

The coldest part of the fridge, between 0 and 5°C, is usually the lower two shelves, but refrigerators with an ice box at the top have the coldest part immediately under the ice box.

Upper shelves and door storage will be cool zones +5° to 7°C suitable for dairy and wine storage.

In frost-free appliances, the temperature is even throughout the interior.

Star ratings

Star ratings for freezers and ice boxes are as follows:

- *** = -6°C suitable for storing pre-frozen food for a week
- **** = -12°C suitable for storing pre-frozen food for 4 weeks
- ***** = -18°C suitable for storing pre-frozen food for 3 to 12 months
- ****** = -18°C (or colder) suitable for storing frozen food for 12 months and freezing fresh food up to 1/10th volume of freezer without using a fast-freeze facility.

Climate class

All cooling appliances are ascribed a climate class. This denotes the range of *room temperatures* that an appliance is designed to operate within effectively:

N = +16°–32°C

SN = +10°–32°C

N-ST = +16°–38°C

SN-ST = +10°–38°C

Noise levels

Some appliances can be a great deal noisier than others. Models which work by absorption are quieter but more expensive than those with compressors.

Noise levels are given for all cooling appliances and are expressed in decibels as dB(A) re 1 pW.

These range from low at about 33 to high at 47 decibels.

Energy consumption

All cooling appliances are given an energy-efficient class. These rate from A (good) to G (bad).

Most fridges and freezers are rated A or B.

Frost-free refrigeration tends to be less energy efficient.

All appliances should carry the *EU energy label* which describes the manufacturer, model number, energy efficiency class, energy consumption (kW/cycle), net volume of fresh and frozen food compartments (litres), noise levels (dB(A) re 1 pW). See pp. 40, 41.

Running costs can be high as cooling appliances operate all hours every day.

Most manufacturers state energy consumption for 24 hours (kWh) and an indication of annual running costs (£/kWh).

Larders and cold rooms

Before refrigeration was invented, houses were equipped with *larders*, either in an outhouse or in a north-facing room where part of the window would be fitted with perforated or woven copper or brass screens to let in the cool air but keep the insects out. The room would be lined with slate shelves and the ceiling fitted with hooks on which to hang game.