

# Range Buying Guide

Commercial ranges are available with a variety of sizes and configurations for all cooking requirements,. You can purchase ranges with 1 to 12 burners and in combination with griddle tops, charbroilers and convection ovens. Start by determining which features best suit your operation, price range and space.

## Choosing the right range for your venue

There is a difference between a restaurant range and a heavy duty range. Restaurant ranges are well suited for restaurants with fewer than 150 seats. Heavy duty ranges are best suited for restaurants over 150 seats or facilities like hospitals, correctional facilities, and cafeterias that constantly produce meals throughout the day.

### Best Venues for Heavy-Duty Ranges

- ✦ Central Commissary System
- ✦ Banquet Kitchen
- ✦ Large Hospital
- ✦ Correctional Facility
- ✦ Commercial Cafeteria
- ✦ Facilities with over 150 seats

### Best Venues for Restaurant Ranges

- ✦ Smaller Restaurants – fewer than 150 seats
- ✦ Short Order Cook Stations
- ✦ Churches
- ✦ Nursing Homes
- ✦ Snack Bars
- ✦ Limited Menu Facilities



## Heavy Duty Ranges

VS.

## Restaurant Ranges

### Pros

- Durable long lasting construction
- Larger gas valve allows for easier combining of other components
- Higher energy outputs for shorter cooking times
- Can be **battered** together to create large units suitable for high volume kitchens
- Built to withstand intense use with heaviest stock pots

### Cons

- Higher initial costs
- Often larger taking up more kitchen space
- Increased service costs
- Higher energy outputs means higher energy costs

### Pros

- Lower initial costs
- Suitable as a free standing model
- Lower service costs
- BTU and power levels are close to heavy-duty standards for an economical price
- Often take up less kitchen space than heavy-duty ranges
- Most popular in the restaurant industry

### Cons

- Not as durable as heavy-duty ranges
- More costly to install
- Usually have slightly lower energy outputs
- Will not withstand intense use as well as heavy-duty ranges

## Top Range Configurations

After deciding on a heavy-duty or restaurant range a top configuration must be established. Top configurations can consist of all the same components or a combination of numerous components. Top configurations can include gas or electric burners, griddles, hot top, French top, salamander broiler or cheesemelters.

### Open Gas Burners



Open top gas burners are the choice of most professional kitchens. They provide an instantaneous and visible heat source that can be easily controlled and regulated. Gas burners are usually much cheaper than electric burners and provide faster heat to a cooking vessel.

#### Things to consider

- Easily removable and durable top grates
- A wide range of burner flame heights
- Ring or star style burners
- Nursing Homes
- Individual pilot lights for each burner
- High or low BTU rating depending on user preference

### Electric Burners



Most professional kitchens prefer gas for its affordability and usability, however if gas is not an option in your area electric burners may be necessary. These types of units are ideal for establishments that desire the versatility of a full size range without the need for a gas connection.

#### Things to consider

- Solid electric plates are more durable than coils
- Voltage requirements
- Diameter of electric plate or coil

### Griddles



Griddles consist of a flat metal plate made of steel, cast iron or aluminum and food is cooked directly on top of the griddle's surface. The large amount of open space allows the user to cook numerous items simultaneously, ideal for customers who want to prepare various types of foods very quickly.

#### Things to consider

- A large grease trough allows for easy clean-up
- Manual valve controls provide user regulated temperature control
- Thermostatic controls provide accurate temperature control
- Surface should be non-stick or well seasoned

**Ranges can come in varying configurations of burners, griddles and tops to suit your needs.**



#### **Hot Tops**

Unlike griddles, you do not cook directly on top of a hot plate. Instead, pans or pots are placed directly on top of the unit.



#### **Open top burner/half hot top combination**



#### **Open burners**



#### **French Top**

A French Top is a continuous cooking surface that allows you to easily move pans from one section of the top to the other.



#### **Griddle Top**

## **Salamanders, cheesemelters and broiler/griddles**

**Over fired broilers** radiate heat from above the food product enabling the user to successfully broil, melt cheese, or finish products quickly. There are three categories of over fired broilers: **salamanders**, **cheesemelters** and **broiler/griddles**.

#### **Salamanders**

- Salamander broilers have a higher range of use than cheesemelters
- With high heating abilities, they can do just about anything from cooking a thick steak to melting cheese on a platter
- Salamander broilers are significantly more expensive and more powerful than cheesemelters

#### **Cheesemelters**

- Cheesemelters provide gentle heat for more delicate cooking or finishing
- These units are less powerful than salamander broilers
- Cheesemelters are perfect for holding hot food or finishing cheese dishes

#### **Broiler/griddle**

- Saves space by having the broiler and griddle on the range top
- Same burners used for griddle and over fired broiler
- Uneven cooking due to multiple uses in confined area

#### **Range Mounted**

- Does not take up counter space
- Needs proper ventilation
- Pipes make it hard to move the range for cleaning

#### **Wall Mounted**

- Does not take up counter space
- Does not have to be on top of a range freeing up range space
- Can be put out of the way of other equipment, as long as its properly ventilated

#### **Countertop**

- Large open cooking area
- Can be accessed even if someone else is standing at the range

## Final buying considerations



### Casters

Optional for most range models, casters are quick becoming the standard in the restaurant industry. Locking casters provide stability while still allowing the unit to be periodically moved for cleaning and easy service.



### Gas Type

It is vital to specify the type of gas your establishment will be using when ordering your range. Whether using **Natural Gas** or **Propane**, ranges are specifically constructed to work with a specific gas type. Failure to purchase the range that works with a certain gas could result in the failure of a very expensive piece of equipment.

### Gas vs. Propane vs. Electricity

If you're replacing a range, your decision to use gas, propane or electric has already been made, unless you want to go to the effort and expense of choosing a different heat source.

### About Gas Ranges

Gas is by far the most popular. The flame from an open top gas burner is instantaneous. It's also easier to gage the heat since the flame is visible. Commercial gas ranges are usually more affordable than electric.

Gas ranges are more desirable when cooking meats and vegetables because they provide a greater amount of "moist heat".

The type of food and heating needs will determine the BTU's. The higher the BTU, the faster the heat up. The down side is, the higher your energy consumption will be. The lower the BTU's, the lower the heat up, the less costly it is to operate.

### About Propane

Propane or liquid gas (LP) is mostly used for restaurants in rural areas or portable operations. Propane typically burns a little cooler than natural gas so you'll need to account for the difference when considering the BTU output.

### About Electric Ranges

Electric ranges are easier to relocate than gas or LP within a restaurant kitchen than a gas range. Unlike a gas range, there's no need to move a gas connection along with your range.

Most ovens have some degree of variance in baking temperatures. However, electric ovens have a quicker response time to temperature changes, providing less heat variance overall. Lower amounts of variance yield to a more even heat and more consistent baking results.