
 [How to Recycle](#)

 [Where to Recycle](#)


[Home & Garden](#)   [How & Buy](#)

Reading time: 4 mins

# Buyer's Guide to the Most Efficient Counter-Depth Refrigerators



By [Gemma Alexander](#)

© MAR 24, 2021    [fridge-counter](#), [refrigerators](#), [small](#)

[kitchens](#)

Never miss an update!

[JOIN OUR LIST](#)



We would all like to buy the most environmentally friendly appliances available. But in real life, energy efficiency is only one of many factors we need to consider when we're making major purchases. If you're dealing with a narrow galley kitchen, living in a [tiny house](#), or dealing with any number of awkward kitchen configurations, the dimensions of your new refrigerator might be your top priority.

Fortunately, if a counter-depth refrigerator is non-negotiable, there are extremely efficient options.

## Refrigerator Efficiency

Energy efficiency is the primary consideration when it's [time to buy](#) a new refrigerator. If all refrigerators sold in the United States were [Energy Star](#) certified, the energy cost savings would be close to \$700 million each year, equivalent to taking more than 870,000 vehicles off the road.

There are more than 300 refrigerators on Energy Star's 2021 Most Efficient list, but many of them are already discontinued. Earth911 has [identified the best options](#) that are currently available for purchase. All of these are top freezer designs that extend beyond the depth of a standard counter.

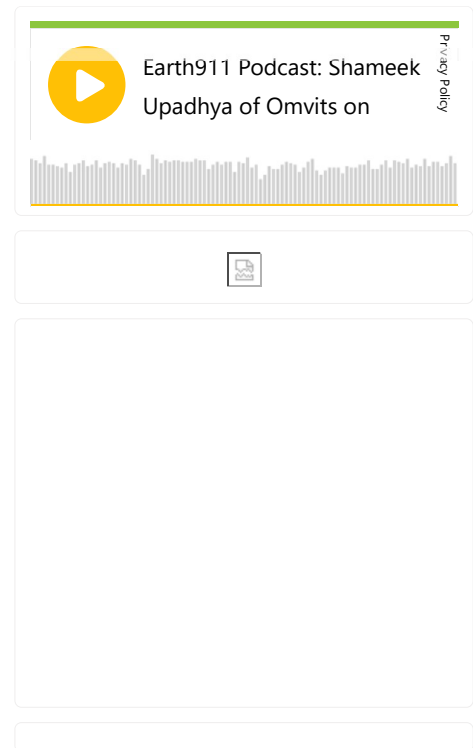
## Small Matters

It's important to buy the right size refrigerator for your household. Overfull refrigerators operate less efficiently. So do ones that are mostly empty. And if your refrigerator is bigger than you need, you risk wasting food that gets pushed to the back and forgotten. A common rule of thumb for refrigerator sizing is 6 cubic feet per person in the household. But if you are very good at [eliminating food waste](#), you may need less storage space than the average person, who wastes a third of what they buy.

Total energy consumption generally increases with size. But so does the per-cubic-foot efficiency. One large Energy Star appliance is less wasteful than two smaller refrigerators, especially if one of them is old. Don't keep a spare refrigerator in the basement or garage.

## About Refrigerant

Refrigerators only use a very small amount of refrigerant. But the [impact of the refrigerant](#) on the ozone layer is still a consideration. This is measured as [Global Warming Potential](#) (GWP) relative to CO<sub>2</sub>, which is assigned a value of 1. As of [January 1, 2021](#), new refrigerators will use R-600a (GWP of 5). However, the refrigerator you buy in 2021 may have been manufactured in the previous year. For now, the only way to be sure your new fridge uses R-600a is to check the sticker



Earth911 Podcast: Shameek Upadhya of Omvits on Privacy Policy

Download

inside the door. It should identify the refrigerant alongside the model and serial number.

## The Best Counter-Depth Refrigerators

The standard depth of kitchen countertops in the U.S. is [25 inches](#). The following models range in depth from 25.63 inches to 32 inches with the refrigerator door closed.

### [Frigidaire FFHT1835V\\*](#)

This 18.3 cubic-foot capacity counter-depth refrigerator from Frigidaire uses 369 kWh/yr. As is usual for the most efficient refrigerators, it does not offer electricity-intensive extras like an icemaker or through-door dispenser. But it does have an auto-defrost function, humidity-controlled crisper drawers, and a flexible interior storage system. It's also available in [stainless steel](#).

**Cabinet depth:** 26 5/8 inches with the door closed; 57 inches with the door open 90 degrees



### [Frigidaire FFHT1814V\\*](#)

Slightly cheaper and slightly smaller than the previous entry, at 18 cubic feet, this Frigidaire uses the same amount of energy, 369 kWh/yr. It too has humidity-controlled crisper drawers, but the interior is not as adjustable.

**Cabinet depth:** 30 1/8 inches with the door closed; 58 1/2 inches with the door open 90 degrees



### [Kenmore 111.6121\\*61\\*](#)

The 21 cubic-foot Kenmore provides a lot more storage space and uses commensurately more energy, about 393 kWh/yr. It's a straightforward design without a lot of bells and whistles that has been available consistently for years.

**Cabinet depth:** 32 inches with the door closed; 62 inches with the door open 90 degrees



### [Kenmore 111.7121\\*61\\*](#)

This large-capacity Kenmore is one of the few refrigerators with an icemaker to make Energy Star's Most Efficient list. The 21 cubic-foot refrigerator is still not as efficient as others its size, though, using 472 kW/yr.

**Cabinet depth:** 32 inches with the door closed; 62 inches with the door open 90 degrees



### [Summit FF1511SS](#)

If you are willing to sacrifice some storage space in exchange for reduced energy use, there are a lot of narrow, counter-depth refrigerators to choose from. The largest of these is 28 inches wide and offers 13 cubic feet of capacity while using only 320 kWh/yr.

**Cabinet depth:** 25.63 inches with the door closed; 50.75

inches with the door open 90 degrees



## Responsible Refrigeration

No matter what refrigerator you buy, try to [recycle](#) your old one. Make sure the [refrigerant](#) is removed and properly disposed of by a [responsible service provider](#).

Refrigerators should be set to 35-38 degrees Fahrenheit and freezers to 0 F. The refrigerator should be placed away from heat sources and inches away from the wall; don't store stuff on top and clean the condenser coils a few times a year. If the door seals lose their airtightness, replace them.

Turn off extra features like the icemaker and anti-sweat heater. Only store food in closed containers to keep the moisture levels low. Keep the refrigerator three-quarters full and organized. This will help the refrigerator operate more efficiently and help you avoid food waste.

---

advertising

---

[Edit](#)



Reading time: 4 mins

### [How To Create a Rain Garden](#)



By [Gemma Alexander](#)

Gemma Alexander has an M.S. in urban horticulture and a backyard filled with native plants. After working in a genetics laboratory and at a landfill, she now writes about the environment, the arts and family. See more of her writing [here](#).