sauce simmer	Dishwasher-safe	Oven-safe (°F)	Works with induction	
NONSTICK COOKWARE SETS																					
✓	1	Cuisinart Green Gourmet Hard Anodized GG-12	<div>83</div>	\$250	12	Anodized aluminum	Yes	Yes	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	NA	👍		500		
✓	2	Swiss Diamond Reinforced #6010	<div>79</div>	\$600	10	Aluminum	Yes	No	👍	👍	👍	👎	👍	👍	👍	NA	👍	●	500		
	3	Tasty 11pc Titanium Reinforced Ceramic Nonstick	<div>75</div>	\$99	11	Aluminum	Yes	No	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👎	👎	NA	👍	●	NA	●	
	4	Rachael Ray Cityscapes Porcelain Enamel Nonstick (Bed Bath & Beyond exclusive)	<div>71</div>	\$130	12	Porcelain enamel aluminum	Yes	No	👎	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👎	NA	👍		350		
	5	Pioneer Woman Vintage Speckle Nonstick (Walmart exclusive)	<div>68</div>	\$99	10	Porcelain enamel aluminum	Yes	NA	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👎	NA	👍	●	400		
	6	Gotham Steel Nonstick	<div>68</div>	\$100	10	Aluminum	Yes	No	👍	👎	👍	👍	👍	👍	👎	NA	👍		500	●	
	7	Red Copper Ceramic Infused Nonstick	<div>62</div>	\$100	10	Aluminum	Yes	Yes	👍	👎	👎	👍	👍	👍	👍	NA	👍		500		
	8	Ayesha Curry Home Collection Porcelain Enamel Nonstick	<div>57</div>	\$140	12	Porcelain enamel aluminum	Yes	No	👍	👍	👎	👍	👍	👍	👎	NA	👎		500		

UNCOATED COOKWARE SETS																					
✓	1	All-Clad Stainless Steel	66	\$600	7	Stainless	NA	NA	⬆	NA	NA	⬆	NA	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	●	500	●	
	2	Ayesha Curry Home Collection Stainless Steel #70209	58	\$150	11	Stainless	NA	NA	⬆	NA	NA	⬆	NA	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬇	●	500	●	
	3	Le Creuset Signature Cast Iron	53	\$525	5	Porcelain enameled cast iron	NA	NA	⬇	NA	NA	⬆	NA	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	●	500	●	

		Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Test Results												Features		
Rec.	Rank				Pan size (in.)	Material	PFOA-free*	PTFE-free*	Cooking evenness	Nonstick food release—new	Nonstick durability	Ease of cleaning	Handle temperature	Handle sturdiness	Dishwasher-safe	Oven-safe (°F)	Induction cooktop		
NONSTICK FRY PANS																			
✓	1	Zwilling J.A. Henckels Energy Nonstick	81	\$100	10 & 8	Stainless	Yes	Yes	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	●	400	●		
✓	2	Swiss Diamond Nonstick #6424	80	\$95	9	Aluminum	Yes	No	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	●	500			
💰	3	Member's Mark Nonstick (Sam's Club)	75	\$15	10	Aluminum	Yes	No	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	●	400			
💰	4	Red Copper Nonstick	75	\$20	10	Aluminum	Yes	Yes	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	●	500			

UNCOATED FRY PANS																			
✓	1	All-Clad Tri-Ply Stainless Steel	60	\$115	10	Stainless	NA	NA	⬆	NA	NA	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	500	●		
	2	All-Clad TK Stainless Steel	58	\$150	10	Stainless	NA	NA	⬆	NA	NA	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	500	●		
	3	Le Creuset Signature	51	\$150	9	Porcelain enameled cast iron	NA	NA	⬆	NA	NA	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	500	●		

HOW WE TEST: Overall Score is a result of all tests. **Cooking evenness** is how well a fry pan turns out evenly browned pancakes. **Speed of heating** measures how fast the largest pot with 4 quarts of water

reaches a near-boil. **Ease of cleaning** indicates how hard it is to remove béchamel from a saucepan. Testers use instruments to check **Handle temperature** and **Handle sturdiness**. **Nonstick food release** is how easily

a fried egg slides out of a pan when new, and when the coating is worn. To test **Nonstick durability**, a machine rubs steel wool over the coating until it has worn through or for up to 2,000 strokes (whichever

comes first). **Sauté performance** reflects how well a fry pan browns potatoes. **Sauce simmer** measures how well cookware maintains a low, even temperature. **Price** is approximate retail.

Ratings ➤ **Hot Stuff** Ratings of gas, electric, induction, and dual-fuel ranges incorporating predicted reliability and owner satisfaction scores.

		Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results						Features							
Recommended	Rank				Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Cooktop high	Cooktop low	Baking	Broiling	Oven capacity	Self-cleaning	High-power elements/burners	Medium-power elements/burners	Low-power elements/burners	Convection mode	Cooking drawer	Warming drawer	Slide-in	Stainless steel available
SMOOTHTOP, SINGLE OVEN (30-INCH)																				
✓	1	GE Café CS980STSS	86	\$2,550	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	1	2	2	•	•	•		•
✓	2	GE Profile PB911SJSS	85	\$990	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	2	0	2	•				•
💰	3	LG LRE3193ST	84	\$700	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	NA	2	0	2	•				•
✓	4	Kenmore Elite 95052	84	\$1,000	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	2	0	2	•		•		•
✓	5	Kenmore Pro 92583	83	\$1,900	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	2	1	1	•				•
✓	6	LG LSE4613ST	82	\$1,350	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	2	0	2	•				•
✓	7	Samsung NE58F9500SS	82	\$1,200	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	2	0	2	•			•	•
💰	8	LG LRE3083SW	82	\$810	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	2	0	2	•				•
✓	9	Bosch HEI8054U	81	\$1,980	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	2	0	2	•		•	•	•
	10	Kenmore 94242	79	\$930	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	2	0	2	•		•		•
	11	GE JS760SLSS	78	\$1,100	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	2	0	2					•
	12	Whirlpool WEE510S0FS	77	\$1,080	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	2	0	2					•
	13	GE JB655SKSS	77	\$600	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	2	0	2	•				•
	14	Samsung NE59N6650SS	77	\$900	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	2	0	2	•				•
	15	Samsung NE59J7630SS	77	\$1,000	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	2	0	2	•				•
	16	Samsung NE59M4320SS	75	\$650	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	2	0	2	•				•
	17	Kenmore 96183	71	\$550	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	2	0	2	•				•
	18	Frigidaire FFEF3054TS	70	\$675	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	2	0	2					•
	19	Whirlpool WFE515S0ES	67	\$630	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	2	0	2					•
	20	GE JBS60RKSS	66	\$605	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	NA	1	1	2					•
	21	Samsung NE59M4310SS	65	\$530	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	2	0	2					•
	22	Kenmore Elite 42793	65	\$2,600	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	2	0	2	•				•
	23	Kenmore Elite 95223	65	\$1,800	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	2	0	2	•		•		•
	24	Kenmore 95123	64	\$1,300	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	2	0	2	•				•
	25	KitchenAid KFEG500ESS	62	\$1,250	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬇	2	0	2	•				•
	26	GE JB645RKSS	59	\$630	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	2	0	2					•
	27	Whirlpool WFE320M0EW	59	\$420	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	NA	2	0	2					•
	28	Whirlpool WFE975HOHV	58	\$1,170	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	2	0	2	•				•
SMOOTHTOP, DOUBLE OVEN (30-INCH)																				
✓	1	Samsung NE58F9710WS	83	\$1,600	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	1	2	1	•		•	•	•
	2	LG LDE4415ST	80	\$1,620	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	2	0	2	•				•
	3	Samsung NE59J7850WS	79	\$1,300	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	1	2	1	•		•		•
	4	GE JB860SJSS	78	\$1,350	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	2	0	2	•				•
	5	Ikea Betrodd 602.885.60 [IES900DS]	73	\$1,000	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	2	0	2					•
GAS AND DUAL-FUEL, SINGLE OVEN (30-INCH)																				
✓	1	Samsung NX58H9500WS	79	\$2,000	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	2	2	1	•		•	•	•
💰	2	Samsung NX58H5600SS	76	\$650	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	2	2	1	•				•

		Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Test Results						Features							
Recommended	Rank				Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Cooktop high	Cooktop low	Baking	Broiling	Oven capacity	Self-cleaning	High-power elements/burners	Medium-power elements/burners	Low-power elements/burners	Convection mode	Cooking drawer	Warming drawer	Slide-in	Stainless steel available
GAS AND DUAL-FUEL, SINGLE OVEN (30-INCH) <i>Continued</i>																				
💰	3	Samsung NX58K3310SS	75	\$550	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	NA	2	2	1					•
👍	4	GE JGS760SELSS	74	\$1,900	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	🟡	2	2	1	•				•
👍	5	GE Profile PGS930SELSS	74	\$2,340	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	⬆	2	2	1	•				
👍	6	LG LRG4113ST	74	\$945	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	🟡	2	2	1	•				•
👍	7	Samsung NX58M6630SS	74	\$800	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	⬆	2	2	1	•				•
👍	8	GE PGB911ZEJSS	72	\$1,500	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	🟡	2	3	0	•				•
👍	9	LG LRG3193ST	72	\$750	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	NA	2	2	1	•				•
👍	10	GE JGB700SEJSS	71	\$700	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	🟡	🟡	⬆	🟡	2	2	1	•				•
👍	11	Kenmore 75232	71	\$730	⬆	🟡	⬆	⬆	⬆	🟡	🟡	⬆	2	2	1	•		•		•
👍	12	Kenmore 74332	70	\$760	⬆	🟡	⬆	⬆	⬆	🟡	🟡	⬆	2	2	1	•		•		•
👍	13	LG LSG4513ST	70	\$1,400	⬆	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	🟡	⬆	🟡	2	2	1	•				•
💰	14	LG LRG3061ST	70	\$810	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	NA	2	2	1					•
	15	Frigidaire FFGF3054TS	69	\$720	⬆	🟡	⬆	⬆	⬆	🟡	🟡	⬆	2	2	1					•
	16	GE JGB660SEJSS	69	\$650	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	🟡	🟡	⬆	⬆	2	2	1					•
	17	GE JGBS66EEKES	68	\$675	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	🟡	🟡	⬆	NA	2	2	1					•
	18	Kenmore 74237	68	\$750	⬆	🟡	⬆	⬆	🟡	🟡	⬆	⬆	2	2	1	•				•
	19	Bosch HDI8054U	67	\$2,500	🟡	⬆	🟡	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	🟡	2	1	2	•		•	•	•
	20	GE JGSS66EELES	67	\$1,260	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	🟡	🟡	⬆	NA	2	2	1					•
	21	Kenmore 74143	66	\$600	⬆	🟡	⬆	⬆	🟡	🟡	⬆	⬆	2	1	1	•				•
	22	LG LRG3081ST	65	\$900	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	🟡	2	2	1	•				•
	23	GE JGBS60DEKWW	65	\$400	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	🟡	🟡	⬆	NA	1	2	1					•
	24	Ikea Betrodd 002.885.58 [IGS505DS]	59	\$800	⬆	🟡	🟡	⬆	⬆	🔴	⬆	⬆	2	0	0	•				•
GAS AND DUAL-FUEL, DOUBLE OVEN (30-INCH)																				
👍	1	LG Signature LUTD4919SN	83	\$3,240	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	2	2	1	•				•
👍	2	Samsung NY58J9850WS	81	\$2,970	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	🟡	2	2	1	•		•	•	•
👍	3	GE PGB980ZEJSS	78	\$2,130	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	🟡	2	2	1	•				•
👍	4	LG LDG4315ST	75	\$1,500	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	⬆	2	2	1	•				•
👍	5	GE Café CGS995SELSS	74	\$2,800	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	⬆	🟡	3	2	1	•				•
	6	GE JGB860SEJSS	64	\$1,530	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	🔴	⬆	🟡	2	2	1	•				•
	7	KitchenAid KFGD500ESS	59	\$1,700	🟡	🟡	🟡	⬆	🟡	🔴	⬆	🟡	1	2	2	•				•
	8	Whirlpool WGG745S0FS	59	\$1,200	⬆	🔴	🟡	⬆	⬆	🔴	⬆	⬆	1	2	2	•				•
ELECTRIC INDUCTION																				
👍	1	GE Profile PHS930SLSS	85	\$2,340	⬆	🟡	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	3	1	0	•				
👍	2	Kenmore Elite 95073	85	\$1,400	⬆	🟡	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	2	1	1	•		•		•
👍	3	LG LSE4617ST	82	\$3,300	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	🟡	2	2	0	•		•		•
👍	4	Frigidaire Gallery FGIF3036TF	81	\$1,080	⬆	🔴	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	4	0	0	•				•
	5	Frigidaire FFIF3054TS	78	\$1,000	⬆	🔴	⬆	⬆	⬆	🟡	⬆	⬆	4	0	0					

		Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results	Test Results						Features							
Recommended	Rank				Predicted reliability Owner satisfaction	Cooktop high	Cooktop low	Baking	Broiling	Oven capacity	Self-cleaning	High-power elements/burners	Medium-power elements/burners	Low-power elements/burners	Convection mode	Cooking drawer	Warming drawer	Slide-in	Stainless steel available
PRO-STYLE GAS AND DUAL-FUEL (30-INCH)																			
✓	1	GE Monogram ZGP304NRSS	70	\$4,700	↑ ↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	1	3	0	•				•
	2	KitchenAid KDRS407VSS	69	\$4,230	↑ ↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	3	0	1	•				•
	3	Wolf DF304	67	\$6,400	↑ ↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	3	1	0	•				•
	4	NXR DRGB3001	63	\$1,700	— —	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	NA	4	0	0	•				•
	5	Miele HR1124	59	\$5,000	— —	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	4	0	0	•				•
	6	Wolf GR304	57	\$4,900	↑ ↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	NA	3	1	0	•				•
	7	Thermador PRG304GH	57	\$4,400	↓ ↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	NA	4	0	0	•				•
	8	Jenn-Air JGRP430WP	55	\$4,000	↓ ↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	3	0	1	•				•
	9	Bertazzoni PRO304GASX	46	\$3,350	↓ —	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	NA	1	1	2	•				•
	10	Smeg C30GGXUI	46	\$3,000	— —	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	NA	1	4	0	•				•
	11	American Range ARR304	37	\$4,600	— —	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	NA	3	1	0	•				•
PRO-STYLE GAS AND DUAL-FUEL (36-INCH)																			
✓	1	GE Monogram ZDP364NDPSS	76	\$7,600	↑ ↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	4	0	0	•				•
✓	2	KitchenAid KDRU763VSS	75	\$7,300	↑ ↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	3	0	1	•				•
	3	Thermador PRG366JG	65	\$7,700	↓ ↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	6	0	0	•				•
	4	Kucht Pro Style KRG3618U	65	\$3,000	— —	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	NA	6	0	0	•				•
	5	GE Café CGY366SELSS	63	\$5,130	↑ ↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	6	0	0	•				•
	6	Wolf GR366	63	\$6,000	↑ ↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	NA	5	1	0	•				•
	7	NXR DRGB3602	61	\$3,000	— —	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	NA	6	0	0	•				•
	8	Frigidaire Gallery FGGF3685TS	42	\$3,150	— —	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	2	2	1	•				•
	9	BlueStar RCS36SBSS	41	\$3,600	↓ ↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	NA	5	0	1	•				•
	10	Haier HCR6250AGS	41	\$1,900	— —	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	NA	1	3	1	•				•
	11	Jenn-Air JGRP436WP	40	\$5,700	↓ ↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	5	0	1	•				•
	12	Smeg C36GGXU	33	\$3,200	— —	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	NA	1	1	4	•				•

HOW WE TEST: Overall Score combines test results with survey data on reliability and satisfaction. **Predicted reliability** estimates the likelihood that newly purchased models from a given brand will break within the first five years. **Owner satisfaction** reflects the proportion of CR members who are extremely likely to recommend

the range they bought. In cases where we have insufficient survey data to provide a brand-level rating, indicated by a gray dash (-), we assume the model has average reliability and satisfaction. **Cooktop high** is a measure of how quickly the highest-power burner brings a large pot of water to a near-boil. **Cooktop low** indicates

how steadily a low-power burner maintains a simmer, and whether the highest-power burner, set to low, scorches delicate foods, like tomato sauce. **Baking** is a rating of how evenly the oven bakes cakes and cookies on multiple racks. **Broiling** is a measurement of how well the upper element browns a full tray of hamburger patties, and how evenly

it broils. **Oven capacity** is a measure of usable space in the cavity (for double-oven ranges, the rating includes both ovens). **Self-cleaning** evaluates the oven's ability to clean itself of a lab-calibrated mixture of sticky foods, including pie filling, lard, eggs, and tapioca.

ROAD REPORT



STAY
AHEAD
OF THE
CURVE
WITH
CR AUTO
RATINGS,
NEWS
& ADVICE™

THE VITAL STATISTIC

55%

Percentage of drivers ages 25 to 39 who said they sent a text or an email while driving during the previous 30 days.

Source: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety 2017 survey.

AHEAD OF THE CURVE

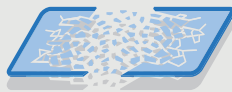
EXPLODING SUNROOFS UPDATE

A U.S. Senate probe that followed CR's report on exploding sunroofs found that three automakers—Ferrari, Tesla, and Volvo—are making sunroofs of laminated glass, which is designed to hold its form when shattered. Other car companies continue to make at least some models with tempered glass, which can explode and break into thousands of fragments when it fails. "Automakers should fix older cars with the problem and design new ones so they don't have the issue in the first place," says William Wallace, senior policy analyst for Consumers Union, the advocacy division of CR, which is pushing for recalls and other solutions. *See the full article in the December 2017 issue.*

LAMINATED GLASS



TEMPERED GLASS



ASK OUR EXPERTS

HOW CAN I KEEP MY CAR WINDOWS FROM FOGGING UP IN WINTER?



Car windows can quickly steam up in winter when moisture in the warm cabin air creates condensation. To keep windows clear, make sure your climate control system is in fresh-air mode (running it in recirculation mode causes moisture to accumulate). Though it might seem counterintuitive, drivers should turn the air conditioner on. Its compressor dehumidifies the air, which will reduce the chances of windows fogging, and setting it to a high temperature should keep the car toasty, too.

RECALL

RAM PICKUP TRUCK

Ram is recalling 1.1 million pickup trucks from model years 2015 to 2017 because their tailgates can open unexpectedly, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Affected vehicles include Ram 1500, 2500, and 3500 trucks with 5-foot-7-inch or 6-foot-4-inch beds and power locking tailgates.

What to do: Call 800-853-1403 to see whether your truck is affected. The automaker says it will fix affected trucks free of charge.

What Makes a Tire Top?

Our comprehensive ratings for car and SUV tires guarantee you won't just spin your wheels when comparison shopping. Plus, consult our exclusive tread-life testing to see which tires last longest.

by Jeff S. Bartlett

IT'S HARD to overstate the importance of tires in keeping passengers safe and delivering performance. That's why so many consumers in colder climates spend the time and expense to swap winter/snow tires twice a year to ensure that their 2-ton vehicles have the best grip possible.

With year-round convenience in mind, manufacturers have introduced an all-weather product category designed not only to perform well in the snow but also to be a year-round tire for your car. Some cost more than the average price of performance all-season tires, but you'll come out ahead by avoiding the cost and inconvenience of seasonal tire changes.

"The best all-weather tires have proved to provide year-round traction that truly combines all-season and winter/snow performance," says Gene Petersen, Consumer Reports' tire-program manager. "While some can cost more

than performance all-seasons, they represent a good value."

These do-it-all tires offer unique tread designs and enhanced rubber compounds that increase traction across a broad range of temperatures. They're different from typical all-season tires mainly because they provide better traction in the snow. For this reason, they have the same mountain/snowflake symbol on the sidewall as winter/snow tires.

In our latest testing, CR evaluated five all-weather models: the Goodyear Assurance WeatherReady, Michelin CrossClimate +, Nokian WRG4, Toyo Celsius, and Vredestein Quatrac 5. From this fresh category, the Michelin CrossClimate + shined as the top-rated all-weather tire thanks to its uncompromising grip. This impressive—but pricey—tire is sold in limited sizes by Tire Rack, one of the nation's leading tire retailers. More sizes will be added in the fall.

CR's Unique Testing

As the tire market evolves, so do CR's testing methods. We replaced our basic cornering test with a more dynamic evaluation of acceleration, braking, and handling on a 2-plus-acre course over wet asphalt. This new all-in-one test better reflects real-world challenges drivers face.

