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**—Betty Domrosch**

*Longtime member, supporter, and Legacy Society member*

With her long affiliation, Betty has decided to include CR in her will.  
“CR is an independent voice on product and food safety, encouraging  
our government and industry to act for marketplace fairness.”



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# A Safer Food Supply



**SALMONELLA IN FLOUR.** Listeria in salad greens. Hepatitis A in frozen fruit. These are just a few examples of the alarming recalls made in 2023—and it's only July. Each year, an average of 48 million people fall ill from eating food contaminated with bacteria or viruses. Almost 130,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die. Consumers should be able to assume their food is safe and should not

have to resign themselves to the high risk of food poisoning.

That's why CR is committed to reporting on problems in our food supply, such as this month's article on seafood safety, on page 24, and our recent analysis of 10 foods linked to the most serious outbreaks and recalls. It can also be hard to stay on top of every new food warning, but CR makes it easier with our recall tracker. Sign up at [CR.org/foodrecalltracker](https://www.consumerreports.org/foodrecalltracker) to get text alerts about products to avoid.

While your awareness is important, if we want more peace of mind about our food, we also need to revolutionize the way our food system is regulated, starting with the Food and Drug Administration. Consumers need more transparency and accountability at the FDA, but today the agency has a splintered, dysfunctional structure that has led to countless safety issues, including last year's infant formula crisis. CR is working hard to ensure that the FDA appoints a deputy commissioner with direct authority over all aspects of its food program, empowering the agency to establish a prevention-based system that fully addresses the risks that endanger consumers. You can help make that happen by signing our petition at [CR.org/foodreform](https://www.consumerreports.org/foodreform).

We should be able to trust that the food we eat will not make us sick. There's more to be done together on that front. Through our tools, reporting, and advocacy, CR is determined to create the safe, reliable food system that every consumer deserves.

**Marta L. Tellado,**  
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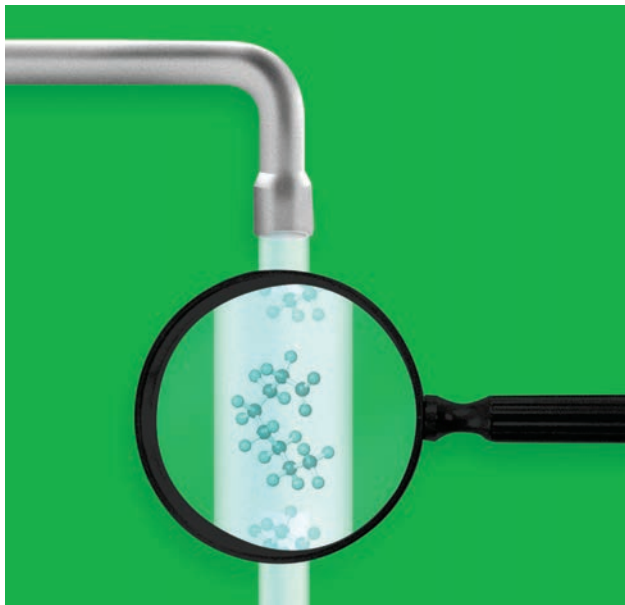
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## Getting PFAS out of Water

CR's long-running efforts to protect the public from PFAS chemicals paid dividends this spring, when the Environmental Protection Agency proposed the first national standard to limit the substances in drinking water.

PFAS, or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, resist breaking down in the environment and can remain in people's bodies for years. Exposure can cause a range of health risks, including cancer, liver damage, immune system suppression, and developmental issues in fetuses.

PFAS are used to make countless consumer products resistant to water, oil, and corrosion, and the chemicals seep into water systems from factories, landfills, and other sources.

CR has been raising awareness about PFAS since 2019, partly through investigations that have found the chemicals in food packaging, bottled water, and nonstick cookware. In 2021, a joint investigation by CR and the Guardian US found widespread PFAS contamination in U.S. drinking water.

The EPA proposal would set limits on six PFAS chemicals (of the more than 12,000 known) and require municipal water systems to monitor them, notify the public about the levels detected, and reduce levels that exceed the limits.

Please help us urge the EPA to adopt the proposal by signing our petition at [CR.org/pfasinwater](https://www.consumerreports.org/pfasinwater).

**46 OUT OF 120** tap water samples CR collected around the country exceeded our recommended limit for total PFAS.



SOURCE: CONSUMER REPORTS TAP WATER TEST RESULTS, MAY 2021



## CALL TO ACTION

CR's recent study of peer-to-peer payment apps such as Cash App, Venmo, and Zelle found that they may put consumers at risk of, among other things, losing money through fraud. We're working with these companies to improve their practices. Meanwhile, you can help by signing our petition asking the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and Congress to impose some commonsense rules on them, like requiring that they investigate fraud reports, provide insurance on user funds, and collect only the data needed to deliver users their service. Add your name at [CR.org/p2petition](https://www.consumerreports.org/p2petition).

## Fighting Unfair Fees

### WHAT'S AT STAKE

Consumers are perpetually barraged by fees: overdraft charges on bank accounts, seat assignment fees on airlines, service charges on event tickets, resort fees on hotel stays, broadcast TV fees on cable service. What's more, consumers are too often surprised by these fees because they tend to lurk in the fine print—or appear on bills only when it's too late or inconvenient to back out.

Such fees aren't just a nuisance. Because they're often not included in the advertised, or sticker, price, they undermine consumer efforts to comparison shop and to stick to their household budgets.

### WHAT CR IS DOING

CR has been battling these kinds of junk fees for years. In 2019, we launched the "What the Fee?!" campaign to spotlight the problem in the telecom, travel, and cable industries. And in 2022 we urged the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau



to protect consumers from excessive and hidden fees. Among other things, our efforts have persuaded federal regulators to require cable TV providers to disclose total prices before consumers sign up for service.

This year, we delivered more than 41,000 consumer signatures to the Federal Trade Commission, demanding an end to junk fees; endorsed the Junk Fee Prevention Act, which is currently being debated in both houses of Congress; and briefed White House staff members before President Joe Biden announced a crackdown on junk fees during his February State of the Union address.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Sign our petition in support of the Junk Fee Prevention Act, at [CR.org/junkfeelaw](https://www.consumerreports.org/junkfeelaw).





## Our April 2023 article “Will an Electric Car Save You Money?” compared the cost of owning an EV with a gas-fueled vehicle. Our readers shared their thoughts on those calculations, and more. To add yours, head to [CR.org/electriccarsavings](https://www.consumerreports.com/electriccarsavings).

YOUR APRIL 2023 issue is as fantastic as ever. But I think that the analysis in “Will an Electric Car Save You Money?” should address the cost of battery replacement. For example, how long will an EV battery last? And what will the cost be to replace it? Should an EV cost-of-operation projection simply assume that the buyer of a new EV will sell the car before the battery dies, making its battery replacement cost to the first buyer zero? If so, the battery replacement cost shifts to the next buyer, which could

reduce the car’s resale value. Diminished resale value is a major financial consideration for an EV buyer (new or used).  
–Ken Fulmer, Fairfax, VA

**EDITOR’S NOTE** We understand the concern. But other than batteries replaced under a recall for specific models, there haven’t been many replacements because EVs have been in mass production for only a decade. So we can’t provide meaningful battery replacement estimates at this time. Currently, it’s thought that EV batteries degrade by 10 to 20 percent over 10 years, but that doesn’t mean they need to be replaced. The expectation is that the battery pack will last the service life of the car. Should there be an underperforming


module or cell in the battery, it can be replaced individually, and the cost for such work a decade from now is likely to be far less than today’s cost. Those are among the reasons we didn’t factor in replacement in our article. And keep in mind that even conventional cars can need an engine or transmission replacement, but that’s the exception, not the rule.

YOU FAILED TO include the costs for an EV that aren’t required for a gas or diesel-powered vehicle. First is the annual state fee for owning an EV. It can run up to \$200 per year. This is to offset the loss of gas tax revenue. Second is the cost to charge your vehicle beyond the cost of the

electricity. A 40 to 50 amp charger will cost around \$1,000 to install. If it takes too long to charge your EV at home and you use a public charger (even a free one), it’s logical to include the cost of your time while the vehicle charges. Even if you’re calculating your time at only \$15 per hour, this cost can add up over the course of a year. I had planned on purchasing an EV, but the lack of savings changed my mind.  
–Fred Utick, Gastonia, NC

**EDITOR’S NOTE** Electric vehicle ownership does come with new challenges and sometimes unexpected costs. Some states have usage fees for EVs, compensating for lost revenue from their gas tax. The need for a 240-volt home charger depends on the car, how far it’s driven on a regular basis, and where it will be parked. Most homeowners will want a charger to conveniently charge an EV, while most owners of plug-in hybrids can get by just fine with a regular 120-volt outlet. Installation costs do vary, and it’s wise for car shoppers to explore them before committing to a purchase. In terms of the cost of time spent waiting for charging, many EV owners who charge at home overnight will see a significant time savings when compared with cumulative stops for gas fill-ups and oil changes.

WE’VE ENJOYED SIGNIFICANT savings vs. gas with our EV using our home charger (\$0.115/kWh). But we were disappointed to learn when traveling and not charging at home that we’ve paid upward of \$0.43/kWh at a fast charging station on the road—no longer a savings over gas. Potential buyers should consider where they’ll charge and how much they’ll pay when looking at the costs [of ownership]. While the U.S. is now building thousands of new charging stations, it’s uncertain

 Go to [CR.org/lettertoeditor](https://www.consumerreports.com/lettertoeditor) to share your comments for publication.

WRITE

what price they'll charge. We've purchased a plug-in hybrid for our second car and use inexpensive electricity around town—and it's an efficient gas hybrid when traveling.

—Jim Jacobs, Park City, UT



## FEWER SMALL CARS

AFTER READING YOUR 2023 annual auto issue, it dawned on me that most of the biggest car makers have stopped producing their smallest and most affordable cars. In a time when inflation is high and larger cars consume more dwindling resources and produce more pollution, why are smaller cars less available?

—Mark Burkett, Oklahoma City, OK

**EDITOR'S NOTE** *Good observation. In the past, automakers had to meet average fuel-economy standards set by the*

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*National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for their entire fleet. So they sold small, efficient cars at little or no profit to offset the lower MPGs of larger models. For model years beginning with 2008, those standards changed. Now fuel-economy regulations focus on the "footprint"—how well a model performs for its size—rather than the average for all the vehicles a company sells. This means automakers have less incentive to produce small cars and instead can focus on more-profitable SUVs and trucks.*



## CLEANER TEETH

REGARDING "THE SECRETS to Cleaner, Healthier Teeth" in the March 2023 issue: First-time users of a water flossing device should start with a lower setting. I used my partner's water flosser for the first time and wound up knocking out part of a filling because I neglected to adjust the setting from eight (out of 10) to something lower. My dentist suggested that the filling was probably cracked already and that the water pressure simply loosened it enough to eject it. Either way, it was an unwanted surprise.

—Salvatore Borruso, Summit, NJ

YOU DIDN'T MENTION that whitening products will not have an effect on teeth with crowns or veneers—only natural teeth will be whitened. I wish I had known this before I had some of my dental work because no matter what, I'll always have a dull, slightly yellowed smile due to crowns on my upper front teeth and veneers on my lower front teeth!

—Roberta Hackelford, Clovis, CA



## WHAT'S A 'PULL' PAYMENT?

In "Breaking Up With Your Bank" in the March 2023 article "Choose the Right Bank for You," you recommend avoiding "pull" payments but suggest setting up auto bill payments. What's the difference?

—Keniston Sweet, Queensbury, NY

**EDITOR'S NOTE**  
*With a "pull" payment, you're providing your banking information to a company that then withdraws a set amount—a monthly subscription fee, for example. An auto billing payment is something you set up with your bank, directing it to "push" funds to a company on a one-time or regular basis—to your credit card, for example. This lets you control when the money is deducted from your account (or easily stop a recurring payment) and keeps your financial information private.*

**EDITOR'S NOTE** *This is indeed good to know. As the American Dental Association cautions, "Patients who have tooth-colored restorations (including crowns or implants) should be aware that only natural teeth will be affected by the bleaching agent and treatment could result in differences between natural teeth and restorations, which will not change color." If you need a crown or implant, discuss the color of the restoration—and of surrounding teeth—with your dentist.*



## SECURITY SYSTEM FEES

IN REFERENCE TO "Protect Your Home (Inside and Out)" in the March 2023 issue: I have a professionally installed ADT security system and pay the monthly service charge. Each year the city I live in requires me to pay a permit fee as well. Receipt verification is submitted to my homeowners insurance agent for a discount.

—Marilyn Kilpatrick, Glendale, CA

**EDITOR'S NOTE** *Some municipalities do require that anyone running their own security system with professional monitoring obtain a permit from local authorities. Check with your police department to see if it requires alarm permits and if there's an associated fee. (Some charge an annual fee, others may charge a one-time fee when you obtain the permit, and some don't charge a fee at all.) Yonkers, N.Y., where Consumer Reports is based, requires permits but doesn't charge residents a fee. Dallas, on the other hand, requires its residents to pay an annual fee of \$50 for alarm permits.*

# What We're Testing in Our Labs ...

In our 63 labs, we continually review and rate products. Here, timely picks for this month.

## Meat Thermometers

**WE TESTED:** 8 digital models  
**WE TEST FOR:** How quickly and accurately a thermometer gives temperature readings, how easy it is to read what's on the display, and more.

**ABOUT THE SCORES:**  
 Median: 90  
 Range: 72-97

EXCELLENT LEAVE-IN (WIRED)

✓ **Inkbird Bluetooth Grill Thermometer IBT-4XS**  
 \$50

97

OVERALL SCORE



INSTANT-READ BARGAIN

✓ **ThermoPro TP19H Digital Meat Thermometer**  
 \$17

92

OVERALL SCORE



TOTALLY WIRELESS LEAVE-IN

✓ **Meater Meater Plus with Bluetooth Repeater**  
 \$100

89

OVERALL SCORE



## Freezers

**WE TESTED:** 13 large and extra-large models  
**WE TEST FOR:** Temperature uniformity, accuracy of the thermostat, energy efficiency, noise, usable storage space, and more.

**ABOUT THE SCORES:**  
 Median: 74  
 Range: 60-92

LARGEST CAPACITY CHEST FREEZER (21.3 CU. FT.)

✓ **GE FCM22DLWW**  
 \$1,070

91

OVERALL SCORE



QUIET UPRIGHT (18.1 CU. FT.)

✓ **Midea MRU21F2AWW**  
 \$1,000

77

OVERALL SCORE



GOOD TEMP CONSISTENCY FOR A NICE PRICE (13.9 CU. FT.)

✓ **Frigidaire FFCL1542AW**  
 \$720

76

OVERALL SCORE



## Ask Our Experts

### How can I protect my frozen foods from freezer burn?



Freezer burn happens when cold, dry air hits poorly wrapped frozen food—which then causes ice crystals to form on it. Airtight packaging is the best way to prevent freezer burn—and a vacuum sealer is tops for this. But if you don't have a vacuum sealer, use two layers of protection. For example, wrap food tightly in plastic, then place it inside a freezer storage bag, sealing it tightly to remove air. Also, set your freezer temperature to 0° F or below and keep the door shut as much as possible so that the inside temperature doesn't fluctuate. When properly packaged, uncooked frozen meat should be fine to eat for up to 12 months; most prepared foods will taste okay when frozen up to two months.

