

# Fryer Buying Guide

## What are the different types of fryers?

Commercial fryers are valuable cooking mechanisms with several models available: portable countertop models to save space, floor models, or batteries of several small fryers. With the addition of casters, you can easily clean the fryer at the end of the day to ensure quality and performance.

The primary difference is the “sediment zone” for each style of fryer. The sediment zone is where cracklings, breading, and small pieces of food collect as they fall off during the cooking cycle. Some manufacturers call this the “cold zone” because oil temperature in this zone is not as hot as the cooking zone.

### Open-Pot Fryers

The term “open-pot” refers to the unobstructed heated area of these fryers. Gas models heat the fry pot from the outside. Electric models have a ribbon-shaped element immersed in the oil, which folds upward for easy cleaning.



- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>Pros</b> |   |
| +           | Versatile and well-suited for most frying needs |
| +           | Open-pot fryers are the easiest to clean        |
| +           | Value priced                                    |
| <b>Cons</b> |   |
| +           | Deep, narrow sediment zone                      |
| +           | Not suitable for specialty products             |

#### Best for lightly breaded foods



French Fries



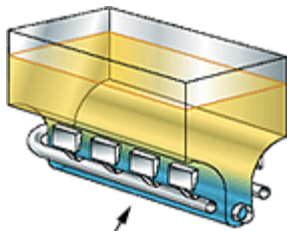
Cheese Sticks



Hot wings



Poppers



Sediment zone  
(blue region)

#### Open-Pot Sediment Zone

Open-pot fryers are easiest to clean, but have a smaller sediment zone than tube-style fryers, making them best for lightly breaded (lower sediment) foods. The construction of these fryers allows for the best visual monitoring of sediment status.

## Tube-Type Fryers

Tube-style fryers can accomplish the same tasks as open-pot fryers, but are slightly more difficult to clean because the tube-shaped heating elements are permanently fixed in the vat.



### Pros

- ⊕ Well-suited for a wide range of heavy frying
- ⊕ Wide sediment zone

### Cons

- ⊕ Difficult to clean
- ⊕ Not suitable for specialty products
- ⊕ More costly than open-pot fryers

### Best choice for heavily battered foods



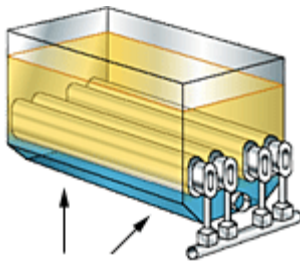
Fried Chicken



Onion Blossoms



Fried fish



Sediment zone  
(blue region)

### Tube-Type Sediment Zone

Tube-style fryers have larger sediment zones below the burners than other fryers. The wide sediment areas below the burner tubes allow particles to settle and accumulate. However, because tubes are generally fixed in place, it can make cleaning more difficult and time consuming.

## Flat-Bottom Fryers

Flat-bottom fryers are designed for frying delicate items that float near the surface of the oil, such as tortilla chips, taco shells and tempura. These fryers don't have a sediment zone, so they aren't as suited for the high volume tasks accomplished with tube-style and open-pot designs.



### Pros

- ⊕ Well-suited for liquid battered foods
- ⊕ Ideal for bulk frying

### Cons

- ⊕ Difficult to clean
- ⊕ No sediment zone

### Best choice for specialty foods



Funnel Cake



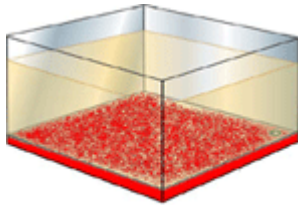
Tortilla Chips



Tempura



Taco Shells



*No sediment zone exists  
(red region)*

#### Flat-Bottom Sediment

Flat-bottom fryers lack an area devoted to capturing sediment. Contaminants remain more in contact with foods throughout the frying cycle. Patrons may complain about a blackened appearance or a difference in taste due to carbonized contaminants.