Overall, we purchased more than 630 tires this year for our full test program, covering 63 models for all-season, performance all-season (which includes all-weather tires), and winter/snow categories. We tested them at our track in Connecticut for wet and dry braking and handling, ride comfort and quietness, snow traction, and resistance to hydroplaning.

We evaluated each tire's grip on ice at a nearby skating rink. We also commissioned outside labs to measure each tire's rolling resistance, which affects fuel economy, and we conducted extensive treadwear tests on public roads in western Texas.

Most tires met or exceeded their warranty projections. Even those with a shortfall were usually off by a small amount. Of course, tread life will vary based on where and how you drive.

But the T-speed-rated Sumitomo HTR Enhance L/X missed its warranty projection by 25,000 miles. It has a 90,000-mile warranty but would last only 65,000 miles based on our test projections. According to a Sumitomo representative, customer satisfaction levels are "nearly 100 percent" with the product and mileage warranty. "It is our goal to provide top quality products at affordable prices," the company said in a written statement to CR.

In our ratings, tires that underperform their warranty have points deducted from their Overall Score. (Winter/snow tires don't carry a mileage warranty and are intended for limited, seasonal use, so we don't assess their tread life.)

ALL-SEASON

Suited to year-round driving in varying climates with moderate winter driving conditions.

*Average
All-Season Tire*

Dry braking	⬆️
Wet braking	⬇️
Snow traction	⬆️
Ice braking	⬇️
Handling	⬇️
Tread life	⬆️

General
Altimax RT43

ALL-WEATHER

Suited to year-round driving in varying climates, with an emphasis on winter grip.

*Average
All-Weather Tire*

Dry braking	⬆️
Wet braking	⬇️
Snow traction	⬆️
Ice braking	⬆️
Handling	⬇️
Tread life	⬆️

Michelin
CrossClimate +

SUMMER*

Suited for temperatures above 45° F.

*Average
Summer Tire*

Dry braking	⬆️
Wet braking	⬇️
Snow traction	NA
Ice braking	NA
Handling	⬆️
Tread life	⬇️

Michelin
Pilot Super
Sport

WINTER/SNOW

Designed to provide optimum grip in severe winter conditions with temperatures below 40° F.

*Average
Winter-Snow Tire*

Dry braking	⬆️
Wet braking	⬇️
Snow traction	⬆️
Ice braking	⬆️
Handling	⬇️
Tread life	NA

Cooper
Discoverer
True North

*For summer tire ratings, readers with a Digital or All-Access membership can go to [CR.org/summertires](https://www.crp.org/summertires).

Tire-Shopping Strategies

When buying a new or used car, it's important to consider the tires you're getting with the vehicle and the expected cost, durability, and performance over time.

➤ **Make sure your new car** comes with the right type of tire for your needs. You might need to discuss possible options with the dealer. For example, some vehicles sold in the snow belt come with summer tires. All-season tires will be marked with "M+S," which indicates that they have a tread designed to handle mud and snow.



Tires that have a mountain and snowflake symbol on the sidewall meet industry standards for snow traction.

➤ **Owners should investigate** online the cost and difficulty of replacing tires. (The tire size is on the sidewall and a sticker on the doorjamb on the driver's side.) For example, tires on large wheels with short sidewalls can be expensive to replace and make for a rougher ride, among other drawbacks.

➤ **Tires in a luxury or sports package** might be higher-performance tires that are typically more expensive and may wear faster. So make sure you know what you're paying for and whether there's a less expensive option you should consider.

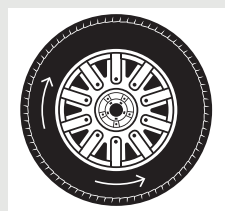
Stay Safe on the Road

Routine tire checks improve safety and help boost fuel economy. Perform these checks monthly and before you embark on a long-distance trip.



CHECK THE TIRE PRESSURE

Tires lose air over time. They need to be checked monthly and filled every so often, especially when temperatures drop in winter months. Underinflated tires flex more than properly inflated ones. That builds up heat, which can lead to failure. Plus, underinflated tires are less fuel-efficient and can wear out faster. To get a good tire-pressure reading, check when the tires are "cold," meaning the car has been parked for longer than 3 hours. Consult your owner's manual and the driver's doorjamb placard for the proper pressure. If you have a spare tire, check its pressure regularly, too.



SCAN THE TIRE SIDEWALLS

Look for cracks caused by age and exposure to the elements. Encounters with curbs, potholes, and other unfriendly objects in the road can lead to cuts and bulges in tires. Replace tires that show any signs of trouble and you'll head off problems before they occur.



CHECK THE TIRE'S AGE

The date code tells you when the tire was manufactured. Look for "DOT" followed by several digits near the wheel. The last four numbers identify when the tire was made. For example, "0308" indicates that the tire was manufactured in the third week of 2008. Consult your owner's manual for when to replace it. Some vehicle manufacturers recommend replacing tires after six years. Without a limit, we recommend removing tires at 10 years, including the spare, regardless of condition.



MEASURE TREAD DEPTH AND WEAR

Grab a quarter and a penny to measure tread depth. Place the quarter upside down in a tire groove with a treadwear indicator—raised bars within some grooves. They will appear flush with the tread when the tire is worn out. The distance from the quarter's edge to George Washington's hairline is about $\frac{1}{32}$ inch. If you can see all of Washington's head exposed, it's time to start shopping for new tires—you at least still have some grip left. And if there is some space exposed above George's head, check the tire with a penny. Using the same technique, insert that penny into the same groove, and point Lincoln's head down. If you can see the top of Abe's head over the tread, the tire should be replaced immediately. Many states have made it illegal to use tires with a tread that shallow.

Do I Have to Replace All 4 Tires?

Conventional wisdom holds that owners of all-wheel-drive vehicles should replace all four tires even if only one is damaged to ensure even traction and to prevent AWD system damage. Now there's a

less expensive option: shaved tires. Owners can buy one tire from **Tire Rack** (888-727-8092), and the company will shave it to match the tread of your other three tires for about \$25 to \$35. It's cheaper than buying

four new tires, but shaving a tire is likely to nullify its treadwear warranty. Other retailers may offer a similar service, but the equipment required to properly shave a tire's tread isn't common.

Ratings ➤ **Top Tires** This is where the rubber meets the road, from all-season to winter/snow types.

		Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price Paid	Speed Rating	Three-Season Driving				Snow Driving		Comfort		Other	
Rec.	Rank					Dry braking	Wet braking	Handling	Hydroplaning resistance	Snow traction	Ice braking	Ride	Noise	Rolling resistance	Tested tread life (miles)
ALL-SEASON TIRES															
✓	1	General Altimax RT43	70	\$87	T	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	80,000
✓	2	Michelin Defender T+H	67	\$115	H	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	90,000
	3	Continental TrueContact Tour	66	\$97	T	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	95,000
	4	Falken Sincera SN201 A/S	66	\$79	T	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	80,000
	5	Falken Sincera SN250 A/S	66	\$81	T	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	80,000
	6	Nexen Aria AH7	66	\$91	T	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	90,000
	7	Yokohama Avid Ascend	65	\$92	T	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	100,000
	8	BFGoodrich Advantage T/A Sport	63	\$88	T	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬇	75,000
	9	Hankook Kinergy PT	63	\$92	T	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	80,000
	10	Kumho Solus TA11	61	\$80	T	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	75,000
	11	Pirelli P4 Four Seasons Plus	60	\$108	T	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	85,000
	12	Bridgestone Ecopia EP422 Plus	60	\$113	T	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	70,000
	13	Toyo Versado Noir	60	\$100	H	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	75,000
	14	Firestone Champion Fuel Fighter	58	\$95	T	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	60,000
	15	Firestone All Season	58	\$85	T	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	60,000
	16	Uniroyal Tiger Paw Touring	58	\$91	T	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇	75,000
	17	Kelly Edge A/S	56	\$76	H	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	60,000
	18	Uniroyal Tiger Paw Touring	56	\$99	H	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬇	70,000
	19	Sumitomo HTR Enhance L/X	54	\$90	T	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	65,000
	20	Sentury Touring	53	\$54	H	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	50,000
	21	Milestar MS932 Sport	50	\$60	H	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬇	55,000
	22	Westlake Radial RP18	49	\$58	H	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬇	55,000

PERFORMANCE ALL-SEASON TIRES (INCLUDES ALL-WEATHER)

✓	1	Michelin CrossClimate +*	75	\$171	W	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	75,000
✓	2	Continental PureContact LS	71	\$128	V	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬇	90,000
	3	General Altimax RT43	66	\$99	V	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	70,000
	4	Goodyear Assurance WeatherReady*	64	\$142	V	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	75,000
	5	Michelin Premier A/S	64	\$158	V	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	80,000
	6	Pirelli Cinturato P7 All Season Plus	64	\$140	V	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	70,000
	7	Vredestein Quattrac 5*	62	\$104	V	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	50,000
	8	Atlas Force HP	61	\$53	V	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	65,000
	9	Falken Sincera SN250 A/S	61	\$94	V	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	75,000
	10	BFGoodrich Advantage T/A Sport	60	\$106	V	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	80,000
	11	Firestone Firehawk AS	60	\$92	V	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	60,000

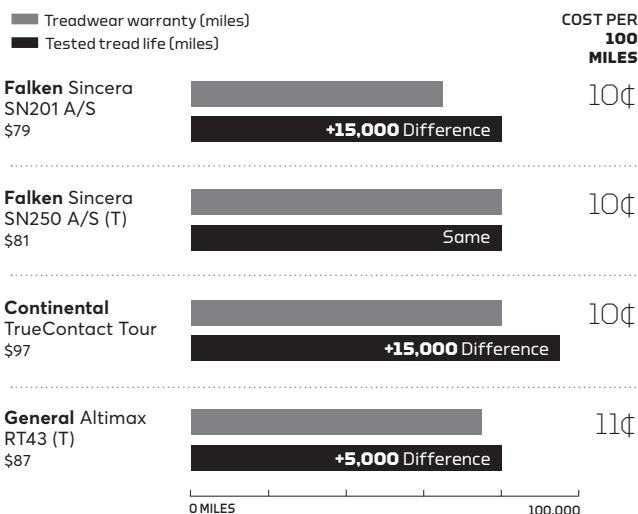
*All-weather tire.

		Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price Paid	Speed Rating	Three-Season Driving				Snow Driving		Comfort		Other	
Rec.	Rank					Dry braking	Wet braking	Handling	Hydroplaning resistance	Snow traction	Ice braking	Ride	Noise	Rolling resistance	Tested tread life (miles)
PERFORMANCE ALL-SEASON TIRES <i>Continued</i>															
	12	Nokian WRG4*	59	\$160	V	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	60,000
	13	Yokohama Avid Ascend	59	\$117	V	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	75,000
	14	Bridgestone Turanza Serenity Plus	59	\$147	V	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	65,000
	15	Goodyear Eagle Sport All-Season	58	\$106	V	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	80,000
	16	Bridgestone DriveGuard	56	\$153	V	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	55,000
	17	Uniroyal Tiger Paw AWP3	56	\$103	V	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	65,000
	18	Nokian Entyre 2.0	55	\$93	V	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	70,000
	19	Cooper CS5 Ultra Touring	55	\$111	V	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	60,000
	20	Kumho Solus TA71	54	\$89	V	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	50,000
	21	Toyo Extensa HP II	54	\$89	V	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	55,000
	22	Sumitomo HTR Enhance L/X	53	\$92	V	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	65,000
	23	Toyo Celsius*	53	\$113	V	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	60,000
	24	Falken Ziex ZE950 A/S	51	\$108	V	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	55,000
	25	Maxxis Bravo HP-M3	46	\$84	V	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	65,000
ULTRA-HIGH-PERFORMANCE ALL-SEASON TIRES															
✔️	1	Michelin Pilot Sport A/S 3+	78	\$152	Y	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	55,000
✔️	2	Pirelli P Zero All Season Plus	76	\$126	Y	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	50,000
✔️	3	Continental ExtremeContact DWS06	76	\$141	Y	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	45,000

How CR Tests Treadwear

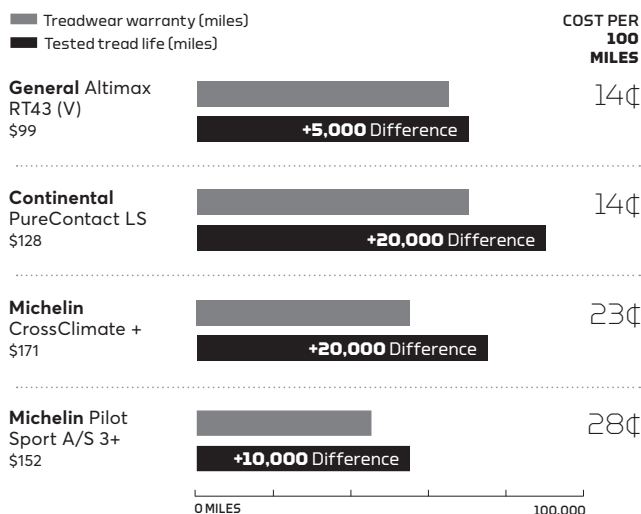
We accumulate miles on Texas roads to estimate how long each tire should last (with proper maintenance). In many instances, our tread-life mileage estimates are equal to or better than manufacturer mileage estimates. The all-season and performance all-season tires we tested most recently were installed on eight Toyota Camry sedans, and each Camry was loaded with the weight of four occupants. Tests were run night and day (totaling 1,000 miles a day) until we put 16,000 miles on each tire set, with periodic pressure checks, vehicle alignment, and tire rotation. We provide buying advice based on actual miles driven instead of government treadwear ratings or manufacturer warranties. Though mileage may vary, our tread-life projections are a good way for shoppers to compare tires and choose ones that will last a long time. The following charts compare our test results to select model treadwear warranties.

ALL-SEASON

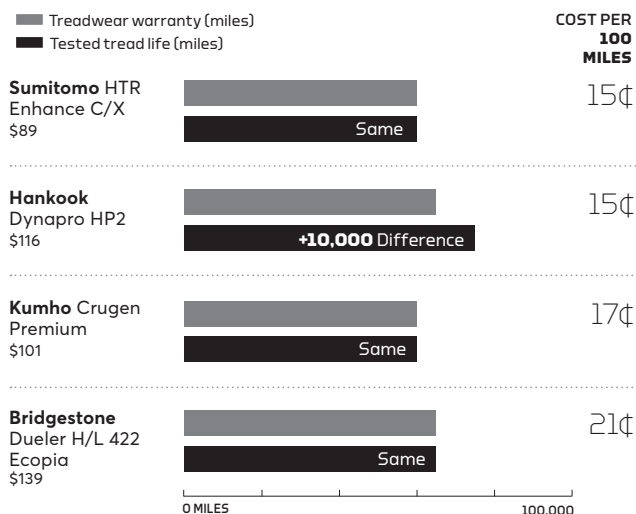


		Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price Paid	Speed Rating	Three-Season Driving				Snow Driving		Comfort		Other	
Rec.	Rank					Dry braking	Wet braking	Handling	Hydroplaning resistance	Snow traction	Ice braking	Ride	Noise	Rolling resistance	Tested tread life (miles)
ULTRA-HIGH-PERFORMANCE ALL-SEASON TIRES <i>Continued</i>															
✓	4	BFGoodrich g-Force Comp-2 A/S	74	\$116	W	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	60,000
	5	Goodyear Eagle Sport All-Season	72	\$144	W	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	70,000
	6	Yokohama Advan Sport A/S	72	\$118	Y	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	60,000
	7	Goodyear Eagle F1 Asymmetric All-Season	72	\$147	Y	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	50,000
	8	Hankook Ventus S1 Noble 2	72	\$128	W	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	45,000
	9	Dunlop Signature HP	72	\$122	W	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	40,000
	10	General G-Max AS-03	70	\$111	W	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	50,000
	11	Falken Azenis FK450 A/S	68	\$129	Y	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	40,000
	12	Kumho Ecsta 4X II	68	\$131	W	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	40,000
	13	Cooper Zeon RS3-G1	68	\$140	W	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	35,000
	14	Bridgestone Potenza RE970 AS Pole Position	68	\$144	W	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	45,000
	15	Laufenn S Fit AS	68	\$84	W	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	60,000
	16	Nitto Motivo	66	\$112	W	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	50,000
	17	Fuzion UHP Sport A/S	64	\$79	W	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	55,000
	18	Toyo Proxes 4 Plus	62	\$127	Y	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	50,000
	19	Sumitomo HTR A/S PO2	60	\$90	W	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	30,000
	20	Sumitomo HTR Enhance L/X	60	\$121	W	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	55,000
	21	GT Radial Champiro UHP AS	58	\$92	Y	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	40,000

PERFORMANCE AND ULTRA-HIGH-PERFORMANCE (UHP) ALL-SEASON



SUV ALL-SEASON



		Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price Paid	Speed Rating	Three-Season Driving				Snow Driving		Comfort		Other	
Rec.	Rank					Dry braking	Wet braking	Handling	Hydroplaning resistance	Snow traction	Ice braking	Ride	Noise	Rolling resistance	Tested tread life (miles)
WINTER/SNOW TIRES															
✓	1	Cooper Discoverer True North	70	\$92	H	✓	✗	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	NA
✓	2	Hankook Winter I*cept iZ2	70	\$101	T	✓	✗	✓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	NA
✓	3	Continental WinterContact SI	69	\$121	H	✓	✗	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	NA
✓	4	Michelin X-Ice XI3	68	\$98	H	✓	✗	✓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	NA
✓	5	Nokian Hakkapeliitta R3	68	\$147	R	✓	✗	✓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	NA
	6	General Altimax Arctic 12	67	\$84	T	✓	✗	✓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	NA
	7	Bridgestone Blizzak WS80	67	\$109	H	✓	✗	✓	↑	↑	↑	↓	✓	↑	NA
	8	Falken HS449 Eurowinter	64	\$91	H	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	✓	↓	NA
	9	Dunlop Winter Maxx 2	63	\$140	T	✓	✗	✓	↑	↑	↑	↑	✗	↓	NA
	10	Toyo Observe G3-Ice	62	\$137	T	✓	✗	✓	↑	↑	↑	↑	✗	↑	NA
	11	Uniroyal Tiger Paw Ice & Snow 3	61	\$80	T	✓	✗	✓	↑	↑	↑	↑	✓	↓	NA
	12	BFGoodrich Winter T/A KSI	61	\$123	T	✓	✗	✓	↑	↑	↑	↓	✓	↑	NA
	13	Yokohama Ice Guard iG52c	60	\$91	T	✓	✗	✗	↑	↑	↑	↓	✗	↑	NA
	14	Falken Espia EPZ II	60	\$94	T	✓	✗	✗	↑	↑	↑	↑	✓	↓	NA
	15	Laufenn I Fit Ice	60	\$110	T	✓	✗	✓	↑	↑	↑	↑	✓	✓	NA
	16	Firestone Winterforce 2	59	\$86	S	✓	✗	✗	↑	↑	↑	↓	✓	↑	NA
SUV ALL-SEASON TIRES															
✓	1	Goodyear Assurance CS Fuel Max	70	\$133	H	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	40,000
✓	2	Kumho Crugen Premium	68	\$101	V	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	60,000
✓	3	Bridgestone Dueler H/L 422 Ecopia	68	\$139	H	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	65,000
✓	4	Sumitomo HTR Enhance C/X	68	\$89	T	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	✓	↑	↑	↓	60,000
	5	Hankook Dynapro HP2	66	\$116	H	↑	✓	↓	↑	↑	✓	↓	↑	↑	75,000
	6	Nitto NT 421Q	66	\$124	H	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	✓	65,000
	7	Toyo Open Country Q/T	66	\$127	H	↓	✓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	65,000
	8	Yokohama Geolander G055	64	\$119	H	↓	✓	↓	↑	↑	✓	↓	↑	↑	75,000
	9	Toyo Celsius CUV	64	\$121	H	↓	✓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	✓	↓	75,000

> Readers with a Digital or All-Access membership can go to [CR.org/tires](https://cr.org/tires) for complete, up-to-date ratings.

HOW WE TEST: Overall Score is based on more than a dozen tests, with braking, handling, and hydroplaning resistance more heavily weighted for many tires. **Speed Rating** denotes a tire's maximum speed when carrying the load defined by the load index. **Braking** tests on ice

are from 10 mph; on dry and wet pavement, from 60 mph. **Handling** for many tires combines how well a tire performed in wet and dry cornering grip or the wet-handling test, steering feel, and an emergency handling maneuver. **Hydroplaning**

resistance denotes a tire's ability to resist skimming along the surface of standing water. **Snow traction** tests denote how far a vehicle has to travel to accelerate from 5 to 20 mph on flat, packed snow. **Ride** and **Noise** are evaluated subjectively on rough and smooth roads.