ILLUSTRATION: SERGE BLOCH



For the latest ratings of these and other product categories, readers with a Digital or All Access membership can go to [CR.org](http://CR.org).

## Mirrorless Cameras for \$800 or Less

**WE TESTED:** 11 models  
**WE TEST FOR:** Image quality when taking photos in normal and low light, viewfinder and video quality, battery life, ease of use, and more.

**ABOUT THE SCORES:**  
 Median: 80  
 Range: 71-82

**EASY TO USE**  
 ✓ **Nikon Z 30 w/ 16-50mm**  
 \$800

82

OVERALL SCORE



**SUPER VIDEO QUALITY**  
 ✓ **Canon EOS M50 Mark II w/ 15-45mm**  
 \$700

81

OVERALL SCORE



**GREAT PRICE & ALSO COMPACT**  
 ✓ **Panasonic Lumix DC-G100 w/ 12-32mm**  
 \$550

78

OVERALL SCORE



## Air Conditioners

**WE TESTED:** 63 window units  
**WE TEST FOR:** How quickly a window unit cools a room and accurately chills it to a set temperature, how noisy it is, and more.

**ABOUT THE SCORES:**  
 Median: 67  
 Range: 31-89

**FOR LARGE ROOMS**  
 (350 TO 550 SQ. FT.)  
 ✓ **Midea MAW12V1QWT u-shaped**  
 \$500

89

OVERALL SCORE



**FOR MIDSIZED ROOMS**  
 (250 TO 350 SQ. FT.)  
 ✓ **Frigidaire Gallery GHWQ083WC1**  
 \$480

87

OVERALL SCORE



**FOR SMALL ROOMS**  
 (100 TO 250 SQ. FT.)  
 ✓ **LG LW6023IVSM**  
 \$380

89

OVERALL SCORE



## Asphalt Roofing

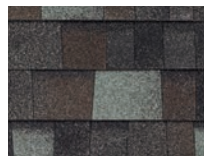
**WE TESTED:** 9 laminated shingles  
**WE TEST FOR:** Resistance to tearing and stretching, ability to weather the elements, and more. (Price is approximate per 100 sq. ft.)

**ABOUT THE SCORES:**  
 Median: 60  
 Range: 53-64

**MOST DURABLE**  
 ✓ **Owens Corning Duration**  
 \$95

64

OVERALL SCORE



**STANDS UP TO WIND**  
 ✓ **GAF Timberline HDZ**  
 \$110

61

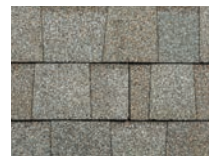
OVERALL SCORE



**LIFETIME WARRANTY**  
 ✓ **Tamko Heritage**  
 \$90

60

OVERALL SCORE



## Car Batteries

**WE TESTED:** 94 models  
**WE TEST FOR:** How well a battery can endure repeated charge and discharge cycles in hot temperatures, how long a battery's reserve capacity lasts, and more.

**ABOUT THE SCORES:**  
 Median: 79  
 Range: 29-99

**TOPS FOR SIZE 35**  
 ✓ **Odyssey Extreme Series 35-PC1400T**  
 \$305

99

OVERALL SCORE



**SMART PICK FOR SIZE 65**  
 ✓ **Super Start Platinum AGM 65PLT**  
 \$190

91

OVERALL SCORE



**BEST FOR SIZES 24 & 24F**  
 ✓ **Napa Legend Premium 8424F**  
 \$130

90

OVERALL SCORE



**Note:** We rate different products according to different testing protocols; as a result, Overall Scores of one product category are not comparable with another.

COMING NEXT MONTH Smartphones & More



## Which type of kitchen countertop is the most resistant to staining?

ACCORDING TO OUR lab tests, the most stain-resistant countertop is quartz, a man-made material composed mainly of a mixture of ground quartz and resins. Granite, a natural stone, is a close second when it comes to stain resistance. While neither of these surfaces is completely impervious to discoloration, both showed a strong resistance to staining from common foods and household products such as beet juice, food coloring, and chemical drain cleaners.

One big difference: Granite requires upkeep to maintain its stain resistance; you'll need to reseal it periodically—something you won't have to do with quartz. (In general, you should reapply sealant when drops of water no longer

bead up on the granite.) Quartz also tends to be slightly less expensive than granite (although a few premium brands of quartz are about the same price—or even more).

Another countertop material that's similarly priced and excellent at standing up to tough stains is varnish-sealed butcher block. The downside: It falls to near the bottom of our countertop material ratings because it shows wear and tear easily.

Other popular countertop choices include marble, limestone, and bamboo—all of which earn low scores in our stain-resistance testing.

### My in-ear headphone buds are always falling out. How can I get a better fit?

START BY LOOKING for a pair that comes with multiple sizes of soft silicone or foam ear tips. For example: Apple's basic wireless AirPods, \$130, are sold with one-size-fits-all earbuds, but the Pro version,

\$250, comes with silicone tips in four sizes (including a new extra-small tip) to help you achieve a better fit. You can also look for models that have "wingtips"—little silicone arms that fit into the exterior of your ear for added stability. Beats by Dre Beats Fit Pro, \$250, is a top-scoring example of these. Next, to find the earbuds best suited for your ears, try them on. Start with medium-sized tips and work your way up or down, making sure the tips are securely attached: They should be pushed all the way onto the earbud stems to prevent the tip from popping off or getting stuck in your ear canal.

You're looking for a snug fit without too much pressure. Some headphone brands, such as Apple and Sony, have smartphone apps that can test the seal for you, and can suggest whether you need to go up or down a size. If you can get a good seal with more than one size, it's best to go larger; smaller ones can go too deep into the ear canal and can be harder to remove if they get stuck. And FYI: Your left and right ears may require different sizes.

In our labs, we assess how well headphones stay in place in spite of vigorous head movement, and note whether they pinch, cramp the ears, or get

hot or sticky after prolonged use. To browse CR's reviews of over 190 headphone models, go to [CR.org/headphones](https://www.consumerreports.org/headphones).

### My car battery is just 2 years old, but it died—even though it's summer. What gives?

HOT WEATHER is actually harder on your battery than cold. That's because heat can cause the battery to corrode and/or the battery's liquid to evaporate, damaging its power-generating chemistry inside.

The stats from AAA bear this out: Car batteries typically last about 58 months or longer in the most northern parts of the U.S., such as North Dakota, (where it's regularly 0° F in winter), and they tend to last less than 41 months in the southernmost regions, like Arizona (where temps can rise above 100° F regularly in summer).

CR's John Galeotafore, who manages our car battery tests, recommends having your car battery load-tested annually after it's 2 years old if you live in a warmer climate, or 4 years old if you live in a colder climate. Doing so tests your battery's ability to hold a charge while being used and indicates when it's time for a new battery. If you live where temperatures regularly exceed 80° F, look for batteries in our ratings that excel for length of life, such as those on page 9 of this issue.



LEARN

We have more than 140 in-house experts who research, test, and compare. Submit your questions at [CR.org/askourexperts](https://www.consumerreports.org/askourexperts) ... and watch for the answers.

# CR Insights

IN THE KNOW

## Sleep Cooler This Summer

**EVEN WITH THE** air conditioning on, it can be hard to stay comfortably cool while you sleep. The good news: The right mattress, sheets, pillows, and more can help you stop waking up in a sweat.

Consider these solutions, hand-picked by our sleep-product experts, for staying cool all night long.

A PILLOW THAT WON'T TRAP HEAT

**1. Tuft & Needle Original Foam** \$100

**79** OVERALL SCORE

This polyurethane foam pillow aces our tests for "breathability" (a measure of how effectively a pillow dissipates moisture). This pillow didn't trap heat, which sets it apart from other top-rated pillows in our tests.

TRULY BREATHABLE SHEETS

**2. L.L.Bean Pima Cotton Percale (280TC)** \$170

**74** OVERALL SCORE

Sleep experts say sheets made of natural fibers—like 100 percent cotton—are a good choice because they promote better airflow. This set is soft but still resisted tears and seam damage in our tests.

A SPECIAL COOLING PAD

**3. ChiliSleep Cube Sleep System** \$550

Made to go under your fitted sheet, a cooling pad can chill your bed to your desired temperature. This one, controlled by remote, can go as low as 55° F. It also offers a 30-night trial and one-year warranty.

A COMFORTABLE MATTRESS

**4. Parachute Eco Comfort** \$2,400

**81** OVERALL SCORE

This innerspring dispersed body heat well in our lab tests. (We simulate a 98.6° F sleeper and measure how much heat the mattress traps over 8 hours.) It's also great at supporting both back and side sleepers.

A REFRESHING EYE MASK

**Manta Cool Mask** \$45

The Manta mask has removable eye cups that can be popped in the freezer. While we didn't test cooling the mask, we found it to be comfortable. (Manta allows free returns up to 60 days.)



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: GRAHAM HUTCHINGS



SAVVY SHOPPER

# Where to Save Big on Small Appliances



**LOVE A GOOD BARGAIN?** A recent survey of more than 20,000 CR members gave us the lowdown on shopping for small appliances (such as air fryers, toaster ovens, blenders, and more) at major retailers, revealing which ones rated best for great prices, selection, and customer service, among other factors.\*

Five retailers—shown in our ratings chart below—were called out for their budget-friendly prices. The big surprise: The top rating for low prices, selection

of products, customer service, and delivery went to QVC, the website of the TV-based shopping channel.

QVC received praise not just for its prices but also for its wide array of small appliances and its easy-to-navigate website. “I got a great deal on the Keurig coffee maker I wanted,” explained Sharon, a survey participant from Georgia. “It’s easy to order online,” said Dorthea from Missouri. Don from Ohio listed “price, ease, great

QVC

74

OVERALL SATISFACTION

- 4/5 PRICE PAID
- 4/5 SELECTION

★ macy's

65

OVERALL SATISFACTION

- 4/5 PRICE PAID
- 4/5 SELECTION

COSTCO WHOLESALE

64

OVERALL SATISFACTION

- 4/5 PRICE PAID
- 1/5 SELECTION

KOHL'S

63

OVERALL SATISFACTION

- 4/5 PRICE PAID
- 3/5 SELECTION

PHOTOS, BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT: CONSUMER REPORTS; PLATO TALLEPOROS; JEAN WISENBAUGH; GETTY IMAGES; CONSUMER REPORTS

CR Time Traveler SEAFOOD



**1938** CR's first-ever test of canned tuna includes tasting 138 cans of it. Pacific white meat tuna earns our highest score of 93.

**1941** Forty CR tasters try 17 canned clam chowder brands. Most receive low scores, but a Saltsea chowder is rated tops for flavor.



**1956** Frozen fish sticks soar in popularity. CR grades 21 brands—and finds that almost 85 percent of the fish sticks tested have “very good” flavor.

**1961** Our tests of frozen shrimp reveal “dismal” quality: 75 percent are “fair” or “poor.” Acceptable brands are Cap'n John's, Booth, and Shrimp Ahoy.



**1976** CR's tests reveal high levels of lead in sardines. We find one soldered steel can with 3.24 ppm, far above CR's acceptable level of 0.3 ppm.

customer service, speed of delivery,” as QVC’s merits.

Membership warehouses—such as Costco and Sam’s Club—also got favorable scores for their low prices, but they didn’t fare as well for their selection of small appliances.

Finally, Lowe’s and Home Depot scored poorly both on their prices and selection. In fact, they were the only two retailers in our survey to receive unfavorable scores overall.

PHOTOS, FACING PAGE: ADOBE STOCK



## BIG-BOX STORE BARGAINING

Asking for a better price works—even at large retailers. In fact, the CR members in our 2022 survey\* who haggled when shopping for a small appliance got a better deal 78 percent of the time, saving about \$57 each. How to negotiate? Here’s what successful bargainers told us:

➤ **Always ask a representative (in-store or online) whether they can offer you a discount.**

Among those who successfully bargained at retail stores, 26 percent simply asked for a lower price. You should also inquire about special discounts you may be eligible for, such as those for seniors, veterans, or teachers. And check with any organizations you belong to, such as AAA, for member discounts.

➤ **If you find the same item for less at another retailer, use it as a bargaining chip.**

If you’re in a store, search competitors’ websites for the same product on your smartphone, then ask a salesperson about price matching. While shopping online, use a retailer’s chat function (where it’s easy to share links you’ve found proving that the same item is being offered for a lower price on another retailer’s site).

\*In our 2022 Spring Survey, 20,274 CR members reported their experiences purchasing items from more than 30,432 major and small appliances from the beginning of 2021 through the end of August of 2022.

**1979** To find out which canned tunas taste best, CR samples 58 products. Bumble Bee and Chicken of the Sea chunk white tuna in oil are the winners.



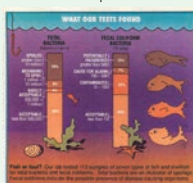
**1992** A CR report raises concerns about the quality of fish sold. Almost 70 percent of the fish we test is handled in unclean conditions.



**2023** Our lab finds that Bumble Bee’s light tuna has the lowest mercury levels of the products we tested, and can be eaten up to 3 times a week by most adults.\*\*



**1988** Our taste testers order from a French food catalog with fancy items like lobster bisque. But the lobster tastes “old and fishy.”



**2014** CR says pregnant women should avoid tuna altogether due to its mercury content, while the FDA suggests they can have 8 to 12 ounces per week.

**Bumble Bee Chunk Light Tuna in Water \$1.50**



\*\*CR’s recommendations for nonpregnant adults. Based on a 5-ounce can of tuna drained of water, leaving 4 ounces of tuna. Assumes no other fish is eaten that week.

For our latest report on seafood safety, turn to page 24.

**THE BETTER DEAL**

**SMALL SUVs**

HIGHER PRICE  
**\$40,300 - \$57,350**



✓ 2023 Infiniti QX50  
\$51,380\*

**69** OVERALL SCORE

BETTER PRICE  
**\$31,350 - \$44,760**



✓ Hyundai Tucson Hybrid  
\$33,194\*

**83** OVERALL SCORE

**THE LOWDOWN**

THE INFINITI QX50 combines alluring styling, a well-furnished interior, and an innovative engine. But the Hyundai Tucson Hybrid has better performance for way less money. It has a smoother ride and more responsive handling, gets 35 mpg overall (compared with the QX50's 22 mpg), and has higher owner satisfaction. The Hybrid Limited trim is loaded with luxe features for just \$40,445.

**ICE CREAM MAKERS**

HIGHER PRICE  
**\$315**



Whynter ICM-201SB  
Time for sorbet: 33 min.  
Time for ice cream: 37 min.

BETTER PRICE  
**\$70**



Cuisinart ICE-21P1  
Time for sorbet: 14 min.\*\*  
Time for ice cream: 17 min.\*\*

**THE LOWDOWN**

THE WHYNTER ice cream maker is easy to use and made the smoothest sorbet and ice cream out of the five machines we evaluated in our at-home review. But the Cuisinart, for less than a quarter of the price (!), churned out quality frozen treats in record time—and we enjoyed the smooth texture of both the chocolate sorbet and vanilla ice cream we made with it.

**BAGGED CANISTER VACUUMS**

HIGHER PRICE  
**\$1,099**



✓ Miele Complete C3 Marin  
**84** OVERALL SCORE

BETTER PRICE  
**\$530**



✓ Kenmore Elite Pet Friendly UltraPlush 81714  
**76** OVERALL SCORE

**THE LOWDOWN**

OUR TOP BAGGED CANISTER vacuum, the Miele offers excellent performance—but it's also the most expensive canister in our ratings, costing hundreds more than all of its competitors. For half the price, the Kenmore is a champ at cleaning bare floors and sucks up dirt from carpeting just as well as the Miele. Plus, true to its name, the Kenmore is excellent at picking up pet hair.

