Fitting format

Most of the different models listed above are available as:

freestanding	usually cheap small models or large side-by-side and 'retro style' (i.e. with rounded corners) fridge-freezers
built-in	generally means appliance will fit into 500 or 600 mm wide spaces to suit standard cabinets with facility for a 'decor' panel to match cabinet door fronts
in-column	means appliances built into tall cabinets, sometimes stacked one above the other. This may mean they are fully integrated but also, confusingly, can mean 'built-in'
	Check with the manufacturer
built-under	as 'built-in' (above) but low enough to fit under a standard 900 mm high worktop so is about 865 mm high
fully integrated	can be built into standard tall or base cabinets, accept matching doors and variable plinth heights

Note that *fully integrated* appliances fit seamlessly into standard cabinets.

Built-in and *built-under* appliances, which are not fully integrated, will have dirt trapping gaps at the sides and will break the continuous plinth line of adjacent cabinets.

Cooling appliances unless *freestanding* will need ventilation space at the back and at plinth level to suit manufacturer's requirements.

Side-by-side fridge-freezers are generally larger than a 600 mm deep worktop. They take up a lot of floor space and need from 250 to 450 mm both sides for full access to door storage. See p. 126.

Those with ice and water dispensers need a water connection.

Capacity

The volume of different models can vary from as little as 120 litres for a built-under larder refrigerator to 600 litres for a side-by-side fridge-freezer.

As a guide, allow about 28 litres (one cubic foot) for each person in the household.
This volume may be reduced if there is a separate freezer.

Most families find that 140–170 litres is adequate.

For the household with a kitchen garden, a total of 400 litres may be more suitable. Here a 250 litre chest freezer outside the kitchen and a refrigerator in the kitchen might be appropriate.

Defrosting

There are three methods:

manual — appliance is turned off, contents removed and ice left to thaw and drain from the bottom shelf into a bowl

auto defrost — during normal operation, ice builds up on the back wall which subsequently melts and runs down the back wall into a container from which it is evaporated by the heat of the compressor.

frost free — sensors monitor the temperature and direct a fan at the back of the appliance to circulate chilled air through a system of vents evenly round the interior. This has the benefit that frozen packs do not stick together, labels stay legible and ice never builds up. However, it can make food somewhat dry, is expensive to run and tends to be less energy efficient.