Rolling resistance, as measured by a dynamometer, is a factor in fuel economy. **Tested tread life** indicates wear potential based on our 16,000- or 20,000-mile vehicle driving test. For more tire buying advice and ratings, go to [CR.org/tires](https://cr.org/tires).



ROAD TEST

WE CONDUCT MORE THAN 50 TESTS ON EACH VEHICLE AT OUR 327-ACRE AUTO TEST CENTER. FOR COMPLETE ROAD TESTS, MEMBERS CAN GO TO [CR.ORG/CARS](https://www.cars.com/cr.org/cars).



LUXURY COMPACT SUVs

Acura RDX

Top Performance
But Tricky Tech

77

OVERALL
SCORE

ROAD-TEST SCORE 80

HIGHS Handling, acceleration, stopping distances, front-seat comfort, fit and finish

LOWS Controls, gear selector, engine noise, brake-pedal feel

POWERTRAIN 272-hp, 2.0-liter four-cylinder turbo engine; 10-speed automatic; all-wheel drive

FUEL 22 mpg on premium fuel

PRICE AS TESTED \$43,995

THIS NEWEST RDX impressed us on our test track and on the road.

But Acura, which continues to move away from design simplicity, missed the mark with this SUV's annoyingly complex controls.

For example, the RDX's gear selector, which requires drivers to either push a button or pull a switch, is very frustrating to use.

The new infotainment system is even worse. It has a dash-mounted screen that drivers can control only by using the touchpad that sits between the seats.

The system is confusing to use even when the RDX is parked, and very distracting for drivers when the car is moving. For example, they're forced to look at the screen to execute common audio tasks. It's one of the worst systems

that we've encountered recently.

Driving the RDX is a much more satisfying experience. It's lively and engaging, and feels planted when taking sharp turns, although the brake pedal has a spongy feel. The suspension quashes most bumps, but we found the ride to be rather firm and choppy.

We enjoyed the energetic 2.0-liter turbo engine's quick acceleration once it got past an initial delay, and the new 10-speed automatic transmission shifted smoothly.

Fuel economy, at 22 mpg overall, is about average for the class.

The interior is appealing, and the front seats are firm and supportive.

We like that key advanced safety systems are standard.



COMPACT CROSSOVERS

Nissan Kicks

Basics With
Some Bonuses

63

OVERALL
SCORE

ROAD-TEST SCORE 64

HIGHS Fuel economy, visibility, controls, standard automatic emergency braking

LOWS Acceleration, fit and finish, front-seat comfort, agility

POWERTRAIN 125-hp, 1.6-liter four-cylinder engine; continuously variable transmission; front-wheel drive

FUEL 32 mpg on regular fuel

PRICE AS TESTED \$21,050

THE KICKS TARGETS drivers who want the ride height, easy access, and extra space of a compact SUV but don't want to pay for features they might not need, such as all-wheel drive.

Its superb 32 mpg combined fuel economy and great visibility show why buyers are increasingly skipping sedans in favor of SUVs, even very small ones.

It's pleasant to drive around town, but the Kicks doesn't live up to its sporty name. Our testers complained about how slow it was when they tried to merge onto a highway, that the suspension allows the SUV to lean noticeably when taking corners, and that its steering is imprecise. The front seats lose support over long trips, and there's grating engine noise when drivers push hard

on the accelerator.

But the affordable Kicks shines in practicality. There's plenty of room even with its tiny footprint, especially in the rear seat and cargo area. Wind and road noise are kept to a minimum, and the Nissan's ride comfort is choppy but slightly better than most of its competitors.

Its interior is basic, but textured plastics and stitching give the Kicks a dose of style. We like the easy-to-understand controls. Android Auto and Apple CarPlay compatibility are standard on the SV trim and up.

Forward-collision warning and automatic emergency braking come standard, a big deal for a car this affordable. Blind-spot warning and rear cross-traffic warning come standard on the SV and top-of-the-line SR.



LARGE SEDANS

Toyota Avalon Hybrid

A Regal Ride and High Efficiency

91

OVERALL SCORE

ROAD-TEST SCORE 93

HIGHS Fuel economy, ride, interior room, controls, trunk space

LOWS Low stance

POWERTRAIN 215-hp, 2.5-liter four-cylinder hybrid engine; continuously variable transmission; front-wheel drive

FUEL 42 mpg on regular fuel

PRICE AS TESTED \$38,643

THE AVALON HYBRID boasts unrivaled fuel efficiency and ride comfort among large sedans. Its 2019 redesign moves it upscale, making the Avalon a sensible alternative to higher-priced luxury cars.

The hybrid powertrain delivers 42 mpg overall, a commendable achievement for such a big car. It accelerates immediately from a stop because of its electric assist. But merging into traffic and passing maneuvers cause the engine to work hard, and those revs create a coarse soundtrack.

The V6 engine in the nonhybrid version delivers more power effortlessly (and with a more satisfying sound) thanks in part to its eight-speed transmission, which makes quick, smooth shifts.

The Avalon Hybrid's outstanding ride absorbs road

imperfections and coddles passengers in ways that some more expensive luxury models can't match. Yet the car is quite agile, with limited body lean around corners.

Pampering touches, such as soft materials and detailed stitching, help distinguish the spacious cabin. The front seats are roomy and supportive. The rear seat has generous legroom, but our taller testers had limited headroom. It can be a challenge to get into, though, because of the car's low roof and floor.

We found the controls easy to use, but the touch screen can be a long reach for drivers who sit farther away from the dash.

The Avalon comes standard with forward-collision warning, automatic emergency braking with pedestrian detection, and blind-spot warning.



MIDSIZE HYBRID SEDANS

Honda Accord Hybrid

Excellent MPG and Loads of Comfort

79

OVERALL SCORE

ROAD-TEST SCORE 86

HIGHS Fuel economy, ride, trunk space

LOWS Gear selector, low stance

POWERTRAIN 212-hp, 2.0-liter four-cylinder hybrid engine; continuously variable transmission; front-wheel drive

FUEL 47 mpg on regular fuel

PRICE AS TESTED \$29,780

IF FUEL ECONOMY is your priority, Honda has a special Accord for you. The all-new hybrid version got a stellar 47 mpg overall in our testing, on a par with the Camry Hybrid and up from the regular Accord's 31 mpg.

Even more impressive, the Accord Hybrid achieves that fuel economy without making significant compromises compared with the gas-only version. The Hybrid has the same responsive handling, comfortable ride, and well-finished cabin.

It even has an equally spacious trunk, and the brakes (which can be grabby in hybrids) feel almost as natural as they do in the regular version.

Buyers will no doubt notice that the Hybrid costs about \$1,500 more.

The vehicle gets off the

line smoothly with a dose of initial electric power. It's slightly quicker to 60 mph than the conventional Accord. Push the car hard, however, and the engine revs, seemingly out of sync with the car's speed. That creates a loud, unnerving droning sound that's typical of hybrids.

There are a few other irritations. We aren't fans of the unintuitive push-button gear selector, and the Accord's low stance makes it difficult to get in and out of.

Forward-collision warning, automatic emergency braking, and lane-keeping assist are standard equipment. Blind-spot warning and rear cross-traffic warning aren't available on the base Hybrid but come standard on the EX trim and above.

Ratings ➤ **Delicate Balance** Our testing shows the newest hybrids can deliver stellar fuel economy with few compromises. We also found that confusing infotainment controls can sully an otherwise enjoyable driving experience.

	Make & Model	Overall Score	Price	Survey Results		Safety	Road-Test Results											
Recommended			As tested	Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Front-crash prevention	Road-test score	Overall mpg	Acceleration 0-60 mph, sec.	Dry braking 60-0 mph, ft.	Avoidance-maneuver speed, mph	Routine handling	Ride	Noise	Seat comfort front/rear	Controls	Luggage, suitcases-duffels/ Cargo volume, cu. ft.	
MID-SIZED HYBRID SEDANS																		
✓	Toyota Camry Hybrid LE	89	\$28,949	⬆	⬆	Std./⬆	89	47	7.8	138	54.5	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆/⬆	⬆	3+1	
✓	Honda Accord Hybrid EX	79	\$29,780	⬇	⬆	Std./⬆	86	47	7.4	139	52.5	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆/⬆	⬇	4+1	
✓	Ford Fusion Hybrid SE	77	\$28,290	⬆	⬇	Opt.	80	39	8.3	140	52.0	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇/⬆	⬆	2+3	
✓	Hyundai Sonata Hybrid SE	75	\$26,950	⬇	⬇	Opt.	80	39	8.2	140	51.0	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆/⬆	⬆	3+2	
✓	Honda Clarity Plug-in Hybrid	72	\$34,290	⬇	⬆	Std./⬆	72	110 ⁽¹⁾ /39 ⁽²⁾	8.3	141	53.0	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇/⬆	⬇	3+2	
	Chevrolet Malibu Hybrid	68	\$30,735	⬇	⬇	Opt.	79	41	8.0	135	55.0	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇/⬆	⬆	1+2	
LARGE SEDANS																		
✓	Toyota Avalon Hybrid XLE	91	\$38,643	⬆	⬆	Std./⬆	93	42	8.3	135	53.0	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆/⬆	⬆	4+0	
✓	Chevrolet Impala Premier (V6)	86	\$39,110	⬆	⬆	Opt.	91	22	6.9	130	54.0	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆/⬆	⬆	4+2	
✓	Kia Cadenza Premium	85	\$36,945	⬆	⬆	Opt.	91	24	7.0	127	52.0	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆/⬆	⬆	4+0	
	Nissan Maxima Platinum	71	\$41,995	⬇	⬇	Std./⬆	81	25	6.5	132	53.0	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆/⬇	⬆	3+0	
	Ford Taurus Limited (V6)	67	\$37,885	⬇	⬇	Opt.	72	21	7.2	135	50.0	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆/⬆	⬇	4+2	
	Chrysler 300 Limited (V6)	65	\$38,335	⬇	⬆	Opt.	83	22	7.4	137	50.0	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆/⬆	⬆	3+1	
	Dodge Charger SXT (V6)	63	\$34,510	⬇	⬆	Opt.	82	22	7.4	134	52.0	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆/⬆	⬆	3+1	
COMPACT Crossovers (Front-wheel Drive)																		
✓	Kia Soul Plus	74	\$24,115	⬆	⬆	Opt.	74	26	8.8	127	53.5	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆/⬆	⬆	1+1	
✓	Toyota C-HR XLE	72	\$23,892	⬆	⬆	Std./⬆	64	29	11.2	131	52.5	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇/⬆	⬆	2+0	
	Nissan Kicks SV	63	\$21,050	⬇	⬇	Std./⬆	64	32	10.5	137	51.5	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬇/⬆	⬆	3+0	
LUXURY Compact SUVs																		
✓	BMW X3 xDrive30i	81	\$53,745	⬆	⬆	Opt.	92	24	7.7	128	50.5	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆/⬆	⬇	32.0	
✓	Porsche Macan S	80	\$63,290	⬆	⬆	Opt.	85	19	6.4	130	51.0	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆/⬆	⬇	29.0	
✓	Lexus NX 300	78	\$43,284	⬆	⬇	Std./⬆	74	24	7.5	132	49.5	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆/⬆	⬇	28.5	
✓	Audi Q5 Premium Plus	78	\$51,570	⬆	⬆	Std./⬆	83	24	6.8	130	52.5	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆/⬆	⬇	27.0	
✓	Acura RDX Tech	77	\$43,995	⬇	⬆	Std./⬆	80	22	7.0	127	52.0	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆/⬆	⬇	33.0	
	Infiniti QX50 Essential	67	\$51,380	⬇	⬆	Std./⬆	77	22	7.2	129	55.5	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆/⬆	⬇	30.5	
	Buick Envision Premium	67	\$45,380	⬆	⬇	Opt.	67	21	7.9	128	55.0	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬇/⬆	⬆	32.5	
	Volvo XC60 T5 Momentum	66	\$50,040	⬇	⬆	Std./⬆	79	23	8.0	124	52.0	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆/⬆	⬇	34.0	
	Cadillac XT5 Luxury	59	\$51,025	⬇	⬇	Opt.	76	20	7.1	132	53.5	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆/⬆	⬇	33.0	
	Lincoln MKC Reserve	56	\$46,485	⬇	⬇	Opt.	72	19	7.8	125	54.0	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬆/⬇	⬇	30.5	
	Mercedes-Benz GLC300	54	\$49,105	⬇	⬆	Std./⬆	81	22	6.8	132	50.0	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆/⬆	⬇	28.0	
	Alfa Romeo Stelvio Ti	51	\$52,040	⬇	⬆	Opt.	74	24	7.0	132	52.5	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇/⬇	⬇	26.5	
	Jaguar F-Pace Prestige	47	\$53,895	⬇	⬆	Opt.	72	20	6.0	129	50.5	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬆/⬆	⬇	28.5	
	Land Rover Discovery Sport HSE	39	\$49,895	⬇	⬇	Opt.	58	21	8.6	136	50.5	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆/⬆	⬇	33.0	