\*Price as tested. \*\*This time estimate is for the active making of the ice cream and is not inclusive of freezing the cylinder, which must be done ahead of time.





FOOD IQ™

## Cocktails to Go

**GOT A YEN** for a chilled cocktail on a warm summer night but just can't face gathering, measuring, and mixing everything? You might want to try one of the new cocktails in a can, which have been gaining in popularity and are found now in many liquor stores. The kinds of premixed alcoholic drinks you get in a can are more varied than ever, including popular cocktails such as Negronis and old-fashioned. CR staffer Angela Lashbrook tasted a variety of these libations (tough job, right?) and found several worth recommending. Here's what to try, depending on which base spirit you prefer.

IF YOU LIKE GIN, TRY:

**Tip Top Negroni**  
\$6 for a 100 ml can  
ABV: 26%

**CR'S TAKE:** The Tip Top Negroni is a pretty loyal interpretation of what a classic Negroni should be: a mix of gin, vermouth, and Campari with a hint of sweetness and herbal notes. This one is simultaneously bitter, sweet, and boozy—though it's a little more syrupy-sweet than a bar-made version might be. If you've never tried a Negroni, this can isn't a bad place to start.

IF YOU LIKE RUM, TRY:

**Rocket Queen**  
\$21 for a 4-pack of 12-oz. cans  
ABV: 7.5%

**CR'S TAKE:** Wow! This cocktail is a delightful surprise. It's a rum-based cocktail with pomelo fruit (similar to a grapefruit but sweeter and milder), pandan (an aromatic plant that adds a floral, coconut aroma), cinnamon, and absinthe. The result is sweet and tropical. "This drink is so tasty and interesting—I've never had anything like it," Lashbrook says.

IF YOU LIKE TEQUILA, TRY:

**Cutwater Grapefruit Tequila Paloma**  
\$14 for a 4-pack of 12-oz. cans  
ABV: 7%

**CR'S TAKE:** A good paloma, traditionally made with tequila, grapefruit soda, and lime juice, should be refreshingly sweet but tart. This one, made with the brand's proprietary tequila, is a faithful, if mild, version—refreshing, lightly citrusy, and not overly sweet. In short: It's very drinkable, especially on a summer evening.

IF YOU LIKE WHISKEY, TRY:

**Dashfire Bourbon Old Fashioned**  
\$6 for a 100 ml can  
ABV: 38%

**CR'S TAKE:** This little can packs a punch. Pour it over a big ice cube and you'll have more than enough of this bourbon-based drink to keep you happy. It has a rich, deep cherry flavor, characteristic of a classic old-fashioned, and it's well dosed with four of the company's proprietary bitters, which come through in the cocktail.



### SKIP IT

**Thomas Ashbourne The Perfect Cosmo by SJP**  
\$28 for a 4-pack of 200 ml cans  
ABV: 20%

**CR'S TAKE:** A traditional cosmopolitan, made with cranberry juice, should be slightly sweet, but this one was way too sugary, with a hit of fake strawberry. Plus, it smells like lighter fluid, Lashbrook says.

PHOTOS: BEN GOLDSTEIN; PROP STYLING: MIAKO KATOH

## PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

### PRESSURE WASHERS

**THE BEST PRESSURE WASHERS** can blast water with up to 80 times more force than your average garden hose, removing grime from dirty driveways, decks, patios, and other tough-to-clean places quickly and easily. In our tests, gas-powered washers tend to deliver higher pressure than other types—often around 3,000 pounds per square inch (psi). But most people will find electric models, like the top-scoring plug-ins below, powerful enough (at 1,000 to 2,300 psi) for cleanups. These are less pricey, quieter, and easy to maneuver, and require little upkeep, compared with gas models. Our testers say to skip battery models, which aren't as powerful, maxing out at around 500 psi.



#### ELECTRIC (PLUG-IN)

##### Greenworks GPW2301 \$300



- 4/5 CLEANING
- 2/5 POWER
- 5/5 EASE OF USE

**70** OVERALL SCORE

##### DeWalt DWPW2400 \$330



- 4/5 CLEANING
- 3/5 POWER
- 5/5 EASE OF USE

**70** OVERALL SCORE

##### DeWalt DWPW2100 \$300



- 4/5 CLEANING
- 3/5 POWER
- 5/5 EASE OF USE

**68** OVERALL SCORE

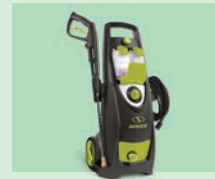
##### Greenworks GPW2000 \$200



- 4/5 CLEANING
- 3/5 POWER
- 5/5 EASE OF USE

**67** OVERALL SCORE

##### Sun Joe SPX3000-MAX \$250



- 4/5 CLEANING
- 3/5 POWER
- 4/5 EASE OF USE

**66** OVERALL SCORE

##### Ryobi RY142711VNM \$350



- 3/5 CLEANING
- 3/5 POWER
- 5/5 EASE OF USE

**65** OVERALL SCORE

#### GAS

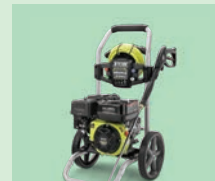
##### Simpson MS60763-S \$360



- 5/5 CLEANING
- 4/5 POWER
- 4/5 EASE OF USE

**72** OVERALL SCORE

##### Ryobi RY802925VNM \$400



- 5/5 CLEANING
- 4/5 POWER
- 4/5 EASE OF USE

**71** OVERALL SCORE

##### Simpson MS60773-S \$360



- 5/5 CLEANING
- 4/5 POWER
- 4/5 EASE OF USE

**70** OVERALL SCORE

##### Westinghouse WPX3200 \$350



- 4/5 CLEANING
- 4/5 POWER
- 5/5 EASE OF USE

**69** OVERALL SCORE

##### Predator 58028 \$430



- 5/5 CLEANING
- 4/5 POWER
- 5/5 EASE OF USE

**68** OVERALL SCORE

**CAUTION:** Pressure-washer water streams can pierce skin and cut through protective gear, including boots. Never use a zero-degree tip or nozzle, which exerts a dangerous amount of pressure. All of the gas models and the electric Sun Joe shown here are not eligible for a CR recommendation because they come with zero-degree nozzles.

ILLUSTRATIONS: RODRIGO DAMATI; PHOTOS: CONSUMER REPORTS; MANUFACTURERS



## RECALLS

TO STAY INFORMED ABOUT RECALLS FOR YOUR VEHICLES, READERS WITH MEMBERSHIP CAN USE OUR FREE CAR RECALL TRACKER AT [CR.ORG/MORE](https://www.consumerreports.org/more).

### HYUNDAI & KIA VEHICLES >

Hyundai is recalling 567,912 2019-2023 Santa Fe SUV, 2021-2023 Santa Fe HEV SUV, and 2022-2023 Santa Fe Plug-in HEV SUV and Santa Cruz vehicles and Kia is recalling 3,555 2022-2023 Carnival minivans because their tow hitch harnesses could catch fire while parked or driving. Only vehicles equipped with a genuine Hyundai or Kia trailer tow hitch are included in the recall. Both automakers say that the affected vehicles should be parked outside and away from structures to avoid the risk of a fire spreading.

**What to do:** All owners will be notified by mail with instructions to bring their vehicles to a Hyundai or Kia dealership for inspection and installation of a 15A fuse and new wire extension kit, if necessary. Owners can contact Hyundai at 855-371-9460 or Kia at 800-333-4542. The NHTSA campaign number for the Hyundai recall is 23V181 and for the Kia recall is 23V179. Hyundai's own number for this recall is 244, and Kia's is SC265. The Hyundai recall is an expansion of previous recall number 22V-633.

### THE LAUNDRESS FABRIC CONDITIONERS

The Laundress is recalling about 800,000 fabric conditioners because they can contain a chemical impurity, ethylene oxide, a carcinogen that can cause adverse health effects if there is



significant and direct long-term exposure. (Note: 730,000 of the 800,000 products were previously recalled on Dec. 1, 2022.) The fabric conditioners were sold online at Amazon, [thelaundress.com](https://www.thelaundress.com), and other websites and in stores at The Container Store, The Laundress, Target, and other retailers nationwide from 2011 through November 2022 for \$1 to \$20.

**What to do:** Stop using the fabric conditioner and call 800-681-1915 or go to [thelaundress.com](https://www.thelaundress.com) for details and to get instructions to obtain a full refund. (If you previously requested a refund for these products in response to The Laundress' December 2022 recall and reimbursement program, do not submit a new request.) Then dispose of the product by closing the bottle tightly and placing it in household trash. Do not empty the product prior to disposal.

### NURTEC ODT PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Pfizer is recalling about 4.2 million Nurtec ODT orally disintegrating

tablets (75 mg 8-unit dose blister pack) because they must be in child-resistant packaging as required by the Poison Prevention Packaging Act. The packaging of the products is not child-resistant, posing a risk of poisoning if the contents are swallowed by young children. The drugs were sold at pharmacies nationwide as a prescribed medicine from December 2021 through March 2023. The prices of the product varied based on health insurance terms and other factors.

**What to do:** Immediately move the drugs out of the sight and reach of children. Call Pfizer at 800-879-3477 or go to [nurtec.com/PackagingUpdate](https://www.nurtec.com/PackagingUpdate) for details and to get a free child-resistant pouch to store the product. Once the product is secured, you can continue to use it as directed.

### COSORI AIR FRYERS

Cosori is recalling about 2 million air fryers because a wire connection in the fryers can overheat, posing fire and burn

hazards. The fryers were sold at Best Buy, Home Depot, and Target stores nationwide and online at Amazon, [cosori.com](https://www.cosori.com), [homegoods.com](https://www.homegoods.com), [kohls.com](https://www.kohls.com), [lowes.com](https://www.lowes.com), [macys.com](https://www.macys.com), [walmart.com](https://www.walmart.com), and other websites from June 2018 through December 2022 for \$70 to \$130.

**What to do:** Stop using the air fryer. Call Cosori at 888-216-5974 or go to [cosori.com](https://www.cosori.com) for details and to get a free replacement air fryer or another Cosori product by registering at [recall.cosori.com](https://recall.cosori.com). During registration you must provide your contact information and submit photos of the recalled unit with the cord cut off. No receipt is needed to receive a replacement.

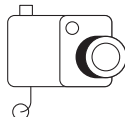
### YETI SOFT COOLERS & GEAR CASES

Yeti is recalling about 1.9 million soft coolers and gear cases because the magnet-lined closures can fail and result in detached magnets, posing a risk of serious injury or death if ingested. The cases and coolers were sold at Academy Sports + Outdoors, Ace Hardware, Dick's Sporting Goods, Yeti, and other stores nationwide and online at Amazon and [yeti.com](https://www.yeti.com) from March 2018 to January 2023 for \$50 to \$350, depending on the case or cooler model purchased.

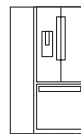
**What to do:** Stop using the cooler and/or gear case. Call Yeti at 833-444-3151 or go to [yeti.com](https://www.yeti.com) for details and to get a full refund or replacement product.

**JULY IS THE BEST TIME TO BUY ...**

#### HOME SECURITY CAMERAS



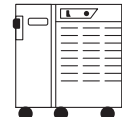
#### REFRIGERATORS



#### BLOOD GLUCOSE METERS



#### DEHUMIDIFIERS





# PRODUCT UPDATE



THE LATEST RATINGS FROM OUR LABS

## The Best Sunscreens of the Year

How much protection are you really getting? Our ratings reveal which products do it right.

by Sally Wadyka



**Safeguard Your Skin**  
Our tests found nine great lotions and sprays—and one with a perfect score (Coppertone Water Babies Lotion SPF 50).



1 Coppertone Water Babies Lotion SPF 50 \$9

100 OVERALL SCORE



W

hen you're shopping for sunscreen, the choices can seem overwhelming. And chances are, the thing you zero in on when trying to pick the

best product is the SPF number. But the stated SPF doesn't always tell the whole story. Consumer Reports' tests suggest that not all sunscreens live up to the SPF listed on the label.

We did find nine sunscreens to recommend (pictured on the facing page) and several others that are decent picks. But of the 68 lotions and sprays in our tests this year, all labeled SPF 30 to 100, an incredible number—53—tested at less than SPF 30, the minimum SPF the American Academy of Dermatology recommends you use.

The type of sunscreen didn't matter. Both lotions and sprays missed the mark in our tests. The brand name and the price didn't make a difference, either. "In our tests, we've often found that one product performs really well while another from the same manufacturer does not," says Susan Booth, who oversees CR's sunscreen tests. "And there's no guarantee that a \$40 sunscreen will be more protective than one that costs under \$10."

A sunscreen's SPF only tells you how well the product filters out the sun's burning ultraviolet B (UVB) rays. You also want a sunscreen to shield your skin from UVA rays. (See "SPF, UVA, UVB: What's It All Mean, Anyway?" at right.) That's why Consumer Reports tests sunscreens for UVA protection as well. Here, we got more reassuring results. Though there was variation in performance, most of the sunscreens were found to be highly protective against UVA rays.

How to know if your sunscreen is truly protecting your skin? Our expert advice and the ratings starting on page 21 can help you make the smartest choices.

## What CR's Tests Found

Five of the lotions and four sprays in our tests are recommended. One, Coppertone Water Babies Lotion SPF 50, got a perfect score of 100.

Some sunscreens are among CR's recommended buys despite there being a difference between the label's SPF and our testing average. "These got an Overall Score of 67 or higher, performed well for UVA protection, and had an average SPF in our tests close to or above SPF 30," Booth says. For example, La Roche-Posay Anthelios Melt-In Milk Lotion SPF 60 averaged SPF 33 and has excellent UVA protection; Black Girl Sunscreen Make It Matte Gel SPF 45 averaged SPF 33 and has very good UVA protection.

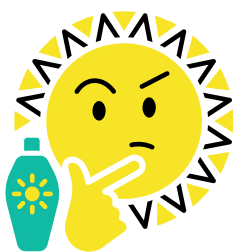
But many popular products fell short. For example, La Roche-Posay

Anthelios Clear Skin Face Lotion SPF 60 averaged SPF 13. Supergoop Play Antioxidant Mist SPF 50 tested at an SPF 8 and Australian Gold Botanical Mineral Lotion SPF 30 averaged an SPF 4. (Those companies didn't respond to our request for comment.)

"It's not that lower-scoring sunscreens don't offer any protection," Booth says, "but in some cases it's minimal."

This is complicated by the fact that most people don't use enough sunscreen. "In tests, subjects' skin is covered with 2 mg of sunscreen per square centimeter of skin," says Mark Chandler, president of ACT Solutions Corp., a sunscreen formulation company. "That's about twice as much as studies have shown people really apply." Skimping on sunscreen cuts its effectiveness, which is particularly a

## SPF, UVA, UVB: What's It All Mean, Anyway?



### SHORT FOR SUN

protection factor, **SPF** represents how well a product guards against damage from the sun's ultraviolet **UVB** rays, which are strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. **UVB** rays can injure the top layers of your skin, and they're the chief cause of sunburn.

