

PRESS RELEASE

Lovin' the oven

Ovens are a crucial element in any kitchen – allowing you to roast succulent Sunday roasts, bake classic cakes and cupcakes, and of course, a wide range of frozen meals. Read on for an overview on the different types of ovens currently on the market.

10/11/2017, Johannesburg: The oven is one of the most expensive appliances in the kitchen, and as such, it is advisable to do some research before you invest. Mercia de Jager, from leading kitchen appliance manufacturer, Miele, says that before you start looking, it is important to understand the difference between the various types of ovens that you can choose from: “Currently, there are a number of ovens to choose from, including convection, steam, microwave and combination ovens – each with its own set of benefits and features.”

Convection ovens

Very simply put, a convection oven is a regular electric oven with radiant heating elements, but it also has a fan and exhaust system, which blows hot air in the oven cavity around the food. The hot air that surrounds food ensures that the food cooks faster, and more evenly, since the hot air is circulated and this helps even out any temperature variance. Convection cooking is also better at browning, says Mercia de Jager: “Convection ovens create a dry atmosphere that caramelises the sugars faster when roasting, so foods like meats and vegetables for example, get browner, but the interiors stay moist. However, if baking is your thing, you should be able to switch the fan off so that your dough can rise.”

Unique features to look out for on a convection oven:

- **Added moisture:** Perfect baking and roasting results can be achieved by adding moisture. The bursts of steam in Miele’s Moisture Plus mode for example, ensures that meat becomes tender and succulent and acquires an appetising browned crust, while bread and rolls taste as if fresh from the bakery.
- **Precise roasting of meat:** Customised and precise roasting of meat, fish and poultry is achievable by monitoring the core temperature with a food probe and using a countdown indicator.
- **Crisp function:** The controlled reduction of moisture in the oven results in a dry micro-climate. This results in particularly crispy French fries, croquettes, and so on.
- **Telescopic runners:** Telescopic runners can be pulled right out – allowing for easy removal of baking trays, racks and oven dishes.
- **Handleless design and soft-open functionality:** Imagine an oven that can open via touch – one without handles that blends seamlessly with your handleless cabinetry. It also opens softly into a 90° position and the movement is cushioned. Miele’s Touch2Open technology and SoftOpen achieve just that.

- **Energy efficiency:** Any modern oven worth its salt should boast a minimum A-rating for energy efficiency. A large percentage of Miele cookers and ovens are categorized in energy efficiency class A+. This protects the environment and your household budget.
- **Self-cleaning catalytic enamel panels:** Miele ovens with PerfectClean for example, have an additional catalytic liner at the back of the oven and in the sides. Already during baking and roasting, grease residue is continuously broken down, which keeps the cleaning effort on the rear panel to a minimum.
- **A catalyser:** Grease and odours can be removed from emerging steam through a catalyser, such as Miele's AirClean. This prevents grease deposits on your furniture, walls and curtains. Cooking odours are also significantly reduced.
- **Pyrolytic cleaning:** Pyrolytic cleaning is an automatic process in which residue in the oven is incinerated to ash at a very high temperature. This makes arduous scrubbing and abrasive cleaners a thing of the past.
- **A non-stick finish:** Cleaning an oven with non-stick interiors is very easy. Many components in your Miele oven for example, such as the oven interior, baking trays, and so on, feature a patented surface finish with unique non-stick properties called PerfectFinish.

Steam ovens

As the name suggests, steam ovens use steam, instead of simply radiant heat, to cook your food. While conventional ovens can dry food out, with steam ovens moisture is never in short supply. Both heat and humidity have a significant effect on cooking – water molecules conduct heat more efficiently than regular air, thus adding steam to the mix results in quicker results. This not only saves time, but it also helps to better preserve the vitamins and minerals in your food.

And that's not the only benefit, says Mercia: "The humidity in the oven helps prevent the water in your food from evaporating, which in turn keeps it from drying out. This means juicier chicken, flakier pastries, and better bread. It also means you can make foods like rice or steamed veggies that would typically never see the inside of an oven, or reheat leftovers without robbing them of moisture."

