

Ovens

For the most flexibility in your kitchen layout, choose a separate oven and cooktop. Separate pieces cost about 20 percent more than an all-in-one stove with the same features and accessories. Since you don't have to watch ovens as carefully as pots, place a separate oven out of heavy traffic areas where it won't break up work spaces. If you bake a lot, plan a second oven off to the side of your work area.

Safety: Never place an oven within 6 in. of a side wall. Locate wall ovens out of heavy traffic and away from doorways to accommodate the oven door's 20-in. swing. Choose between wall models and under-counter models:

Wall ovens look sleek in any kitchen. They are usually 27 in. wide, though 24- and 30-in. models are available. Set the oven at waist height to avoid bending to lift heavy pans. You can even put two ovens side by side so both are at the most convenient height. A stacked double unit, however, takes up less space.

Under-counter ovens let you maximize work space. You can also place these models under the cooktop of your choice. Bear in mind you have to stoop to see what's cooking, since the door opens to just a few inches above the floor.