HOW WE TEST: Recommended models did well in our **Overall Score**, which factors in **Road-Test Results**, **Predicted reliability**, **Owner satisfaction**, and **Safety**, which includes crash-test results and the

availability of front-crash prevention features, such as forward-collision warning and automatic emergency braking at city or highway speeds. For these systems, NA means no such system is offered; Opt. means

it's available on some versions but not necessarily on the one we tested; and models with standard systems are rated from ⬇ to ⬆ based on how many of these features are standard. We also deduct points from the

Overall Score if a vehicle's gear selector lacks fail-safes or is difficult to operate. Readers with a Digital or All-Access membership can go to [CR.org/cars](https://www.cars.com) for complete, up-to-date ratings.

A

Ad blockers	Oct 18, 14
Air conditioners	Jul 18, 17
Air fryers	Jun 18, 15
Alexa digital assistant	Jan 18, 11; Oct 18, 24
Alternative medicine	Nov 18, 24
Amazon Prime	Jul 18, 14
Arsenic in rice	Mar 18, 5

AUTOMOBILE RATINGS

Acura RDX	Nov 18, 63
Alfa Romeo Stelvio	Dec 17, 62
BMW X2	Aug 18, 63
BMW X3	Mar 18, 58
Buick Enclave	Mar 18, 58
Buick Regal	May 18, 59
Chevrolet Equinox Diesel	Jul 18, 62
Chevrolet Traverse	Feb 18, 59
Ford EcoSport	Jun 18, 59
Ford Expedition	May 18, 58
GMC Terrain	Mar 18, 59
Honda Accord	Feb 18, 58
Hybrid	Nov 18, 64
Honda Civic Si	Jan 18, 58
Honda Clarity	Jul 18, 62
Hyundai Accent	Jul 18, 63
Hyundai Elantra GT	Jun 18, 59
Hyundai Kona	Sep 18, 63
Hyundai Sonata	Feb 18, 58
Infiniti QX50	Aug 18, 64
Jaguar E-Pace	Aug 18, 63
Jeep Cherokee	Oct 18, 63
Jeep Wrangler	Jun 18, 58
Kia Rio	Jul 18, 63
Kia Sorento	Oct 18, 64
Kia Stinger	May 18, 59
Land Rover Range Rover Velar	Mar 18, 59
Lexus LS 500	Sep 18, 63
Lexus RX L	Jun 18, 58
Lincoln Navigator	May 18, 58
Mazda6	Oct 18, 64
Mitsubishi Eclipse Cross	Oct 18, 63
Nissan Kicks	Nov 18, 63
Nissan Leaf	Sep 18, 64
Nissan Rogue Sport	Jan 18, 59
Subaru Crosstrek	Jan 18, 59
Tesla Model 3	Sep 18, 64
Toyota Avalon Hybrid	Nov 18, 64
Toyota Camry	Dec 17, 63
Hybrid	Feb 18, 59
Toyota C-HR	Jan 18, 58
Volkswagen Tiguan	Dec 17, 62
Volvo XC40	Aug 18, 64
Volvo XC60	Dec 17, 63

AUTOMOBILES & AUTO EQUIPMENT

Auto insurance discrimination	Mar 18, 5
Backup cameras	Aug 18, 5
Best & worst lists	Apr 18, 28
Best vehicles for road trips	Jul 18, 39
Brand Report Card	Apr 18, 26
Buying new vs. used	Feb 18, 50
Coming in 2018	Apr 18, 35
Driver data privacy	Jun 18, 44
Emergency kit preparation	Jul 18, 30
Financing	Dec 17, 60
Fuel economy	Apr 18, 10
standards	Jul 18, 5; Nov 18, 7
technological advances	Apr 18, 13
time line	Apr 18, 14
Gas, finding cheapest	Jul 18, 38
High-tech vehicles	Jun 18, 44
In-car entertainment systems	
most and least distracting	Jan 18, 53
Intelligent high beams	Jan 18, 12
Owner satisfaction	Feb 18, 48
Profiles, 2018	Apr 18, 37
Ratings, 2018	Apr 18, 37
Reliability	Apr 18, 85
new cars	Dec 17, 52
Roadside assistance	Jul 18, 34
Safety systems	May 18, 12
Self-driving cars	Dec 17, 5; Jun 18, 5
Sunroofs, exploding	Dec 17, 30; Feb 18, 5
Tires	Nov 18, 56
best by region	Jan 18, 16
safety checks	Nov 18, 58
shopping for	Nov 18, 58
Top Picks for 2018	Apr 18, 19
Trim levels	Oct 18, 56
price difference	Oct 18, 59
Trucks	Apr 18, 24
safety	Aug 18, 58
Used cars	Apr 18, 81
best 3-year-old models	Sep 18, 54
flood damage	Feb 18, 52
Vehicle-to-vehicle communication	Jun 18, 44

B-D

Banks	
customer satisfaction	May 18, 14
Beds-in-a-box	Mar 18, 30
Bicycle helmets	Jun 18, 11
Bitcoin	May 18, 15
Breakfast	
fast-food	Aug 18, 42
Cable TV	Aug 18, 30
savings	Aug 18, 36
Cameras	Jun 18, 23
time line	Nov 18, 14
Cannabidiol	Oct 18, 44
Carpet cleaners	Jun 18, 18
Cell phones	Jan 18, 24
how to buy	Jun 18, 14
insurance	Jun 18, 50
iPhone X vs. iPhone 8	Feb 18, 13
refurbished	Jun 18, 56
repairing cracked screens	Jun 18, 54
service providers	Jun 18, 50
time line	Oct 18, 14
Children and technology	Nov 18, 7
Cleaning equipment	
carpet cleaners	Jun 18, 18
vacuums	
belts	Sep 18, 18
robotic	Jan 18, 18
Cleaning tips	
carpet stains	Jun 18, 21
curtains	Jul 18, 12
humidifiers	Nov 18, 16
laptops	Sep 18, 15
pillows	Jun 18, 12
Coffee	
add-ins	Mar 18, 13
Cold & flu	Jan 18, 30
medicine labels	Jan 18, 37
treating symptoms	Jan 18, 33
vaccines	Jan 18, 41
Consumer data	
privacy	Oct 18, 7
security	Dec 17, 5
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau	May 18, 5; Oct 18, 7
Cookware	Nov 18, 44
materials	Nov 18, 47
Cordless drills	Dec 17, 8
attachments	Dec 17, 12
components	Dec 17, 11
Crackers	Jan 18, 42
toppings	Jan 18, 45
Credit cards	
using while traveling	Jul 18, 38
Credit data privacy	May 18, 5
Credit freezes	Sep 18, 7
Data, financial	
protection	Jun 18, 16
Data breaches	Dec 17, 5
Equifax	Feb 18, 5
Digital assistants	Jan 18, 11; Oct 18, 24
Dishwashers	Sep 18, 36
time line	Sep 18, 16
Doctors	
degrees	Mar 18, 48
primary care physicians	Mar 18, 53
specialists	Mar 18, 55
Door locks	Mar 18, 14
Driving	
distracted	Jan 18, 48
phone anti-distraction features	Jan 18, 54
safety around trucks	Aug 18, 60
Drones	Mar 18, 18
Drugs	
prices	Jan 18, 5; May 18, 5, 40; Jun 18, 5
lowering	May 18, 44
shopping around	May 18, 49
Dryers	Aug 18, 48