**SPF** is usually explained as the amount of time it takes for skin to turn red. For instance, if you burn

in 15 minutes, an SPF 30 would give you 450 minutes of protection (15 x 30 = 450).

That's true up to a point. The UV dose is a big factor. The same 15 minutes of sun will result in a very different UVB amount depending on location (sea level vs. high altitude, for instance), time of day, time of year, the amount of cloud cover, and the color of your skin.

"An SPF 30 is not twice as protective as SPF 15," says Mona Gohara, MD, a dermatologist at Yale. "And the difference in UV rays blocked between SPF 30 and 50 is very small." An SPF 15 blocks about 93 percent of rays, SPF 30 blocks 97 percent, and

SPF 50 blocks 98 percent. "Higher numbers don't absolve you from the rules of how much and how often to apply sunscreen."

And **SPF** is only one factor to consider. You also need protection from **UVA** rays, which are present as long as there's daylight. These are the rays that tan and age skin, and along with **UVB** contribute to skin cancer. They penetrate deep into skin and damage the collagen and elastin, which give skin its elasticity. A sunscreen labeled **broad spectrum** will protect against both types of UV rays. If you don't see that term, it's unlikely that the product will shield your skin from **UVA**.

problem when you start out with a low SPF. (It takes a shot-glass-sized amount to cover a bathing-suit-clad body.)

CR asked the Personal Care Products Council, which represents sunscreen manufacturers, about the variation in SPF performance in our tests. The group said our test methods weren't the same as the government's "and, therefore, cannot be directly compared to a label claim." For information on our testing methodology, see "How We Test Sunscreens," on page 23.

The sunscreens as a group did well in our tests for UVA protection: 55 of the 68 received high UVA scores, meaning they screened out most of the UVA rays. Based on our results, all but two qualify as broad spectrum (UVA and UVB coverage) as defined by the Food and Drug Administration. Those two, Black Girl Sunscreen Kids Lotion SPF 50 and Australian Gold Botanical Mineral Lotion SPF 30, were very close to the FDA threshold but didn't meet it in our tests. (Those companies didn't reply to our request for comment.)

### Pick Your Protection

CR's recommended sunscreens are your best options, but any of the ones in our ratings with an Overall Score of 61 or higher should provide acceptable protection, Booth says.

You'll find plenty of lotions and sprays to choose from in our ratings. Which should you use? Lotions have an edge; it's easier to see what you're applying and how much coverage you're getting than with a spray. Sprays may pose a health hazard for some, especially children, because you can accidentally breathe them in and they can irritate the lungs. The safest way to use a spray is to spritz it into your hands and then rub it on your body. If that seems impractical, spray sunscreen close to your skin and hold your breath when applying it. And never spray your face.

Some people would rather use mineral sunscreens—those with zinc oxide, titanium dioxide, or both as the only UV filtering ingredients—because they prefer nonchemical ingredients or find chemical ingredients, such as

avobenzone, irritating. For many years, these have generally performed less well in our tests than chemical ones. This year is no exception. None of the 20 mineral sunscreens we rated have an Overall Score of 61 or higher, and 14 have an average SPF level below 15.

If you'd rather use a mineral sunscreen, choose one that averaged at least SPF 15 in our tests and has top marks for UVA protection, such as Aveeno Positively Mineral Sensitive Skin Face Lotion SPF 50, Blue Lizard Sport Mineral Spray SPF 50+ Unscented, and Badger Active Mineral Cream SPF 30 Unscented. California Kids #supersensitive Tinted Lotion SPF 30+ is also an acceptable choice. It averaged SPF 33, but it's among the lowest-scoring sunscreens for UVA protection. While you should always use enough sunscreen and reapply it every 2 hours you're outdoors or immediately after swimming or sweating, it's especially important if you're using a sunscreen with a lower SPF.

## The Truth About Sunscreens for Your Face

**YOUR FACE IS** the one part of your body that's exposed to UV rays all year-round, so daily care is key. But despite all the marketing, you really don't need a face sunscreen to do that. "There's no difference in the quality of protection vs. a body sunscreen," says Joshua Zeichner, MD, an associate professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City. Face sunscreens and moisturizers with sunscreen use the same UV filtering ingredients. And you can use a body product on your face. Many are formulated to be lightweight and absorb quickly, such as La Roche-Posay Anthelios Melt-In Milk Lotion SPF 60.



➤ **If you have oily, acne-prone skin,** a face-specific, oil-free sunscreen, such as Neutrogena Sport Face Oil-Free Lotion SPF 70+, may be a better choice.

➤ **If you have dry skin,** you may want a product with moisturizing ingredients, such as Black Girl Sunscreen Make It Matte Gel SPF 45 with shea butter and coconut oil.






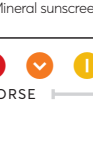
➤ **If you have sensitive skin,** you may prefer a mineral sunscreen. These aren't among the top performers in our tests, but Aveeno Positively Mineral Sensitive Skin

Face Lotion SPF 50 provides adequate protection. Face formulas with ceramides, hyaluronic acid, or colloidal oatmeal also moisturize and soothe.

➤ **What about makeup with SPF?** "A foundation with SPF 30 would give you proper protection if you used enough of it," Zeichner says. But you'll have that caked-on look if you use the right amount—about a quarter-sized dollop for your face alone. Instead, put that amount of sunscreen on your face, give it several minutes to dry, and then apply the makeup. Think of the SPF it contains as a little extra protection.



**Ratings** ➤ **Rub It In!** We test broad-spectrum sunscreens labeled SPF 30 or higher. All are water-resistant for 80 minutes unless otherwise noted.


Brand + Model	Overall Score	Pricing			Test Results			
		Package size (oz.)	Package price	Price per oz.	UVA protection	SPF	CR's average tested SPF	
<b>LOTIONS</b>								
	☹️ <b>Coppertone Water Babies Lotion SPF 50</b>	100	8.0	\$9.00	\$1.13	⬆️	⬆️	64
	✅ <b>Everyday Humans Oh My Bod! Lotion SPF 50</b>	83	3.4	\$17.50	\$5.15	⬆️	⬆️	55
	✅ <b>La Roche-Posay Anthelios Melt-In Milk Lotion SPF 60</b>	73	5.0	\$38.00	\$7.60	⬆️	⬆️	33
	☹️ <b>Equate (Walmart) Ultra Lotion SPF 50</b>	68	8.0	\$7.30	\$0.91	⬆️	⬆️	31
	<b>Solimo (Amazon) Baby Lotion SPF 50</b>	64	8.0	\$4.60	\$0.58	⬆️	⬆️	31
	<b>Coppertone Sport 4-in-1 Performance Lotion SPF 50</b>	63	7.0	\$11.00	\$1.57	⬆️	⬆️	32
	<b>Equate (Walmart) Sport Lotion SPF 50</b>	61	8.0	\$4.90	\$0.61	⬆️	⬇️	29
	<b>Equate (Walmart) Ultra Light Lotion for Face &amp; Body SPF 50</b>	60	8.0	\$5.00	\$0.63	⬆️	⬇️	28
	<b>Banana Boat Sport Ultra Lotion SPF 50+</b>	57	8.0	\$10.00	\$1.25	⬆️	⬇️	20
	<b>Up &amp; Up (Target) Sport Lotion SPF 50</b>	56	10.4	\$7.00	\$0.67	⬆️	⬇️	26
	<b>California Kids #supersensitive Tinted Lotion SPF 30+ <sup>1</sup></b>	55	2.9	\$24.00	\$8.28	⬇️	⬆️	33
	<b>Black Girl Sunscreen Ultra Sheer Lotion SPF 30 Fragrance Free</b>	55	3.0	\$19.00	\$6.33	⬆️	⬇️	16
	<b>Badger Active Mineral Cream SPF 30 Unscented <sup>1,2</sup></b>	55	2.9	\$18.00	\$6.21	⬆️	⬇️	16
	<b>Neutrogena Invisible Daily Defense Lotion SPF 60+</b>	55	3.0	\$15.70	\$5.23	⬆️	⬇️	25
	<b>Aveeno Positively Mineral Sensitive Skin Lotion SPF 50 <sup>1</sup></b>	50	3.0	\$12.00	\$4.00	⬆️	⬇️	19
	<b>Aveeno Protect + Hydrate Lotion SPF 60</b>	50	3.0	\$11.00	\$3.67	⬆️	⬇️	21
	<b>Trader Joe's Face &amp; Body Lotion SPF 30</b>	47	6.0	\$6.00	\$1.00	⬆️	⬇️	12
	<b>Hawaiian Tropic Sheer Touch Lotion SPF 50</b>	47	8.0	\$11.00	\$1.38	⬆️	⬇️	16
	<b>Neutrogena Pure &amp; Free Baby Lotion SPF 50 <sup>1</sup></b>	46	3.0	\$14.50	\$4.83	⬆️	⬇️	14
	<b>Hawaiian Tropic Everyday Active Sport Lotion SPF 30</b>	46	8.0	\$10.00	\$1.25	⬆️	⬇️	11
	<b>Badger Kids Mineral Cream SPF 40 Tangerine &amp; Vanilla <sup>1</sup></b>	45	2.9	\$18.00	\$6.21	⬆️	⬇️	11
	<b>Neutrogena Hydro Boost Water Gel Lotion SPF 30</b>	43	3.0	\$12.00	\$4.00	⬆️	⬇️	16
	<b>Sun Bum Premium Lotion SPF 30</b>	42	8.0	\$18.50	\$2.31	⬆️	⬇️	9
	<b>EleVen by Venus Williams Game Set Match Body Lotion SPF 50 <sup>1</sup></b>	38	3.2	\$38.00	\$11.99	⬆️	⬇️	12
	<b>Neutrogena Sheer Zinc Mineral Lotion SPF 50 <sup>1</sup></b>	36	3.0	\$14.50	\$4.83	⬆️	⬇️	10
	<b>Goddess Garden Organics Daily Mineral Lotion SPF 30 <sup>1</sup></b>	36	6.0	\$22.00	\$3.67	⬆️	⬇️	7
	<b>Walgreens Sport Lotion SPF 50 Fresh Scent</b>	36	3.0	\$3.80	\$1.27	⬆️	⬇️	11
	<b>Hawaiian Tropic Matte Effect Lotion SPF 50+</b>	35	6.0	\$10.00	\$1.67	⬇️	⬇️	22

<sup>1</sup>Mineral sunscreen. Contains zinc oxide, titanium dioxide, or both as the only active ingredients. <sup>2</sup>Water resistant for 40 minutes.

Brand + Model	Overall Score	Pricing			Test Results		
		Package size (oz.)	Package price	Price per oz.	UVA protection	SPF	CR's average tested SPF



**LOTIONS** *Continued*

	<b>Banana Boat</b> Baby Mineral Lotion SPF 50+ <sup>†</sup>	31	6.0	\$11.00	\$1.83	↓	↓	12
	<b>Blue Lizard</b> Sensitive Mineral Lotion SPF 50+ <sup>†</sup>	29	5.0	\$20.00	\$4.00	↓	↓	14
	<b>Coppertone</b> Pure & Simple Mineral Lotion SPF 50 <sup>†</sup>	28	6.0	\$11.50	\$1.92	↑	↓	7
	<b>Banana Boat</b> Kids Sport Lotion SPF 50+ <sup>†</sup>	27	6.0	\$13.00	\$2.17	↓	↓	8
	<b>MDSolarSciences</b> Mineral Moisture Defense Lotion SPF 50 <sup>†</sup>	25	4.0	\$42.00	\$10.50	↓	↓	9
	<b>Black Girl Sunscreen</b> Kids Lotion SPF 50	18	3.0	\$10.00	\$3.33	↓	↓	13
	<b>Australian Gold</b> Botanical Mineral Lotion SPF 30 <sup>†</sup>	18	5.0	\$18.00	\$3.60	↓	↓	4

**SPRAYS**

	<b>Trader Joe's</b> Spray SPF 50+	74	6.0	\$6.00	\$1.00	↑	↑	34
	<b>Neutrogena</b> Beach Defense Water+Sun Protection Spray SPF 50	71	6.5	\$11.00	\$1.69	↑	↑	32
	<b>Black Girl Sunscreen</b> Make It Glow Spray SPF 30	68	3.0	\$19.00	\$6.33	↑	↓	26
	<b>Sun Bum</b> Premium Spray SPF 50	67	6.0	\$18.50	\$3.08	↑	↑	33
	<b>Neutrogena</b> Ultra Sheer Body Mist SPF 70	66	5.0	\$13.00	\$2.14	↓	↑	41
	<b>Australian Gold</b> Ultimate Hydration Continuous Spray SPF 30	66	6.0	\$12.50	\$2.08	↑	↓	21
	<b>Equate (Walmart)</b> Sport Spray SPF 50	65	5.5	\$4.90	\$0.89	↑	↑	30
	<b>La Roche-Posay</b> Anthelios Ultra Light Spray Lotion SPF 60	65	5.0	\$27.00	\$5.40	↑	↓	26
	<b>Up &amp; Up (Target)</b> Sport Spray SPF 50	64	5.5	\$5.00	\$0.91	↑	↓	29
	<b>Banana Boat</b> Sport Ultra Spray SPF 100	63	6.0	\$13.50	\$2.25	↑	↑	36
	<b>Coppertone</b> Complete Spray SPF 50	58	5.5	\$12.00	\$2.18	↑	↓	23
	<b>Banana Boat</b> Sport Cool Zone Spray SPF 30	53	6.0	\$12.50	\$2.08	↑	↓	18
	<b>Hawaiian Tropic</b> Skin Defense Mist SPF 30	51	3.4	\$10.00	\$2.94	↑	↓	15
	<b>Coola</b> Classic Spray SPF 70 Peach Blossom	51	6.0	\$28.00	\$4.67	↑	↓	16
	<b>Blue Lizard</b> Sport Mineral Spray SPF 50+ Unscented <sup>†</sup>	50	5.0	\$20.00	\$4.00	↑	↓	15
	<b>Coppertone</b> Glow Shimmer Spray SPF 30	49	5.0	\$12.00	\$2.40	↑	↓	13
	<b>Hawaiian Tropic</b> Everyday Active Sport Spray SPF 50	39	6.0	\$11.00	\$1.83	↑	↓	13
	<b>Coppertone</b> Sport Mineral Spray SPF 50 <sup>†</sup>	37	5.0	\$12.00	\$2.40	↓	↓	13
	<b>Coola</b> Mineral Spray SPF 30 Fragrance-Free <sup>†</sup>	31	5.0	\$32.00	\$6.40	↑	↓	8
	<b>Supergoop</b> Play Antioxidant Mist SPF 50	30	6.0	\$21.00	\$3.50	↑	↓	8

Brand + Model	Overall Score	Pricing			Test Results		
		Package size (oz.)	Package price	Price per oz.	UVA protection	SPF	CR's average tested SPF



### FACIAL SUNSCREENS

✓ <b>Black Girl Sunscreen Make It Matte Gel SPF 45</b>	67	1.7	\$22.00	\$12.94	↑	↑	33
<b>Neutrogena Sport Face Oil-Free Lotion SPF 70+</b>	53	2.5	\$10.70	\$4.28	↓	↑	33
<b>Supergoop Every.Single.Face Watery Lotion SPF 50</b> <sup>Ⓜ</sup>	52	1.7	\$34.00	\$20.00	↑	↓	16
<b>Banana Boat Sport Ultra Face Lotion SPF 30</b>	51	3.0	\$11.00	\$3.67	↑	↓	15
<b>Hawaiian Tropic Weightless Hydration Face Lotion SPF 30</b>	51	1.7	\$10.00	\$5.88	↑	↓	15
<b>EleVen by Venus Williams Ace the Day Face Lotion SPF 30</b> <sup>Ⓜ</sup> <sup>Ⓜ</sup>	44	1.8	\$38.00	\$21.59	↑	↓	11
<b>Aveeno Positively Mineral Sensitive Skin Face Lotion SPF 50</b> <sup>Ⓜ</sup>	44	2.0	\$12.00	\$6.00	↑	↓	15
<b>Banana Boat Light as Air Face Lotion SPF 50+</b>	43	3.0	\$12.00	\$4.00	↑	↓	13
<b>Sun Bum Glow Lotion SPF 30</b>	42	2.0	\$18.50	\$9.25	↑	↓	10
<b>Australian Gold Plant Based Face Lotion SPF 50 Aloe &amp; Coconut</b>	42	3.0	\$12.50	\$4.17	↑	↓	11
<b>Supergoop Unseen Lotion SPF 40</b> <sup>Ⓜ</sup>	38	1.7	\$38.00	\$22.35	↑	↓	8
<b>Blue Lizard Sheer Mineral Face Lotion SPF 50+</b> <sup>Ⓜ</sup>	38	1.7	\$16.00	\$9.41	↓	↓	23
<b>La Roche-Posay Anthelios Clear Skin Face Lotion SPF 60</b>	36	1.7	\$20.00	\$11.76	↓	↓	13

## How We Test Sunscreens

**WE USE THE** Food and Drug Administration's sunscreen testing protocol as a model. But—as with all products—we do our own scientific, laboratory-based testing to identify differences in performance and give consumers a comparative evaluation.

