

Their disadvantage is that, when slotted into a countertop, there are inevitable gaps on either side for dirt to accumulate and paper thin items to disappear.

They break up the run of cabinets visually as the worktop and plinth boards are not continuous.

A few freestanding cookers still have high level grills which are often popular but inhibit any storage above them for at least 300mm and make a cooker hooded fan over the hob impracticable.

The oven is always at low level which is more difficult for easy access and visibility than an oven at waist level.

Most have depths of 600mm to suit a standard worktop.

Common widths are 500, 600 and 630mm.

Traditional range cookers

Range cookers with their cast iron construction and brightly coloured enamel doors have, for a long time, been a must-have item for the leisured classes in country houses. As they can cost as much as a new car and are expensive to run, they are inevitably a status symbol.

They are disliked by professional cooks for their lack of flexibility and unreliable oven and hob temperatures.

They are also not a good choice for busy working people – there is no thrusting two chops under a grill for a quick supper. If the insulated lids are left up for some time, the burners will cool down and take some time to regain heat.

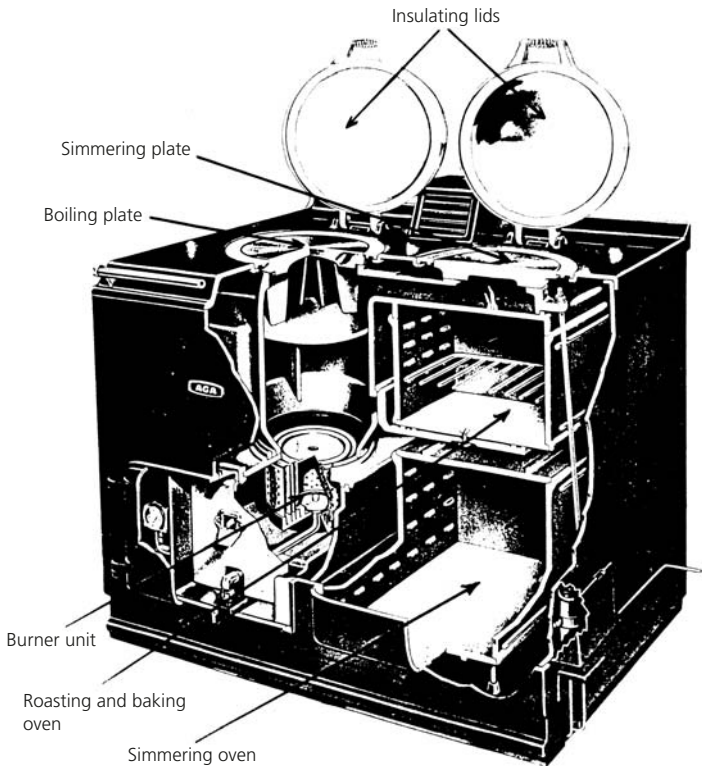
Ideally they are 'on' all the time as cooling down causes condensation which results in rust.

However, despite all these disadvantages, they are loved by their owners for their comfortable room-warming properties and small details like the full length front rail for drying towels and overnight slow cooking in the bottom oven.

There are several different models: cooking only, cooking with a back boiler for hot water, cooking with a larger boiler for hot water and central heating for a limited number of radiators.

Typically there are two oven and four oven types, approximately 1 m and 1.5 m wide.

All models have at least a main oven and a second warming oven with two cast iron hot plates with insulated lids, one for boiling and one for simmering.



Two oven AGA cooker c. 1985

The depth is generally well over 600 mm so will protrude from a standard worktop and depending on type, some models require a 150 mm gap at one side for servicing and a 50 mm gap if positioned next to combustible materials such as a kitchen cabinet.