What's more is that you can cook a number of dishes together at one time, which not only saves time, but it also saves energy, explains Mercia: "Miele steam ovens allow you to cook on up to three levels simultaneously - even different dishes. This is because with steam cooking neither odours nor flavours are transferred to other foods. So you can cook a complete meal for lots of people at the same time. Each dish retains its own unaltered aroma." She says that you can opt for built-in or, if space is an issue, or you are renting, you can choose a free-standing model.

Features to look out for in steam ovens:

- **Easy cleaning:** External steam generation and a stainless steel oven interior makes for easy cleaning. Miele's steam ovens for example, are very easy to clean - after you are finished cooking one wipe is sufficient and everything is dry and shiny again.
- **Simple descaling:** Descaling can be a problem, so look for ovens that can be descaled using descaling tabs. The appliance should alert you when it needs to be descaled and an automatic programme should guide you step by step through the short process via the display.
- **Electronic temperature control:** The cooking temperature is electronically monitored and reliably regulated. "With the constantly precise temperature, you always achieve the best results."
- **Quantity-independent cooking:** Whether one portion or a meal for the whole family, frozen or fresh food, the cooking time remains the same in a Miele steam oven. There is no need to weigh food and calculate different cooking durations.

Microwave ovens

The microwave has become a staple in most modern kitchens, and it is easy to understand why – they offer many benefits. Their main benefits include the fact that they cook and defrost food exceptionally quickly, they present less risk of burns when used, and it is exceptionally easy to operate. The main drawback of microwaves is that, like steam ovens, they don't brown the food. Says Mercia: "Like steam ovens, microwaves can be fully integrated into your kitchen cabinetry, or they can be free-standing. The major drawback to microwave cooking is that it doesn't brown the food."

Combination ovens

Steam oven or microwave? In the past, consumers had to opt for at least one of the two cooking methods as many kitchens only offer enough space for one additional built-in appliance alongside a conventional oven. This all changed with the launch of Miele's DGM 6800, which combines all the benefits of a fully fledged steam oven, with those of a microwave oven, all in one unit. Says Mercia: "Steam cooking provides a healthy and nutritional way of cooking as it preserves all the vitamins, nutrients and minerals in the food."

Alternatively, if your kitchen doesn't offer enough space for two ovens, then why not consider investing in one combination steam oven, which combines a steam oven with a fully-fledged oven in one and the same unit. Mercia elaborates: "Given their wide repertoire, combination steam ovens from Miele are considered cream of the crop among cooking appliances. One exceptional application is Combi Cooking, which allows users to define individual process stages and to precisely determine not only the operating mode, the temperature and the time but also the humidity level inside the unit."

“Besides Combi Cooking, combination steam ovens also offer steam cooking, 'sous vide' slow cooking, Fan Plus, roof and floor heat, roof heat, floor heat, Intensive Bake, Cakes Special, Gentle Bake and three grill settings. Alongside manual control, the flagship model offers more than 200 automatic programmes. It is also possible to create one's own programmes using those mentioned above and to save these for future use.”

Features to look out for on all types of ovens:

- **Automatic cooking:** Automatic programmes are a real help. Miele's ovens boast up to over 100 electronically regulated programmes – allowing you to cook and bake any number of dishes to perfection. No need to programme the mode or temperature and duration.
- **User programmes:** You should be able to create your own user programmes. With Miele ovens for example, you can create up to 20 unique user programmes, where cooking function, temperature and duration can be individually set.
- **Timer functions:** Multiple timer functions and minute minders are essential. They allow you to select a start and finish time or the duration of a cooking process. Your food will be perfectly cooked at exactly the right time.
- **Pleasantly cool surfaces:** The sides of the oven should remain cool when the oven is on. Miele ovens for example, are cooled on all sides, which ensures that controls, handles and adjacent cabinets stay relatively cool to the touch. The multi-layer panels insulate the oven door effectively and ensure a lower temperature on the outside of the door, providing greater safety and protection against burns.
- **Automatic switch-off for maximum safety:** You can lock the appliance with the touch of a finger to protect it from being switched on by mistake, for instance by children.

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