We buy sunscreens at retailers, the way consumers do, and test three samples of each product, each from different manufacturing batches. For SPF, we test the

sunscreens on three people, which is fewer than the FDA's protocol calls for, but we use a statistical analysis to verify our results.

A technician applies a standard amount of each product to a 2x3-inch rectangle on a panelist's back before they soak in water for 40 or 80 minutes based on the product's water resistance claims. Then we expose smaller sections of the rectangle to five or six intensities of simulated sunlight based on how quickly the

panelist's skin burns without protection. We also use a reference sunscreen with known performance to ensure testing accuracy. A day later, a technician examines the skin for redness and determines the sunscreen's SPF.

To test for UVA, we apply sunscreen onto plastic plates, expose them to UV light, and measure the amount of UVA and UVB rays that are absorbed. This test, like the UVA test in Europe, uses a process similar to the UVA

test the FDA requires. But the test we use allows us to determine the degree of UVA protection, while the FDA test does not. The FDA test is pass/fail; a sunscreen that just passes gets the same designation—broad spectrum—as one that screens out even more UVA.

Our ratings are developed from the average results of all the SPF and UVA tests for a sunscreen, as well as how much the average tested SPF varied from the SPF listed on the label.

<sup>Ⓜ</sup> Mineral sunscreen. Contains zinc oxide, titanium dioxide, or both as the only active ingredients. <sup>Ⓜ</sup> Water resistant for 40 minutes.



# IS YOUR SEAFOOD SAFE TO EAT?

You've heard there's mercury in tuna and bacteria in raw oysters. Here's our guide to eating fish without worry.



**SEAFOOD HAS A REPUTATION AS A WONDER FOOD**—and for good reason. It's high in protein, often low in saturated fat, and the best way to get large amounts of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. It doesn't take a lot to reap the health benefits, either: Two or more 3- to 4-ounce servings—about the size of a deck of cards—of most fish each week can lower your risk of heart disease, obesity, and cognitive decline, research shows.

Despite the proven health benefits, only a third of

American adults eat seafood even once a week, and 14 percent never eat it, according to a new Consumer Reports' nationally representative survey of 2,001 American adults.

Why not? Cost, for one. Seafood can be more expensive than chicken, beef, or other meat, and CR's survey found that price is the leading factor for people when choosing seafood, cited by 70 percent of fish eaters.

But worries about safety are important, too, given all that we hear about mercury in tuna, as well as





other contaminants—such as PFAS, or per- and polyfluorinated substances, aka “forever chemicals”—in our oceans and waterways.

Another concern: Seafood is prone to spoilage and food poisoning, making where you buy it and how you store it extra-important. No surprise, then, that about half of people in CR’s survey who eat fish say they consider safety when choosing fish.

Then there are questions about sustainability. As wild

populations of cod, salmon, and other species drop, more and more of our seafood is farmed—and more than a third of people say that whether seafood is wild-caught or farmed is a key factor in deciding which type they buy. To help unravel the confusion, CR recently dug into the issues consumers face when buying seafood—and tested five popular tuna brands for mercury. We also combed the research and talked to experts to create this guide to choosing the best seafood for you and your family.



## How Safe Is Seafood?

Roughly 3 in 10 people in CR’s survey say they have changed their seafood-eating habits for safety or nutritional reasons. Here’s what you need to know about contaminants like mercury and bacteria in seafood.

### The Mercury Problem

Mercury, a neurotoxin, is the most well-known health threat from eating fish. Too much of the heavy metal can harm anyone, impairing speech and hearing and causing muscle weakness. But it’s a particular concern for pregnant people, babies, and little kids because developing brains and bodies are especially vulnerable.

Most seafood contains some mercury from either natural sources or industrial pollution. But bigger fish—such as tuna, shark, and swordfish—that are higher in the food chain tend to have more of the heavy metal because they take in all the mercury that the smaller fish eat. Mercury in tuna is especially worrisome because it’s popular with both adults and kids.

So CR recently tested for mercury in five popular canned tuna brands: Bumble Bee, Chicken of the Sea, Safe

Catch, StarKist, and Wild Planet.

We found that the mercury levels in our tuna samples varied widely but that albacore contained, on average, three times as much as the light or skipjack variety. That makes sense because albacore tuna are larger fish.

**CR’S ADVICE:** Our tests found that average mercury levels across the samples were, with a few exceptions, generally low enough that adults could safely eat up to three 5-ounce cans of light or skipjack tuna a week or one can of albacore. (For details, see “Tuna Watch: The Weekly Limit,” on the facing page.)

However, individual cans of tuna contained enough unpredictable spikes in mercury that CR recommends staying away from canned tuna entirely during pregnancy.

Children can still eat light or skipjack tuna, though in smaller amounts than adults, following these weekly, age-specific guidelines:

**AGES 1 TO 3:** 2 ounces

**AGES 4 TO 7:** 4 ounces

**AGES 8 TO 10:** 6 ounces

**AGE 11:** 8 ounces

For guidance on mercury in other fish, and how much you can safely eat, see “Choose Your Fish Wisely,” below.

### Other Contaminants

Mercury isn’t the only pollutant of concern to seafood lovers. Research suggests that potentially dangerous pesticides and other chemicals contaminate our water and, in turn, the fish we eat.

The effects of these chemicals on human health aren’t as well-understood as mercury but have been linked to a host of health problems ranging from a suppressed immune system to an increased risk of liver and some other cancers.

Mercury accumulates more in bigger, slower-growing fish. But PFAS, which can linger in the environment for many, many years, do not follow the same pattern. Here, it’s more about where a fish was caught—its proximity to sites of PFAS contamination—than it is about its size or species.

Researchers are increasingly finding PFAS in many places, including near manufacturing plants that make the chemicals, which are used in hundreds of products ranging from nonstick cookware to rainproof clothing to food packaging.

The Food and Drug Administration last year found extremely high PFAS levels in two samples of canned clams from China, leading to a recall of the products, though its tests of

**SKIPJACK TUNA** *The smallest of the tuna species, this is commonly used in canned tuna and is also called light or chunk light tuna. It tends to have lower levels of mercury than albacore.*

## CHOOSE YOUR FISH WISELY

Most adults can eat up to three servings a week of fish with lower levels of mercury, or one serving a week of those with medium levels of the heavy metal. Everyone should avoid fish with higher levels.

### HIGHEST LEVELS

- King mackerel
- Marlin
- Orange roughy
- Shark
- Swordfish
- Tilefish (Gulf of Mexico)
- Tuna, bigeye

### MEDIUM LEVELS

- Bluefish
- Buffalo fish
- Carp
- Chilean sea bass/Patagonian toothfish
- Grouper
- Halibut
- Mahi mahi/dolphinfish



other ocean-dwelling seafood, such as cod and tuna, have not found worrisome levels of PFAS.

The bigger concern appears to be with freshwater fish caught by recreational anglers and indigenous people who incorporate local fish into their diets, says Elsie Sunderland, PhD, a professor of Environmental Chemistry at Harvard University. A study by the Environmental Working Group suggests that PFAS may be highest in catfish, small- and largemouth bass, yellow perch, and walleye, especially when caught near urban areas and in the Great Lakes.

When it comes to pesticides like DDT and industrial compounds such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), the risk of contamination is a combination of both a fish's size and its proximity to pollutants. **CR'S ADVICE:** To limit exposure to pesticides and most other potentially harmful chemicals, a safe bet is to follow the same guidelines as for tuna because fish high in mercury could be high in other contaminants. PFAS is mostly a concern if you are a freshwater angler. If you are, contact your state's department of natural resources for any guidance, and ask about known PFAS contamination sites in your area.

## TUNA WATCH: THE WEEKLY LIMIT

Here's CR's advice on the number of cans of tuna that nonpregnant adults can consume each week without getting too much mercury. (This is based on a 5-ounce can drained of water, and assumes that no other fish is eaten.) Children should eat less; see facing page.



**FARMED** These fish or shellfish are bred and raised. The farm can be a pen or a human-made pond in fresh or ocean waters, or above-ground containers, such as tanks. Contained systems where water is recycled may be more environmentally friendly.

### LOWER LEVELS

- Monkfish
- Rockfish
- Sablefish
- Sheepshead
- Snapper
- Spanish mackerel
- Striped bass (ocean)
- Tilefish (Atlantic Ocean)

- Tuna, albacore/white tuna, canned and fresh/frozen
- Tuna, yellowfin
- Weakfish/seatrout
- White croaker/Pacific croaker

- Anchovy
- Atlantic croaker
- Atlantic mackerel
- Black sea bass
- Butterfish
- Catfish
- Clam
- Cod
- Crab
- Crawfish

- Flounder
- Haddock
- Hake
- Herring
- Lobster, American and spiny
- Mullet
- Oyster
- Pacific chub mackerel

- Perch, freshwater and ocean
- Pickerel
- Plaice
- Pollock
- Salmon
- Sardine
- Scallop
- Shad
- Shrimp

- Skate
- Smelt
- Sole
- Squid
- Tilapia
- Trout, freshwater
- Tuna, canned light (includes skipjack)
- Whitefish
- Whiting

**WILD OR WILD-CAUGHT** Fish and shellfish that spend their lives in their natural habitats. How they're caught influences how sustainable they are. Nets and longlines (those that stretch for miles) can target not only the intended catch but also other fish.

## Raw and Risky

From sushi and ceviche to oysters and clams on the half shell, raw seafood is a staple in many cuisines. In CR's new survey, about half of people who eat seafood say they choose raw at least occasionally.

The concern: Cooking seafood to 145° F kills most germs that could be in the food, but when the food is eaten raw, dangerous pathogens can be present and make you sick.

For fin fish, the issue is mostly parasites such as roundworms, tapeworms, and intestinal flukes. Depending on the type, these parasites can work their way into your intestinal wall and cause nausea, diarrhea, or abdominal pain. Some can even migrate to your liver or heart and damage those organs.

For oysters, clams, mussels, and other shellfish, bacteria are the most common cause of food poisoning, particularly one called vibrio. It thrives in coastal waters, especially in warmer months, and can cause diarrhea, vomiting, and fever.

Infections from it sometimes require hospitalization and can even be fatal.

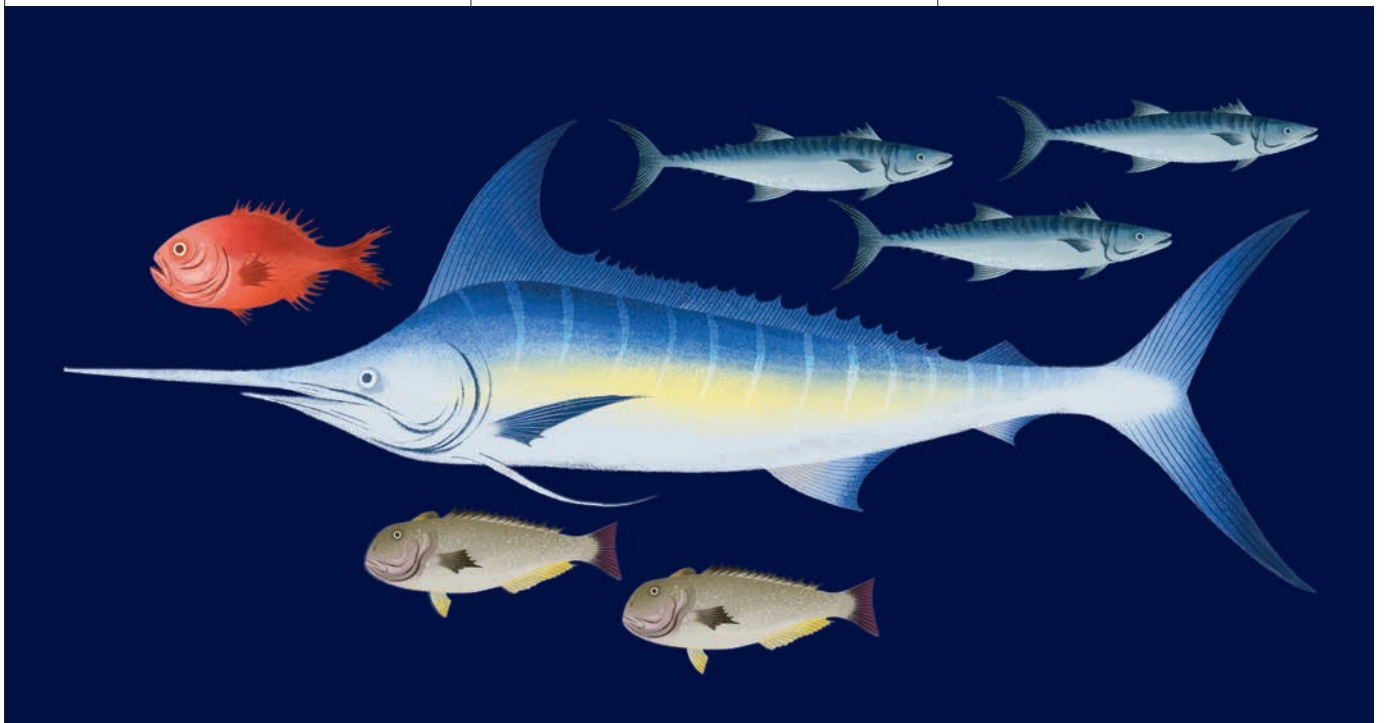
**CR'S ADVICE:** Anyone who is pregnant, is younger than 5 or older than 65, or has a weakened immune system should simply avoid raw seafood, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Others can reduce, but not eliminate, the risk when preparing raw fish at home by carefully selecting seafood and making sure it's prepared properly.