E-G

Earphones, wireless	May 18, 24
Egg labeling	Feb 18, 12
Energy bars	Oct 18, 19
Equifax hack restitution	Feb 18, 5
Facebook privacy control	Oct 18, 40
Farmers markets	Sep 18, 35
Fast-food breakfasts	Aug 18, 42
Fees	
"What the Fee?!" campaign	Sep 18, 7
Financial data protection	Jun 18, 16
Fire extinguisher use	Feb 18, 11
Flexi-fridges	Feb 18, 14
Food	
banned drugs in	Oct 18, 30

expiration dates	Nov 18, 14
heavy metals in	Oct 18, 38
labeling	Jul 18, 5
store-prepared	Jan 18, 15
Food recall location details	Dec 17, 5
Foodborne illness tracking	Sep 18, 7
Fraud victim protection	Jan 18, 5
Frozen pizza	Feb 18, 34
Frozen vegetables	May 18, 52
cooking tips	May 18, 55
Furniture tipping hazards	Jan 18, 5; May 18, 21
Google Assistant	Oct 18, 24
Green juices	Aug 18, 13
Grills	Mar 18, 11; May 18, 28; Jul 18, 22
accessories	Jul 18, 24
buying at Home Depot & Lowe's	May 18, 34
care and cleaning	Jul 18, 26
food safety	Jul 18, 23
lump charcoal vs. briquettes	Jul 18, 27
replaceable parts	May 18, 32

H-I

Headphones, wireless	May 18, 24
Healthy eating	Sep 18, 26
drinks	Sep 18, 34
fish	Sep 18, 32
fruits & veggies	Sep 18, 31
leafy greens	Sep 18, 28
salt alternatives	Sep 18, 16
Heart surgery	Jul 18, 50
common procedures	Jul 18, 52
hospital ratings	Jul 18, 56
questions to ask	Jul 18, 54
Helmets, bicycle	Jun 18, 11
Home care	Dec 17, 40
help with bills	Dec 17, 46
hiring help	Dec 17, 50
supportive communities	Dec 17, 48
Home insurance	Oct 18, 50
Home remodeling	
for curb appeal	Jun 18, 34
elder-friendly upgrades	Dec 17, 44
Ice melts	Nov 18, 22
Insect repellents	Aug 18, 28
Instant Pot tips	Mar 18, 16
Insurance	
car	
price disparities	Mar 18, 5
home	Oct 18, 50
smartphone	Jun 18, 50
iPhone X vs. iPhone 8	Feb 18, 13

L-P

Laundry	
machines	Aug 18, 51
room renovation	Aug 18, 48
time line	Aug 18, 14
Lawn mowers	Jun 18, 38
time line	Jun 18, 12
Lightbulbs	Feb 18, 16
Massage	Nov 18, 41
Mattresses	Mar 18, 22; Jun 18, 13
beds-in-a-box	Mar 18, 30
for side sleepers	Oct 18, 17
types	Mar 18, 28
warmth retention	Aug 18, 15
Media mergers	Mar 18, 5
Medical billing	Sep 18, 44
surprise bills	Oct 18, 7
Mowers	Jun 18, 38
time line	Jun 18, 12
Multi-cookers	
Instant Pot tips	Mar 18, 16
Music streaming services	Sep 18, 14
Naturopathic medicine	Mar 18, 56
Net neutrality	Jun 18, 5
Nonstick pans	Jan 18, 13
Ovens	Jan 18, 15
Pain medication	Oct 18, 48
Paints	
exterior	Jun 18, 34
Passwords	Sep 18, 17
Patient safety	May 18, 5
Peer-to-peer payments	Nov 18, 18
Phone bills	Aug 18, 4
Photos	
digitization	Jul 18, 58
print-making services	Dec 17, 14
Pillows, cleaning	Jun 18, 12
Pink tax	Jul 18, 5
Pizza	
frozen	Feb 18, 34
unhealthy chain options	Feb 18, 37

R-S

Ranges	Nov 18, 48
Refrigerators	Aug 18, 18
capacity	Aug 18, 14
flexi-fridges	Feb 18, 14
ideal food arrangement	May 18, 13
reliability	Oct 18, 13
where to buy	Aug 18, 20
Retirement	Mar 18, 42
healthcare expenses	Mar 18, 47
unexpected	Mar 18, 45
Road trips	Jul 18, 28
pet care	Jul 18, 35
snacks	Jul 18, 37
tech tips	Jul 18, 32
Robocalls	Aug 18, 5
Robovacs	Jan 18, 18
Scams	Jun 18, 26
classic scams	Jun 18, 30
combating	Jun 18, 32
who gets scammed	Jun 18, 29
Shopping	
for appliances	Jul 18, 15
farmers markets	Sep 18, 35
online	Dec 17, 20
haggling	Feb 18, 27
last-minute	Dec 17, 29
return policies	Dec 17, 26
safety	Dec 17, 26
scams	Dec 17, 28
paying less	Feb 18, 24
Siri digital assistant	Oct 18, 24
Smart homes	Oct 18, 24
Smart speakers	Oct 18, 24
Smartphones	Jan 18, 24
how to buy	Jun 18, 14
insurance	Jun 18, 50
iPhone X vs. iPhone 8	Feb 18, 13
refurbished	Jun 18, 56
repairing cracked screens	Jun 18, 54
service providers	Jun 18, 50
Smartwatches	
Apple Watch 3 vs. Fitbit Versa	Aug 18, 16
Snack crackers	Jan 18, 42
toppings	Jan 18, 45
Snow blowing	Nov 18, 22
Snow preparedness	Nov 18, 20
Snow shovels	Nov 18, 23
Space heaters	Jan 18, 14
Stain removal, carpet	Jun 18, 21
Stains	Jun 18, 34
Stem cell treatments	Mar 18, 36
Strollers	Feb 18, 15
Student debt	Feb 18, 5; Nov 18, 7
Sunscreens	Jul 18, 42
bargains	Jul 18, 46
time line	Jul 18, 12
Supplements	Nov 18, 38; Nov 18, 42

T-U

Televisions	Nov 18, 26
audio setup for easier hearing	Jul 18, 11
best deals	Feb 18, 40; Nov 18, 26
smart TVs	
privacy	May 18, 22; Nov 18, 30
sound bars	Nov 18, 31
Tick protection	Jul 18, 13
Toilets	Feb 18, 18
wall-mounted	Feb 18, 21
Turkey, cooking safely	Nov 18, 13
TV antennas	Aug 18, 35
TV streaming	Aug 18, 40
cable replacement services	Aug 18, 38
devices	Aug 18, 41
Vacuums	
belts	Sep 18, 18
robotic	Jan 18, 18
Veggie burgers	Sep 18, 13
Video	
digitization	Jul 18, 58
streaming devices	Feb 18, 43
Vitamin supplements	Nov 18, 38; Nov 18, 42

W-Y

Washing machines	Aug 18, 48
Water heaters	Nov 18, 15
WiFi	
signal strengthening	May 18, 11
Yoga	Nov 18, 43


Cooking Up a Deal

These grocery gaffes and kooky cookware ads might make you lose your appetite



Who's for Dinner?
Is it a slow cooker—or a hot tub?
Submitted by Fred Seitz, Beaufort, SC

Ideal for 2+ people



49¢ lb.

Yellow Vidalia Onions
Jumbo Sweet Boneless

Boneless

No Bone to Pick Here
Yes, we've always preferred our bulbs without bones.
Submitted by Linda Morgan, Santa Fe, NM

Mystery Meat
Do we dare ask how old the other 20% is?
Submitted by Sheldon Somerstein, Mt. Sinai, NY



80% Fresh

80% Fresh Ground Beef
\$2.89 lb.



HARRIS TEETER Organics

12 Grade A Large Free Roaming Eggs

ONE DOZEN
NET WT 24 OZ (1LB 8 OZ) 680 g

HARRIS TEETER Organics

12 Grade A Large Free Roaming Eggs

Ready to Roll
If eggs can roam, maybe pigs really can fly.
Submitted by Sal Petinga, via email



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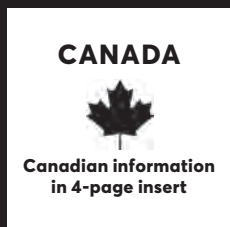
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*Between 7/1/17 and 9/30/17, the average savings off MSRP presented by Participating Dealers to users of the Build & Buy Car Buying Service, based on users who configured virtual vehicles and who TrueCar identified as purchasing a new vehicle of the same make and model listed on the certificate from a Participating Dealer as of 10/31/2017, was \$3,101, including applicable vehicle-specific manufacturer discounts. Your actual savings may vary based on multiple factors, including the vehicle you select, region, dealer, and applicable vehicle-specific manufacturer incentives, which are subject to change. The MSRP is determined by the manufacturer and may not reflect the price at which vehicles are generally sold in the dealer's trade area as not all vehicles are sold at MSRP. Each dealer sets its own pricing. Neither TrueCar nor Consumer Reports brokers, sells, or leases motor vehicles.





Canada Extra

Snow Blowers **34a**

Ranges **34b**

TVs **34c**

Autos **34d**

Contact Info **34d**

How to Use the Canada Extra Section

EVERY MONTH, Canada Extra provides Canadian pricing and availability information about products tested for that issue. The ratings in this section are based on this month's reports, but they narrow your choices to the products that are sold in Canada.

You can use this section in either of two ways: Start with the main report, read about the products that interest you, and turn to this section to find whether they're sold—and for what price—in Canada.

Or start here, find products sold in Canada whose price and overall score appear promising, and read more about them in the main report and full ratings chart; page numbers appear with each Canadian report. (For some products, the Canadian model designation differs slightly from the one used in the U.S.)

In most cases, the prices we list here are the approximate retail in Canadian dollars; manufacturers' list prices are indicated by an asterisk (*). The symbols shown at right

identify CR Best Buys or recommended products in the U.S. ratings. "NA" in a chart means that information wasn't available from the manufacturer. We include, in the Contact Info list on page 34d, the manufacturer's web address in Canada so that you can go online to get information on a model you can't find in the stores. (Many products that aren't available in Canadian stores can be bought online.)

We appreciate your support, but we don't take it

for granted. Please write to CanadaExtra@cu.consumer.org and tell us what you think. We can't reply to every email or implement every suggestion, but with your help we'll try to keep growing to serve your needs.

CR Best Buy









Recommended models that offer the best combination of performance and price.




Recommended

Models that perform well and stand out for reasons we note.

