

In most types, no water supply is necessary as the steam comes from a reservoir which must be filled with (tap) water for every cooking session. The condensate is collected in a tray at the bottom which has to be emptied after cooking. More sophisticated models are available which can be connected to the water and drain pipes.

A limescale indicator will show when the descaling programme needs activating.

These ovens are equipped with racks and trays so that a variety of meat, fish and vegetables can be cooked simultaneously.

Note that steam comes out of the oven when the door is opened and therefore it is not considered safe to build them in under worktop level as they could scald children.

## **Warming drawers**

Warming drawers are designed to pre-heat and keep food and plates warm in a drawer heated at 30–80°C.

The drawer(s) are usually stacked below the oven.

## **Gas ovens**

Gas ovens are far simpler than electric ovens as the different heating zones are determined by the setting of the thermostat which corresponds to the central shelf while the top shelf is one gas mark above, the bottom shelf one gas mark below and the bottom of the oven still cooler.

Some cooks prefer to bake in a gas oven rather than an electric oven as the hot air is more moist.

The grill is incorporated in the top of a single oven or in a separate smaller oven.

Built-in gas ovens are few and far between and tend only to be made by British manufacturers.

## Oven cleaning systems

*Pyrolytic* cleaning works by heating the oven up to around 480°C for 1–3 hours which reduces food deposits to ash which can be swept away when the oven is cool.

*Oxylytic linings* are made up of microscopic porous oxygen-filled ceramic spheres. When the oven is heated up, oxygen is released causing food deposits to oxidise.

*Catalytic liners* are coated with a rough surfaced vitreous enamel that is activated by heating the oven to 220°C for half an hour which speeds up the process of burning off deposits.

*Hydro-clean* is a method of cleaning the oven by pouring 400 ml water and some detergent into the base of the oven and operating the bottom heating element to 60°C. This produces steam to loosen deposits which can be wiped out with a damp cloth when the oven is cool.

*Enamel linings* are sometimes provided at the bottom of the oven and also at the top of the oven which are removable for easier cleaning.

## Microwave ovens

Microwave ovens, in one form or another are an essential appliance in today's kitchen. They may only be used for minor tasks such as defrosting, warming plates or reheating food or they may be the sole oven in the kitchen when conventional cooking is combined with microwaving as in the *combination microwave* which allows for extra speed and efficiency.

It is **the** essential appliance for busy young professionals working long hours who rely on ready-prepared frozen food for their evening meal.