For most raw fin fish, that usually means buying commercially frozen fish. That's because the parasites that can be found in raw fish can be killed only in temperatures below 0° F, says Michael Ciaramella, PhD, seafood safety and technology specialist at New York Sea Grant, a partnership with the State University of New York and Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. When you are ready to prepare the fish, thaw it slowly and, once defrosted, keep it very cold. And don't use the fish if it looks slimy or smells very fishy.

For raw shellfish, check for freshness. Bagged shellfish should have a tag indicating when it was harvested, and if shellfish isn't bagged, the store should have that information. Stick with those harvested no more than about a week earlier. Also do your own inspection: Shells should close tightly when tapped, and don't buy them if they are cracked. Use any shellfish you bring home within one or two days, and when the shells are opened, the meat should be firm.

When dining out, consider the restaurant's reputation. Ratings and reviews on Google, Yelp, and similar sites aren't foolproof. But it would be wise to avoid places that have anything other than stellar reviews or that have even a few mentions of food poisoning. Some locations provide letter grades or color-coded placards to indicate recent food inspection results. "Especially when it comes to sushi, I would avoid anything without a top rating," says Sana Mujahid, PhD, manager of food safety and testing at CR.



**POLE-AND-LINE-CAUGHT** In this sustainable fishing method, crews look for schools of fish and then bait the waters to get the fish into a feeding frenzy. Then each person uses a pole and a line, so fish are caught one at a time and unwanted species can be released.



## What Is Sustainable Seafood?

When choosing seafood, you might get tangled up not only in complicated questions about health benefits and risks but also in the terms and claims related to its sustainability.

Farmed vs. wild-caught? Pole-and-line vs. troll-caught? What does it all mean—and why is it important, anyway?

### Why Sustainability Matters

Fishing in a way that preserves the ocean's fish and shellfish has become a big deal for several reasons.

As the world's population increases, along with per capita seafood consumption, we're harvesting fish in ways that can pollute ocean waters and damage habitats. And we are using technologies—like huge seafood harvesting and processing factory ships that can stay at sea for months at a time—that allow us to catch fish faster than they can reproduce,

according to Seafood Watch, at the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

A number of long-term solutions are being developed, including different ways of catching fish in the wild and, increasingly, farmed fish—raising seafood in pens, ponds, or tanks. But coming up with effective, affordable solutions isn't easy.

Here are the terms related to sustainability that you're likely to see while shopping, and what you need to know about each, as well as our advice on what to look for when searching for sustainable seafood.

### Wild vs. Farmed

In recent decades, fish in the wild have been caught using a variety of huge nets or dredges that exponentially increase the number of fish caught and, over time, deplete populations of key species. In many cases, these techniques also have the unintended harm of catching other species—including turtles and marine mammals—and damaging marine habitats.

Farmed fish has the potential to reduce those risks, according to Seafood Watch. Seafood now commonly raised this way includes shellfish, salmon, shrimp, striped bass, tilapia, and trout.

Taste differences between farmed and wild fish of the same type tend to be slight, says Davis Herron, vice president of Lobster Place Seafood Hall at Chelsea Market in New York City. Farmed salmon tends to be fattier than wild-caught, for example, but that doesn't mean that farmed tastes better or worse than wild, he says.

Several things can influence the nutrition and safety differences between farmed and wild fish. For example, because of the controlled environments in which they are raised, farmed fish may be less likely than wild fish to be exposed to harmful pollutants, such as mercury, and more likely to have consistent levels of omega-3s and other nutrients, says Jason Bolton, PhD, a seafood safety specialist and associate dean at the University of

## SKIP BUYING 'ORGANIC' SEAFOOD

Some places sell fish labeled "organic," but "there's no such thing," says University of Maine seafood safety specialist Jason Bolton. The Department of Agriculture, which sets standards for organic meat, poultry, and other foods, hasn't developed rules for farm-raised seafood. And wild-caught seafood can't be considered organic because its environment isn't controlled.



**TROLL-CAUGHT** Also known as hook-and-line, this technique is often used to catch flounder, salmon, and cod. It involves dragging several fishing lines behind a boat. It's considered preferable to some other methods because unwanted species can be quickly released.

Maine Cooperative Extension in Orono. On the other hand, farmed fish may be raised in crowded conditions, making them susceptible to disease and parasites, like sea lice. They could then be treated with pesticides or antibiotics, which can remain in the seafood or get into surrounding waters.

### Pole-Caught vs. Longlines

Some species of fish, particularly larger ones like tuna, swordfish, and cod, can't be raised easily in farms. In recent decades, they were often caught in the wild with nets or fishing lines that could be many miles long and have thousands of hooks, called longlines. Both of those techniques posed substantial risks of overfishing and catching unintended, potentially threatened species.

As an alternative, some fishing companies are turning to pole-and-line fishing, as well as jigs and trolling lines. With those methods, unwanted species can be more easily released.

The downside: They are more labor-intensive, so some fish caught this way may cost more. For example, for our tests of canned tuna, we paid between \$2.75 and \$3.49 for a can of Wild Planet Skipjack Wild Tuna, which the

company says is "100% pole & line or troll caught." By comparison, Bumble Bee Chunk Light Tuna in Water, which doesn't indicate on the label what fishing method is used, cost between 89 cents and \$1.99.

**CR'S ADVICE:** Although experts can't say whether farmed or wild-caught is better overall, they do offer some general advice to guide your shopping.

If cost is your primary concern, you are usually better off choosing farmed fish over wild. For example, wild salmon can cost twice as much as farmed, or more.

When choosing farmed, look for fish raised in the U.S., which tends to have more oversight in the use of pesticides or antibiotics than fish raised abroad.

Finally, consider species such as tilapia or catfish, which are omnivores and can be fed on insects or algae instead of other fish. That's important because some farmed fish are fed meal or oil made from other fish, which can contribute to overfishing.

For more information about the sustainability of particular species of fish, check out Seafood Watch's guide to sustainable seafood ([seafoodwatch.org/](http://seafoodwatch.org/) recommendations).



## Shop and Prep With Care

The first step to safe seafood is to choose fish low in mercury and other contaminants. But how and where you buy it, as well as how you handle and prepare it, matter if you're to reduce the risk of food poisoning from bacteria and other pathogens. Follow these tips to make sure you buy the freshest catch and store it properly.

## Is a Fish Oil Supplement As Good As Eating Fish?

THERE'S LITTLE doubt that the omega-3 fatty acids in fish have numerous health benefits, especially because they can ward off chronic inflammation, which is linked to cancer, heart disease, and other health problems.

Some research also suggests that

they can make cell membranes more fluid, which in theory could help with brain health and possibly make skin more supple and healthy-looking.

But most of the evidence in support of fish oil's heart benefits comes from research on eating fish itself, not from supplements.

And while some studies suggest that high doses in pill form may benefit people with a history of high cholesterol levels or heart disease, most of the research on supplements has shown little benefit in other people.

For example, studies of fish-oil pills have not been

clearly shown to reduce the risk of developing heart disease in those who don't already have it.

Why would fatty acids in fish work better in food than a pill? One possibility: The benefits "may also be due to choosing fish in place of high-saturated-fat



**PREVIOUSLY FROZEN** This means that the fish or shellfish were frozen after being caught and then thawed in the store. The fish may have been flash-frozen on the boat or at a processing plant. Unless you live near a fishing port, it's likely that fish sold as fresh has actually been frozen.

► **Know the signs of spoilage.**

Seafood is more perishable than meat or poultry, so check before you buy. Fish should smell mild and clean, not fishy or sour. Fillets shouldn't be discolored or dry around the edges, and flesh should be firm and springy. For whole fish, look for clear, shiny eyes.

► **Don't dismiss frozen fish.** Unless you live near a fishing community, the fish you buy likely hasn't come off the boat that day. Fish needs to be transported, and the quality can degrade during travel. Freezing fish right when it's caught helps maintain flavor and moisture. So frozen fish may actually be a higher-quality product than fresh. Frozen fish can also be less expensive and, because it minimizes food waste, better for the environment. When shopping for frozen seafood, avoid packages with frost or ice crystals, which may mean the fish has been stored a long time or thawed and refrozen.

► **Shop clean.** Keep seafood separated from other foods in your shopping cart and shopping bags, so bacteria that could be on the fish don't spread to other foods. Pick up seafood last, and store it in a clean cooler with ice if you can't get it into your refrigerator within

2 hours—1 hour if the temperature outdoors is over 90° F.

► **Store it safely.** Once you get home, keep raw seafood well-wrapped or in a sealed container in your refrigerator to ensure that drips don't contaminate other foods. It's probably best to store raw seafood in the main area of the fridge. The door isn't meant for perishables, and temperatures are more likely to fluctuate in bins than in your refrigerator's main compartment.

► **Use it or freeze it.** Freeze raw seafood you won't use within one to two days. Lean fish keeps for six to eight months in the freezer; fatty fish such as salmon, two to three months. However, what looks like fresh fish may sometimes have been previously frozen and thawed at the store, so if there's no sign saying so, ask at

the fish counter. If you've bought previously frozen fish, don't refreeze: The flavor and texture will suffer.

► **Thaw slowly.** To thaw, place the frozen fish in its bag or its wrapping on a plate in the refrigerator. In a hurry? Place fish in cold water in a sealed plastic bag.

► **Prep right.** Make sure your work area is clean before you start, and use a separate cutting board and utensils for seafood, then clean them with hot, soapy water. Afterward, use hot, soapy water and paper towels to clean up, especially if there are spills.

► **Check for doneness.** That means making sure the fish reaches an internal temperature of 145° F. Checking with an instant-read food thermometer, preferably a digital one, is the most precise method. For thicker fish such as a salmon steak,

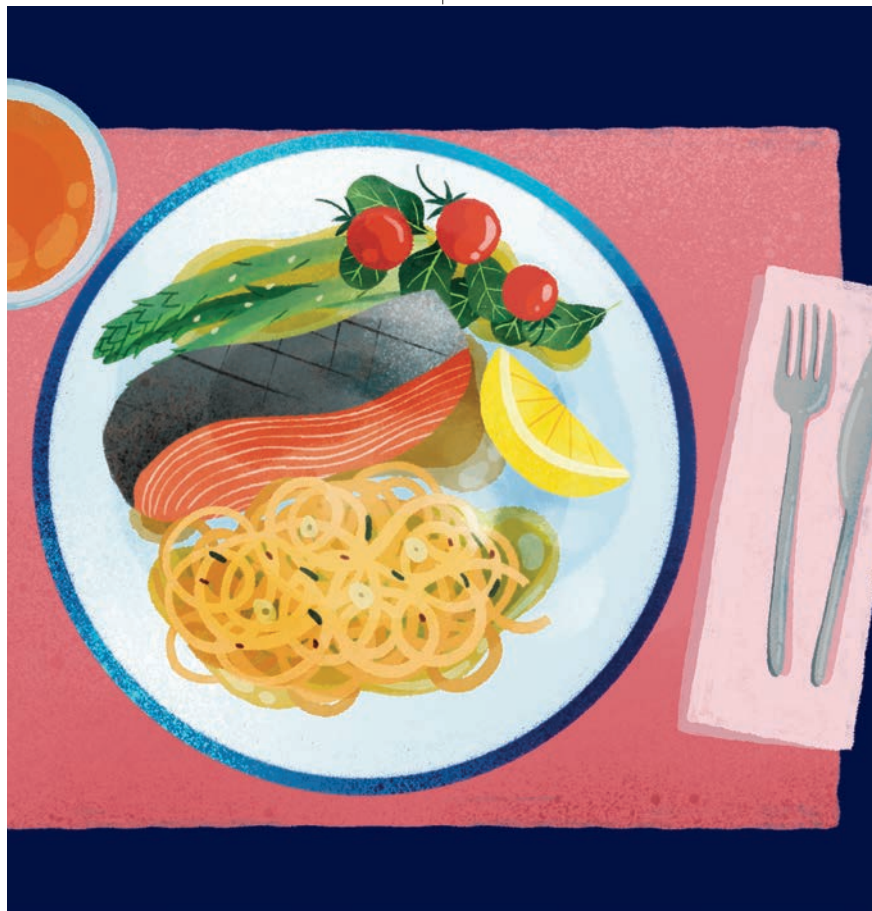
PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

foods like steak," says Alice H. Lichtenstein, DSc, director of the Cardiovascular Nutrition Laboratory at Tufts University in Boston. She is the coauthor of a 2017 advisory from the American Heart Association that recommends that most people get

omega-3 fatty acids from fish, not pills.

Fish that have the most omega-3 fatty acids include salmon, sardines, and anchovies.

If you really don't like fish, you can also get some from walnuts, chia seeds, flax seeds, and oils made from those foods.



**CLEANED SHRIMP** Shrimp that has been shelled and deveined. It's available raw or cooked in fresh or frozen form. The vein isn't harmful to eat, but it can be gritty. You can save money by buying shell-on shrimp and shelling and deveining it yourself.

slip the thermometer into a side of the fillet. But because it's hard to use a thermometer on shellfish or a delicate fillet of sole, the Department of Agriculture says it's also okay to check for doneness by cooking fish until the flesh is opaque and separates or flakes easily with a fork. Cook crabs, lobster, and shrimp until the flesh is opaque and pearly; clams,

mussels, and oysters, until their shells open; scallops, until they are milky white or firm and opaque. **► Be temperature-wise when serving.** Refrigerate cooked seafood within an hour or two. For seafood served cold, as in a shrimp cocktail or salad, keep it refrigerated until you're ready to eat it. For picnics or buffets, place the serving dish in a bowl or tray of ice.

**► Throw it out if you're not sure it's okay.** If you don't know—or can't trust—how your seafood was stored before cooking, how it was prepared, or how it was maintained after cooking, play it safe and throw it away. That's better than taking the chance of a foodborne illness, says CR's Mujahid. Toss leftover cooked seafood after two days in the fridge.



## TINNED FISH IS HAVING A MOMENT

WHEN PEOPLE THINK OF CANNED fish they usually think: tuna. But lots of other seafood—clams, herring, oysters, mussels, and more—comes in cans, too. And thanks to social media, the humble tinned fish has become the latest “it” food.

Raving posts about tinned fish have been exploding on Instagram, TikTok, and other platforms. And unlike some other food trends, tinned fish is both sustainable and good for your health.

Sardines and salmon in particular are great sources

omega-3 fatty acids. And because sardines and anchovies are small fish, lower on the food chain, they tend to have less mercury than larger fish such as shark, swordfish, and tuna. Tinned fish is often sustainable, too, particularly because of how some types—such as sardines and mussels—are caught.

What about taste? Several CR staffers recently tried three brands each of canned sardines, anchovies in olive oil, smoked mussels, and smoked salmon. See our favorites below.

—Angela Lashbrook



### CR STAFF PICKS

**SMOKED SALMON**  
**Wildfish Cannery Smoked White King Salmon** \$19

This has a deep smoky flavor. One taster said she'd use it in an omelet, on pizza, to make salmon cakes, or in a casserole.

**ANCHOVIES**  
**Fishwife Anchovies in Spanish Extra Virgin Olive Oil** \$27 for a three-pack

The tasters found these soft, buttery, and umami-rich, and perfection right out of the tin.

**SARDINES**  
**Jose Gourmet Small Sardines in Extra Virgin Olive Oil** \$9

These had a meaty, firm texture, with an earthy, delicate taste that was not overly fishy.

**MUSSELS**  
**Ramón Peña Mussels in Pickled Sauce** \$13

These are smoky, rich, and pillowy, and are more palatable for those new to tinned mussels.