Snow Blowers

Nineteen of the tested snow blowers are available, including 11 of the recommended models. **Report and ratings, pages 20-25**

		Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price
Rec.	Rank			
THREE-STAGE GAS				
	3	Troy-Bilt Vortex 5708532	90	\$1,600
	6	Troy-Bilt 60-3734	83	\$1,100
TWO-STAGE GAS				
	1	Ariens 926060	91	\$4,260
	3	Cub Cadet 2X 28	87	\$1,400
	6	Ariens 921046	82	\$1,700
	15	Husqvarna ST227P	57	\$1,400
COMPACT TWO-STAGE GAS				
	1	Toro Power Max 824 OE	77	NA
	2	Honda HSS724CW	74	\$2,800
	5	Ariens 920025	70	\$1,000
	6	Husqvarna ST 224P	70	NA
	8	Poulan Pro PR241	40	\$1,000

		Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price
Rec.	Rank			
SINGLE-STAGE GAS				
	1	Toro Power Clear 721 QZE 38744	75	\$1,000
	2	Honda HS 720CS	72	\$1,100
	3	Toro Snow Master 724 QXE	62	NA
SINGLE-STAGE ELECTRIC				
	1	Toro Power Curve 1800 38381	50	\$380
	2	Toro 1500 Power Curve	44	\$340
	3	Toro Power Shovel 38361	42	\$150
SINGLE-STAGE BATTERY				
	1	Ego SNT2102	60	\$900
	2	Snow Joe iON18SB	24	\$350

> Readers with a Digital or All-Access membership can find the latest ratings at CR.org/snowblowers1118.

Ranges

Fifty-two of the tested ranges are available, including 22 of the recommended models. **Report and ratings, pages 44-54**

		Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price
Rec.	Rank			

SMOOTHTOP, SINGLE OVEN (30-INCH)

✓	2	GE Profile PB911SJSS	85	\$1,600
\$	3	LG LRE3193ST	84	\$1,600
✓	7	Samsung NE58F9500SS	82	\$2,200
✓	9	Bosch HEI8054C	81	\$3,550
	13	Whirlpool YWEE510S0FS	77	\$1,300
	16	Samsung NE59J7630SS	77	\$1,400
	17	Samsung NE59M4320SS	75	\$1,300
	20	Whirlpool YWFE515S0ES	67	\$1,150
	27	KitchenAid YKFEG500ESS	62	\$1,500
	30	Whirlpool YWFE975H0HV	58	\$1,800

SMOOTHTOP, DOUBLE OVEN (30-INCH)

✓	1	Samsung NE58F9710WS	83	\$2,700
	3	LG LDE4415ST	80	\$2,000
	4	Samsung NE59J7850WS	79	\$2,100

GAS AND DUAL-FUEL, SINGLE OVEN (30-INCH)

✓	1	Samsung NX58H9500WS	79	\$2,800
\$	2	Samsung NX58H5600SS	76	\$1,700
\$	3	Samsung NX58M3310SS	75	\$1,400
✓	4	GE JCGS760SELSS	74	\$1,800
✓	5	GE Profile PCGS930SELSS	74	\$2,040
✓	10	LG LRG3193ST	72	\$1,000
✓	11	GE JCGB700SEJSS	71	\$1,200
✓	12	Frigidaire Gallery FGGF3058RF	71	\$1,000
✓	15	LG LSG5513ST	70	\$2,100
	17	Frigidaire FFGF3054TS	69	\$1,000
	18	GE JCGB660SEJSS	69	\$1,000
	21	Bosch HDI8054C	67	\$3,900
	22	GE JCGSS66EELES	67	\$1,360
	25	GE JCGBS60DEKWW	65	\$700
	26	GE Café CC2S985SETSS	65	\$3,100

		Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price
Rec.	Rank			

GAS AND DUAL-FUEL, DOUBLE OVEN (30-INCH)

✓	2	Samsung NY58J9850WS	81	\$3,900
✓	3	GE PCGB980ZEJSS	78	\$2,000
✓	5	GE Café CCGS995SELSS	74	\$2,800
	6	GE JCGB860SEJSS	64	\$1,510
	7	GE Café CCGS990SETSS	59	\$3,400
	8	KitchenAid KFGD500ESS	59	\$2,300
	9	Whirlpool WGG745S0FS	59	\$2,100

ELECTRIC INDUCTION

✓	1	GE Profile PHS930SLSS	85	\$3,700
✓	3	LG LSE4617ST	82	\$4,500
✓	4	Frigidaire Gallery CGIF3036TF	81	\$1,300
	5	Frigidaire Gallery CGIF3061NF	78	\$2,250
	6	Frigidaire CFIF3054TS	78	\$1,500

PRO-STYLE GAS AND DUAL-FUEL (30-INCH)

✓	1	GE Monogram ZGP304NRSS	70	\$6,550
	2	KitchenAid KDRS407VSS	69	\$4,900
	3	Wolf DF304	67	\$8,000
	6	Miele HR1124 G	59	\$9,700
	7	Wolf GR304	57	\$6,500
	8	Thermador PRG304GH	57	\$6,000
	9	Jenn-Air JGRP430WP	55	\$6,000

PRO-STYLE GAS AND DUAL-FUEL (36-INCH)

✓	1	GE Monogram ZDP364NDPSS	76	\$12,500
	3	Thermador PRG366JG	65	\$9,000
	6	Wolf GR366	63	\$8,500
	10	Haier HCR6250AGS	41	\$2,000
	11	Jenn-Air JGRP436WP	40	\$8,100

TVs

Forty-four of the tested TVs are available, including 36 of the recommended models. **Report and ratings, pages 26-33**

		Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price
Rec.	Rank			

60-INCH AND LARGER

✓	2	LG OLED65C8PUA	88	\$4,400
✓	3	Sony XBR-65A8F	88	\$4,800
✓	4	LG OLED65E8PUA	88	\$4,500
✓	5	LG 65SK9500PUA	83	\$2,500
✓	6	Samsung QN65Q9FN	83	\$5,000
✓	7	Samsung QN65Q7CN	81	\$3,600
✓	8	LG 65SK9000PUA	81	\$2,250
✓	9	Samsung QN65Q7FN	80	\$3,500
✓	12	Samsung QN65Q6FN	78	\$2,600
✓	13	Samsung QN65Q8FN	78	\$3,700
✓	14	Sony XBR-65X900F	78	\$2,800
\$	16	Samsung UN65NU8000	77	\$2,200
✓	17	Samsung UN65NU8500	77	\$2,200
✓	18	LG 65SK8000PUA	73	\$1,700
\$	19	LG 65UK7700AUB	72	\$1,400
✓	22	Sony XBR-65X850F	71	\$2,200
\$	25	Samsung UN65NU7100	70	\$1,400
✓	30	Samsung UN65NU7300	69	\$1,500
✓	32	Vizio M65-F0	68	\$1,250
✓	33	LG 65UK6300PUE	65	\$1,200

55- TO 59-INCH

✓	2	LG OLED55C8PUA	88	\$3,500
✓	3	LG OLED55E8PUA	87	\$3,200
✓	4	Sony XBR-55A8F	87	\$4,000

		Brand & Model	Overall Score	Price
Rec.	Rank			

55- TO 59-INCH *Continued*

✓	6	Samsung QN55Q7FN	81	\$2,600
✓	7	Samsung QN55Q7CN	80	\$2,800
✓	9	Samsung QN55Q8FN	79	\$2,700
✓	10	Samsung QN55Q6FN	77	\$1,700
✓	14	Samsung UN55NU8500	76	\$1,650
✓	15	Sony XBR-55X900F	76	\$1,700
\$	16	LG 55SK8000PUA	75	\$1,200
\$	18	Samsung UN55NU7100	72	\$1,000
\$	19	Samsung UN55NU7300	71	\$1,200
	26	LG 55UK6300PUE	64	\$825
	31	Vizio M55-F0	60	\$1,000

46- TO 52-INCH

✓	1	Samsung UN49NU8000	75	\$1,200
✓	2	Sony XBR-49X900F	74	\$1,300
\$	4	LG 49UK6300PUE	69	\$750
✓	5	Samsung UN50NU7100	67	\$800
	7	LG 50UK6300BUB	64	\$750
	11	Vizio D50-F1	60	\$470

39- TO 43-INCH

	4	Samsung UN40NU7100	62	\$650
	5	Samsung UN43NU7100	61	\$700
	9	Vizio D39f-F0	60	\$330
	11	Vizio E43-F1	58	\$500

> Readers with a Digital or All-Access membership can find the latest ratings at CR.org/tvs.

Autos

All of the tested vehicles are available in Canada. **Report and ratings, pages 63-65**

Make & Model	Price Range	Acceleration (sec.)				Fuel Economy (liters per 100 km)		
		0-50 km/h	0-100 km/h	80-100 km/h	500 Meters	City Driving	Highway Driving	Overall
MIDSIZED HYBRID SEDAN								
Honda Accord Hybrid	\$33,090–\$39,790	3.2	7.9	4.0	18.4	5.8	4.5	5.0
LARGE CAR								
Toyota Avalon	\$42,790–\$47,790	3.6	8.8	3.5	18.8	7.4	4.6	5.6
COMPACT Crossover								
Nissan Kicks	\$17,998–\$22,798	4.1	11.2	5.0	20.8	10.0	5.9	7.4
LUXURY COMPACT SUV								
Acura RDX	\$43,990–\$54,990	3.1	7.4	3.9	17.7	15.5	8.0	10.8

✓ **HONDA ACCORD HYBRID**
PRICE AS TESTED
\$29,780 (U.S.)

79
OVERALL
SCORE



NISSAN KICKS
PRICE AS TESTED
\$21,050 (U.S.)

63
OVERALL
SCORE



✓ **TOYOTA AVALON**
PRICE AS TESTED
\$38,643 (U.S.)

91
OVERALL
SCORE



✓ **ACURA RDX**
PRICE AS TESTED
\$43,995 (U.S.)

77
OVERALL
SCORE



Contact Info

How to reach manufacturers in Canada.

Ariens
ariens.com

Bosch
bosch-home.ca

Cub Cadet
cubcadet.ca

Ego
egopowerplus.com

Frigidaire
frigidaire.ca

GE
geappliances.ca

GE Monogram
monogram.ca

Haier
haierappliances.com

Honda
powerequipment.
honda.ca

Husqvarna
husqvarna.com/ca

Jenn-Air
jennair.ca

KitchenAid
kitchenaid.ca

LG
lg.ca

Miele
miele.ca

Poulan Pro
poulanpro.com

Samsung
samsung.ca

Snow Joe
snowjoe.com

Sony
sony.ca

Thermador
thermador.ca

Toro
toro.com/en-ca

Troy-Bilt
troybilt.ca

Vizio
vizio.ca

Whirlpool
whirlpool.ca

Wolf
subzero-wolf.com