## Which is better, Gas or Electric?

Your first major decision in selecting a commercial fryer will be to decide between a gas-powered or electric-powered model. Gas fryers are cheaper to operate and recover heat more quickly. Also, high-end gas fryers heat up faster than any other type. Gas fryers can use natural or propane gas and may include filtration systems underneath for draining.

Electric fryers use the highest number of BTU, but are the most efficient. They feature more safety measures and enhanced controls for temperature and time limits. Electric fryers are also preferable for businesses that move frequently or reorganize the kitchen- they disassemble quickly for easy portability and storage.

#### Heating Speed

Electric fryers take longer to get up to temperature and typically can't reach the same maximum temperature as their gas-powered counterparts.

Edge: Gas

#### Oil Recovery

Once up to temperature, electric fryers recover more quickly between frying cycles than their gas counterparts.

Edge: Electric

#### Operational Cost

In the past, gas fryers were the least expensive to operate. However, in recent years natural gas has outpaced the cost of electricity in some areas.

Slight Edge: Gas

#### Efficiency

Electric fryers house a heating element inside the oil, increasing efficiency. Conversely, gas fryers must heat the metal container holding the oil first, which in turn heats the oil – this uses more energy.

Edge: Electric

#### Product Type

You can choose gas or electric power for open-pot, tube-style or flat-bottom fryers

Edge: Even

#### Portability

Electric fryers have the edge because they are not tied to a gas line. Relocating them however, still might require a visit from your electrician.

Edge: Electric

## Oil Selection is Important

- **Cost:** Oil is costly. Make sure you factor in your oil purchases when calculating your fryers operational costs.
- **Flavor:** Different oils have distinctly different flavors which can significantly impact the taste of your food.
- **Smoking point:** Oil tends to smoke and burn at high heat. Be sure to choose an oil that suits your frying needs.
- **Health Effects:** Consumer awareness is at an all-time high. Consider beneficial unsaturated fats (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated) as opposed to saturated and trans fats.

Oil	Smoking Point	Flavor	Health/Nutrition
Canola	High – 400F	Mild flavor	Lowest in saturated fat of all oils – helps lower cholesterol levels
Corn	High – 450F	Light taste – can be used in place of olive oil	Believed to reduce bad cholesterol in the arteries
Grape Seed	High – 400F	Light taste – can be used in place of olive oil	Believed to reduce bad cholesterol in the arteries
Nextra	High – 450F	Tallow, meaty flavor; generally a flavor enhancer	No cholesterol and no trans fat; decreases LDL
Peanut	High – about 450F	Can add a rich, nutty taste, but does not absorb or transfer flavors	Contains reversatrol, which is associated with reduced cardiovascular risk; however, it can cause allergic reactions
Safflower	High – 450F	Bland, flavorless	High in polyunsaturated fats – helps reduce total cholesterol and LDL
Sunflower	High – 450F	Generally bland	High in polyunsaturated fats – helps reduce total cholesterol and LDL
Vegetable	High – 450F	Generally mild flavor	Soy oil is high in polyunsaturated fats – helps reduce total cholesterol; partially hydrogenated vegetable oils contain trans fats

## Fryer Buying Tips

**Save money by spending more.** Buying an energy-efficient fryer costs more money up front but could help save money in energy costs in just a few years. Energy-efficient fryers feature smaller operating costs and less food waste.

**Maintaining the quality of your fryer starts with quality oil filters.** They prolong the life of your cooking oil while collecting crumbs and other food debris you don't want to serve to customers. No matter how good your filters are, be sure to change the cooking oil frequently as excessive use can affect the taste and quality of the food.

**Consider a transfer system** to remove old oil from your facilities. Transfer systems will keep track of cooking oil's degradation rate - it's recommended that you replace the oil when the level exceeds 24% or when food quality and taste suffers. When you remove cooking oil, always use solid steel containers to transport the waste.