# Newer Fish to Try

Tired of salmon or shrimp? Fishmongers from the famed Pike Place Market in Seattle and Chelsea Market in New York City offer a few alternatives. These fish are all relatively low in mercury and good sources of omega-3 fatty acids, with sustainable options readily available. And some may cost less than more familiar varieties.

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## HALIBUT

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This mild white fish has firm flesh. The cheeks, taken from the heads of these large fish, are especially tender and considered delicacies. The most sustainable choices are farmed fish raised in indoor tanks and wild fish from the Pacific certified by the Marine Stewardship Council.

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## SNAPPER

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There are several varieties, including blacktail, bluestriped, and red. This fish, especially red snapper, is quite mild, with delicate flesh. It can be cooked whole or pan-seared with the skin on. The most sustainable red snapper comes from the Gulf of Mexico.

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## BLACK COD

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Also known as sablefish, it looks and tastes like cod—hence its name—but is a different species. Black cod has a mild flavor and soft, buttery texture. For sustainable choices, look for wild-caught black cod from the U.S. West Coast or the farmed version from British Columbia.

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## MAHI MAHI

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It's also called dolphinfish or even just dolphin, but it's unrelated to real dolphins. Mahi mahi is another white fish but with a slightly stronger taste than some. For a sustainable choice, look for U.S. wild-caught fish from the North Atlantic, especially when caught by pole or handlines.

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## STRIPED BASS

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Sometimes called rockfish, this fish has a delicate, slightly sweet flavor, with pinkish-white meat. If you want the most sustainable option, look for farm-raised fish or those wild-caught with handlines.

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## BRANZINO

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Also known as European sea bass, branzino is especially popular in Italian cuisine. It's mild-tasting, with white, flaky meat, and often roasted whole. For the most sustainable choice, look for farmed fish raised in indoor tanks.

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## SEA BASS

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Black sea bass is good for chowders. White sea bass (which is actually a different species) has a firm, meaty texture that holds up well to grilling. Look for white sea bass from California or black sea bass from the Atlantic caught with handlines or bottom trawls.

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## TILEFISH

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Tilefish is sometimes called "poor man's lobster" because some say it has a similar texture but costs less. It's also a sustainable choice because populations are thriving in most places. But avoid tilefish from the Gulf of Mexico because the FDA lists it as being high in mercury.









# TAKE CONTROL OF TECH CLUTTER

Old laptops, cell phones, power cords. Here's what to do with the stuff you no longer need, and how to organize what you do use (including streamlining that overflowing email inbox).

BY MELANIE PINOLA PHOTOGRAPH BY BEN GOLDSTEIN



## Get Rid of Old Electronics

A step-by-step guide to saving what you need, deleting the rest, and recycling the hardware.

### ✕ Gather and Sort Gadgets

The first step in taking control of unwanted devices is to collect them in one spot that's convenient but out of sight, where you can work on the project gradually.

Then divide them into two categories.

Devices that don't contain personal data on them, such as keyboards, headphones, and monitors, can go into boxes ready to sell, donate, or recycle.

The second group is for items that may have important files, such as laptops, phones, and CDs. In most cases, you'll want to copy and then erase those files. (Instructions follow.) But if you don't care about retrieving the information and just want to make sure sensitive data is deleted, you can try a free service that will take the items off your hands and erase the data—in which case, jump to "Sell, Donate, or Recycle," on page 36.

## ✗ Back Up and Wipe Old Phones

The photos, contacts, and messages from your old phone may already be copied onto your new phone. But you can do it again to be safe.

### ANDROID PHONES:

Go to Settings, tap the search icon, and enter "backup." Follow the prompts, then wait 24 hours to make sure everything gets copied. If your phone has an SD card for extra storage, pop it into your computer's built-in SD card reader or an external reader, which costs around \$10 from brands such as Kingston and SanDisk.

**IPHONES:** One option is to back up to iCloud, but you may have to pay a monthly fee to get enough storage. (Go to Settings, tap your name > iCloud backup.) Or connect the phone to your computer with a cable. On a Mac, open Finder and click on the iPhone. Then click General > "Back up all of the data on your iPhone to this Mac." On a Windows PC, open iTunes, then click the iPhone button > Summary > Back Up Now.

Then erase the data on the phone. If it has a SIM card, remove and destroy it (scissors should work). Search Settings for "reset."



## ➤ DESTROY OLD CDs, DVDs, AND FLOPPY DISKS

Do you still have a pile of 3.5-inch floppy disks in a desk drawer? You can buy an inexpensive reader to copy the files to your computer or just see what's on them. A floppy disk drive on Amazon runs about \$20; a DVD drive is about \$25.

Once you have the files on your computer, make the obsolete disks unreadable: Cut scratches in a CD or DVD, and cut up the disk inside a floppy disk. Then add the pieces to your e-cycling pile.

## ✗ Wipe a Laptop or Desktop Computer

This process can take a while. If you have trouble—say, the device won't turn on—or you prefer to get help, contact an electronics repair shop. As an example, Best Buy's Geek Squad data backup service starts at \$100.

Ready to take it on yourself? A fast, simple backup method is to copy the files onto an external hard drive. A 2-terabyte drive should be more than big enough—and you can then use it for extra storage with your current

computer. Prominent brands such as Seagate and Western Digital offer them for about \$60. Connect the drive to the old computer with a USB cable, then use File Explorer for Windows or Finder on Mac to copy the files you want onto the drive.

Next, permanently wipe all personal data from the laptop. This takes a number of steps, which vary depending on the type and age of your computer. Search "erase computer" at Apple or Microsoft's site for directions, or see [CR.org/cleancomputer](http://CR.org/cleancomputer).

## ✗ Sell, Donate, or Recycle

It's finally time get your dusty old gadgets out of the house.

**CASH OUT** Trade-in programs will give you a quote for items like PCs and phones, a free shipping label, and cash or a gift card after they receive them. Options include Amazon.com (amazon.com/tradein), Apple (apple.com/shop/trade-in), and Best Buy (tradein.bestbuy.com). BuyBackWorld and Gazelle promise to delete all your personal data.

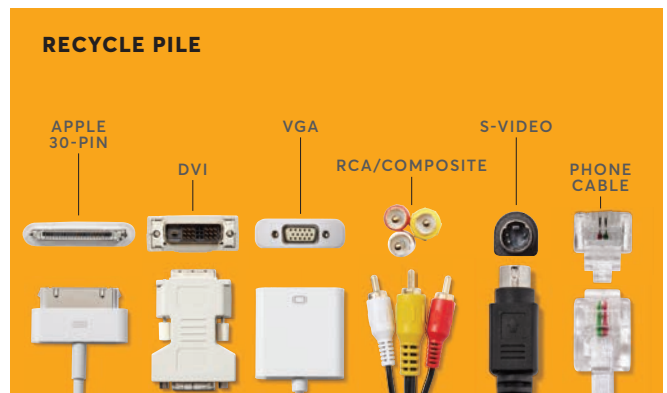
**DONATE** Check with a local charity or go to WorldComputerExchange.org, which distributes tech to schools and programs across the globe. Dell Reconnect works with Goodwill; it takes items in any condition and promises to wipe your data.

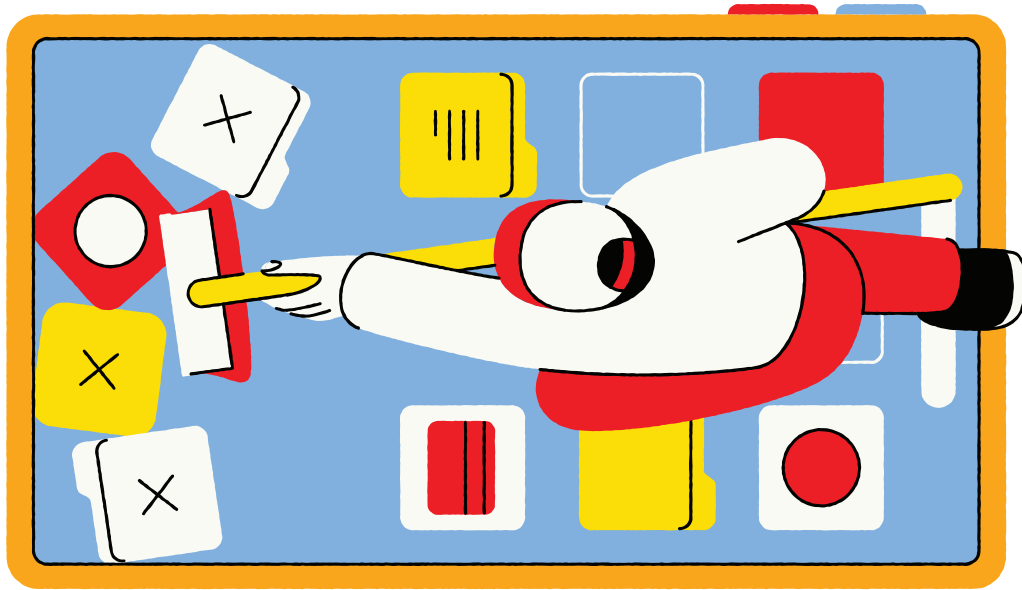
**RECYCLE** Don't throw electronic items in the trash. Recycling them helps conserve resources and keep toxic chemicals out of the environment. Your local recycling center may accept e-waste. Or go to Earth911.com to find other options near you.

## ➤ GET RID OF UNWANTED CABLES

What to do with that tangle of cords? Some can still be useful, even if you no longer want the gadgets they came with. For instance, if you're an iPhone user, you really can't have too many Lightning cables for charging your phone.

But other kinds of connectors are obsolete. This chart will help you decide. One note: Even if they're destined for the recycling pile, temporarily hang on to cables you might need to retrieve data from old laptops and other devices.





# Make More Space on Your Devices

Eventually, your phone and laptop may start telling you they're running out of space, especially if you've saved lots of photos and videos. Here's how to declutter your devices.

## ✗ Free Up Storage on Your Computer

### DELETE UNUSED APPLICATIONS

The first step is to delete old applications, which can take up a lot of room on a hard drive. You might not even be using the biggest space hogs.

**MAC:** Open Finder and go to the Applications folder. Select the app, then either drag it to the Trash or right-click it (or click while holding down the Control button) and choose File > Move to Trash. Then right-click on the Trash icon and choose Empty Trash.

**WINDOWS:** Go to Settings. Then you want to choose Apps > Apps & features. Find the app you want to remove, then select More > Uninstall.

### DELETE DUPLICATES

Identical copies of files aren't just a waste of space; they're confusing when you don't know which file to open. Here's an easy way to find and delete those duplicates.

**MAC:** Open Finder and search for "(1)" with quotation marks.

**WINDOWS:** In File Explorer on Windows, search for filename:~\*(1)\*". Then try "(2)" and "(3)," too.

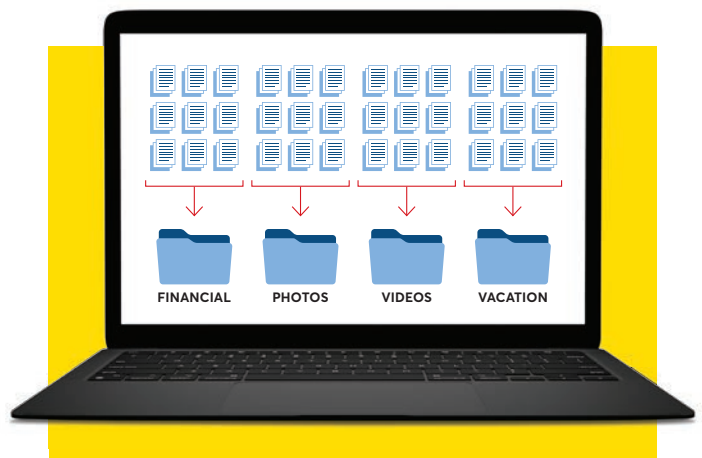
### USE BUILT-IN UTILITIES

These tools will recommend other ways to save space.

**MAC:** Click the Apple icon, then System Settings > General > Storage.

**WINDOWS:** Find the app called Disk Cleanup, or a feature called Storage Sense under Start > Settings > System > Storage.

## DECLUTTER YOUR DESKTOP AND DOWNLOADS FOLDER



Having numerous files on your desktop is like having papers spread all over your actual desk: It can be hard to find what you need and stressful to look at. Your downloads folder can get just as messy.

Delete the files on your desktop you no longer need, such as that PDF ticket for an event long ago, as well as unneeded shortcuts to applications.

Next, move files you do want to keep to the appropriate subfolder under your main Documents folder—or create a new subfolder if necessary.

Now open your Downloads folder and scroll through the list to identify any files you want to keep, such as downloaded bank statements. Move them to the appropriate folders under Documents.

Everything else, including installation files (.dmg on Mac, .exe on Windows), can be trashed.

## ✗ Free Up Storage on Your Phone

### QUICKLY CLEAN UP AN ANDROID PHONE

You can delete unused apps, duplicate photos, junk files, and more with the Files by Google app. Download it from the Play Store if it's not already installed. In the app, tap Clean on the bottom. Then you can choose the kinds of files and apps you want to remove with just a few taps.

### DELETE UNUSED APPS ON AN IPHONE

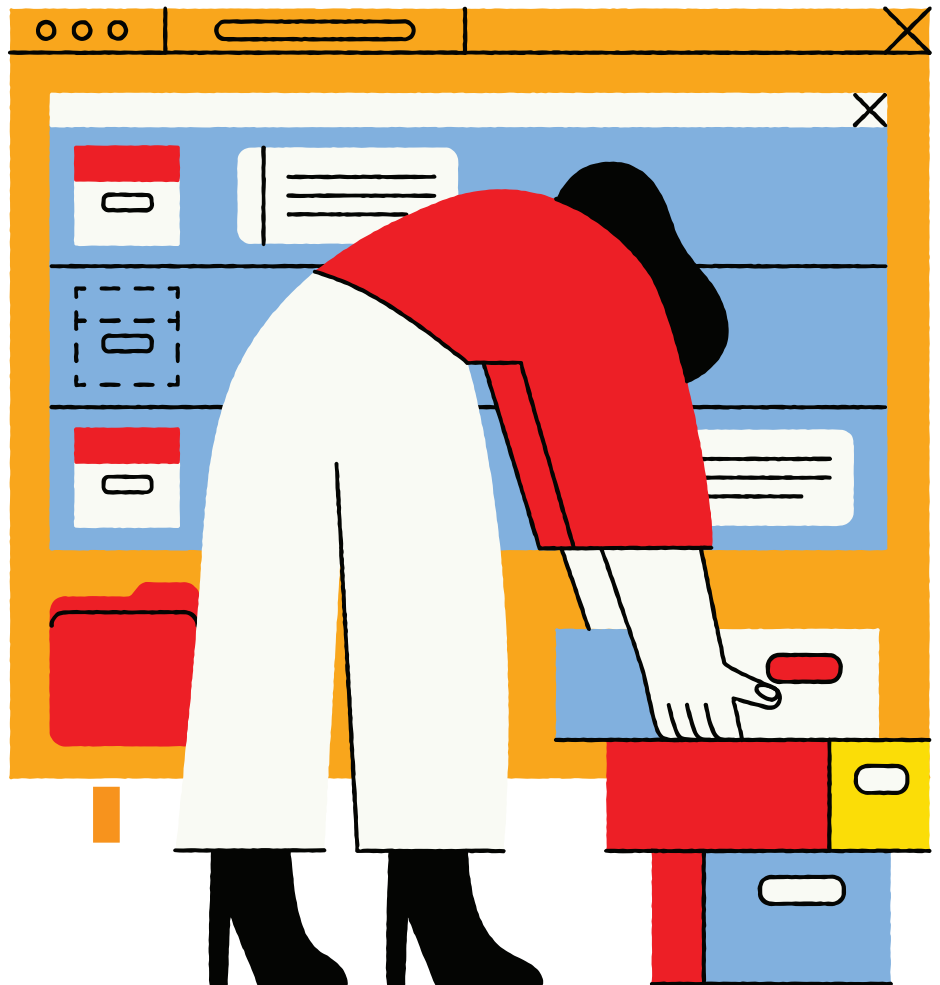
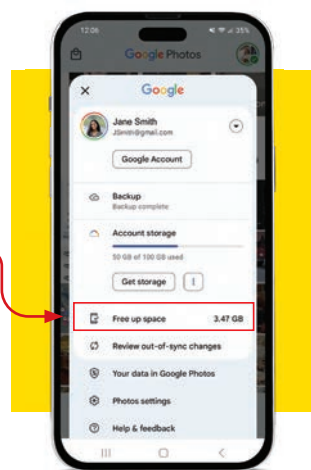
Go to Settings > General > iPhone Storage to see a color-coded bar graph showing your storage usage. Below that, click on the recommendations iOS will present to you, such as enabling "Offload Unused Apps," which deletes the apps but keeps the user data in case you want to use the apps in the future. You'll also see on this screen the apps that are installed on your phone and their size. Tap on the ones you wish to delete.

### OPTIMIZE PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

Photos and videos tend to take up the most storage space. Photo optimization stores full-resolution versions in the cloud while leaving smaller versions on your phone.

**ON AN ANDROID PHONE,** go to Google Photos' settings and select "Free up space."

**ON AN IPHONE,** go to Settings > Photos and enable "Optimize iPhone Storage." Now you'll have more room ... for more photos and videos.



## Tidy Your Digital Accounts

Online life brings certain headaches, such as ever-changing passwords and an overflowing inbox. Here are fixes for those annoyances.

### ✗ Manage Your Passwords

Have you clicked a "Forgot password?" link in the past few months? Resetting your password because you can't

remember it is no one's idea of a good time. For your security, and to make logging in to accounts as hassle-free as possible, we recommend using a password manager, which generates and saves

## ➤ SHUT DOWN OLD ACCOUNTS

Many of us have long-forgotten accounts with retailers, apps, media sites, and more. This raises the odds of your data being misused or stolen. To find old accounts to close, search for emails with phrases like "welcome to" and "confirm your email." To avoid phishing attacks, don't click on links in these emails. Instead, go to the company website in a fresh browser tab.



long, unique passwords for all your online accounts. (One thing you should never do is reuse the same password on multiple sites, which is a major security risk.)

In CR's tests, 1Password (from \$36 per year) performed the best for its balance of privacy, security, and ease of use. Dashlane and Keeper offer both free and paid options.

Once you start using a password manager, you need to remember just one password—the one you use to access all your stored log-in credentials. Make it long (at least 16 characters), unique, and memorable. You can use a series of random words separated by hyphens or spaces. It's fine to write this down in a notebook stored safely at home.

## ✗ Stop Unwanted Emails

Once you empty your inbox of marketing emails (see directions at right), you don't want it to quickly fill back up.

### SEARCH, OPT OUT, AND DESTROY

Marketers give you a way to stop receiving their messages. A convenient tactic for collecting a lot of them in one place is to search your inbox for common marketing lingo like "today only," "while supplies last," "limited time," "coupon," and even "privacy policy" and "edit your preferences."

Then, in the search results, open each email and click on the Unsubscribe link next to the email sender's name, if it's available. Or scroll to the bottom of the email to find the Unsubscribe link to remove yourself from the mailing list.

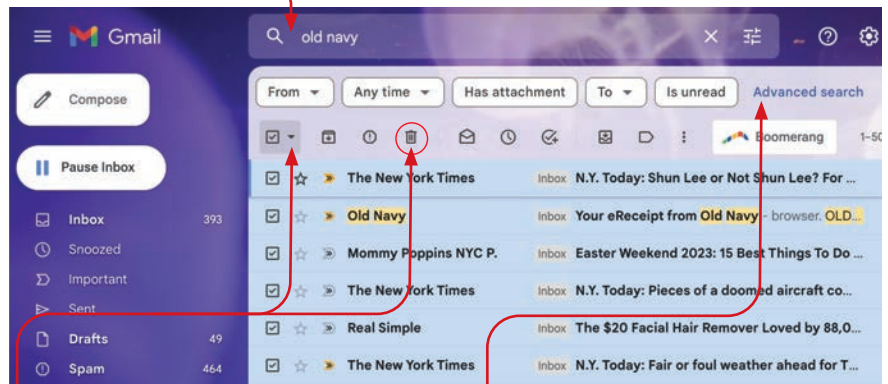
Repeat with each sender, and enjoy deleting the emails as you go.

## EMPTY YOUR GMAIL INBOX

An inbox full of hundreds—if not thousands—of read and unread emails is distracting and can be a source of stress, much like a growing pile of physical mail. You could archive everything, but the emails will take up space and it could cost money if you go over the account's free storage limit. Here's how to delete emails en masse, even hundreds at a time.

1. Use the search box at the top of Gmail to gather unwanted emails. For efficiency, multiple search terms can be grouped into a single

search using "OR" to connect them. "Facebook birthdays OR newsletter," for example, could yield hundreds of results in one search.

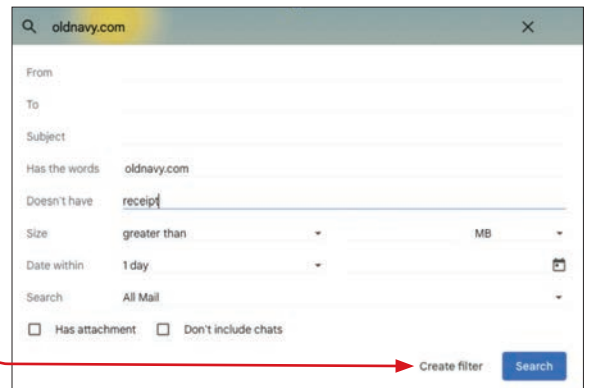


2. To delete them as a batch, select the drop-down check box atop the results, then click the Trash icon.

3. To further narrow the search, click "Advanced search" and add parameters such as "Date within" (if you want to trash only old emails) or "Size" (to delete bulky emails). Put "receipt" into the "Doesn't have" field if you want to delete marketing emails but hold on to receipts.

4. To automatically delete future emails that match the same criteria, select "Create filter," then check "Delete it" and "Also apply filter to matching conversations." Finally, click "Create filter" again.

5. Repeat with other keywords, such as "package was delivered," "has shipped," "your feedback," "survey," and "statement is ready."







**ENTERTAIN EASILY**  
Less lugging of dishes and drinks: Props like the right trays and cooler can make alfresco dining a cinch.  
P. 46

**STAY PROTECTED**  
Summer sun, rain, and bugs won't spoil your backyard gatherings when you're properly equipped.  
P. 44







# YOUR BACKYARD HAVEN

These easy ideas will transform your deck—or patio or terrace—into a comfortable oasis for dining, relaxing, and gathering with your favorite people. **BY SHARLENE BREakey**



## CREATE A COMFORT ZONE

Your deck will feel like a cozy outdoor room with comfy chairs, a bright rug, the right lights, and more.

P. 42



**WITH SUMMER ABOUT** to go into full swing, it's time to ready your deck or backyard for all the gatherings you have planned—or that spontaneously arise—during this kick-back time of year. No doubt your outdoor space already has much of what it needs for good times, such as chairs to relax in, an umbrella for shade, and a great grill. But if anything could use a quick cleanup or replacement (broken wicker? nonworking string lights?), or if you're simply ready for something fresh and new, these suggestions and how-tos from landscape designers, safety experts, and CR's grilling pros will help transform your outdoor space into a sanctuary for memorable parties and hangouts this season. Read on for ideas on décor—from seating to lights to rugs—shelter from rain and sun, and entertaining that's a breeze.



# FEEL MORE AT HOME OUTSIDE

The best outdoor spaces seem almost like another room of the house, according to Kat Aul Cervoni, founder of Staghorn NYC, a landscape design firm. She suggests you take stock of what you love indoors, then find ways to bring that feeling outdoors. Lush greenery, splashes of favorite colors, a rug, the right style chair, and a good playlist, and your backyard is a new living room, except with the sky as your ceiling.



## Cool Seating & Secret Storage

### PATIO FURNITURE

► Sol 72 Outdoor Lancashire Wicker/Rattan 4-Person Seating Group with Cushions \$1,296 [wayfair.com](http://wayfair.com)

### OTTOMAN

Goplus No Collection Brown Rattan Ottoman \$132 for 2 [lowes.com](http://lowes.com)



## HOW TO CLEAN OUTDOOR CHAIRS IN 3 STEPS

## Set up, sit back ... and relax

### GOOD SEATING IS KEY

Ideally, chairs should be stable, multifunctional, easy to care for, and comfortable. If you need replacements, keep these characteristics in mind

as you shop. "Table height chairs with arms are best; they give you something to push up from," says Priscilla Flores, occupational therapist at Cleveland Clinic's Lou Ruvo

Center for Brain Health in Las Vegas. For an all-weather wicker option, see the set at left, which includes two chairs, a sofa, and a table. (Add an ottoman with a flip top and you'll have a rest for your feet—and extra storage.) For materials, think low maintenance, says Julie Farris, a landscape designer and founder of Landstylist. Styles made of mesh or woven rope are particularly easy to care for. If you choose a set with cushions, she says, anticipate regular cleaning and storing. And beware of inexpensive natural wicker sets: "They degrade over time and can break underneath you," says Alyssa Bowser, an occupational therapist at Stanford Healthcare in Palo Alto, Calif. Another point to keep in mind: What's comfortable and practical indoors might be less so outdoors. Take recliners. Those zero-gravity reclining chairs may be tempting, but they can tip too quickly and are hard to lift yourself out of, Flores says. Similarly, tall bar stools can get harder to climb up on or down from as you age. Whatever furnishings you choose, don't overcrowd your deck or patio, she says. An uncluttered space with clear, wide paths is safest for all.

Give old furniture a good wash so that it'll look like new. First, clear dirt, mulch particles, and leaves with a leaf blower, says Becky Rapinchuk, author of "Clean Mama's Guide to a Healthy Home: The Simple, Room-by-Room Plan for a Natural Home" (HarperOne, 2019). Then:

- 1. Use a shop vac or indoor vacuum** before you wash anything. It will suck up dirt and pollen (which can stain when wet) from cushion edges and chair crevices.
- 2. Remove cushion covers** and pretreat mold and mildew spots with a spritz of vinegar and sprinkle of baking soda (for up to 30 minutes). Wash, then air-dry to prevent shrinkage.
- 3. Attack gunky areas** on furniture frames with a small bristle brush and a gentle, natural cleanser, such as castile soap (so that you don't kill any vegetation).

## Bright Ideas

### SOLAR LANTERNS

► **Soji Stella Pearl Solar Lantern 3-pack** \$115  
[allsopgarden.com](http://allsopgarden.com)

## Light the way

The right lighting is safe, practical, and pretty.

### PATH LIGHTS

Solar metal ones like the Harbor Breeze 10-Lumen Black Solar Integrated LED Outdoor Path Light Kit (\$35, [lowes.com](http://lowes.com)) are easy to install and don't require a power source. Measure your path to see how many you need (the packaging will provide spacing info). To install, drive the plastic stake in first with a mallet, then slide the fixture onto it, says Kevin Magness, pro specialist at Lowe's in Grand Forks, N.D.

### STRING LIGHTS

Gather wire, eye screw hooks, and lights to string between one wall of your house, say, and a tree or shed opposite. Make sure you can plug the string in easily to an outdoor outlet, or use a solar model like the Brightech 27-ft. Solar Black Indoor/Outdoor String Light (\$40, [lowes.com](http://lowes.com)). Measure 8 to 10 feet up from the ground and mark where you'll need hooks (about three on each side spaced a few feet apart). Screw eye hooks in, or wrap a tight loop of cable around trees or a pole, to attach the lights. Zigzag wire tautly back and forth from one hook or loop to the other, then attach the strings to the wire using zip ties.

### SOLAR LANTERNS

For extra charm, hang durable Soji solar lanterns (see above) from a tree or hook.



## Style Makers

### OUTDOOR RUG

► **Ruggable Outdoor Havana Multicolor Rug**  
5x7 feet, \$229  
[ruggable.com](http://ruggable.com)

### PLANTER BOX

**Demeter Elevated Raised Bed**  
\$160  
[gardeners.com](http://gardeners.com)



## Add personality

### HOW TO DO RUGS RIGHT

A rug is cozy for bare feet but can also pose a tripping hazard, so follow Bowser's ground rules. First, avoid placing one on walking pathways, in high traffic

areas, and under your dining table, where it can trip up guests' dining chairs. Instead, put a soft one underfoot in your seating area and choose one that's big enough to fit under the legs of all your furniture so that no one catches a foot. For ease, Stafford Meyer, founder of the doormat company Porte + Hall, recommends rugs that are either washable, like the one above, or made of polypropylene, which resists mildew and signs of wear, and is easy to wipe off.

You can tend to them while standing—using pots clustered on a table, tiered shelving, or a raised-bed planter, like the one above (which can create a visual divider between dining and seating areas, too). Look for one that keeps you from having to bend at an awkward angle.

### CR'S TOP PICKS OUTDOOR SPEAKERS



✓ **JBL Partybox Encore Essential Wireless & Bluetooth Speaker** \$300

62 OVERALL SCORE



✓ **Sony XE300 Wireless & Bluetooth Speaker** \$170

54 OVERALL SCORE

### TUNES & GREENERY

For music, look for water-resistant, Bluetooth, and wireless speakers with long battery life, like the CR Recommended models at left. For some natural color, add a few bright annuals.

### OUTDOOR PILLOWS

Choose pillows made of UV-treated polyester like the Arden Selections Sapphire Aurora Blue Stripe (\$30, set of 2; [walmart.com](http://walmart.com))—to add comfort and personality to your deck or patio.

# KEEP IT COZY

Sudden showers, burning rays, biting bugs, or chilly temperatures don't have to force your outdoor plans inside. To protect you from the elements, here are expert-approved, ingenious fixes, including pop-up shades and fire pits to add warmth and atmosphere to any setting.



微信公众号：全球首发刊王

## Give yourself some shelter

### FOR SPOT COVERAGE

The right shelter can keep everyone happy right where they are, regardless of rain or bright sun. Umbrellas are a popular choice, because they work in almost any space, are easy to install, and come in a variety of sizes (a 9-foot umbrella provides shade for most table sizes). Look for one that has a metal pole (less likely to break than wood), a vented canopy so that wind won't cause your umbrella to set sail, and a water- and UV-resistant fabric like Sunbrella (a brand also used for upholstery and cushions) because it never fades, says Jesse Bawsel, manager of the Armstrong Garden Centers

in Pasadena, Calif. (One good option: the Treasure Garden Umbrella at right, which also has an auto-tilt function so that you can move it as the sunlight shifts.) And don't forget to buy an umbrella base (typically sold separately) that's at least 50 pounds; some are designed for freestanding umbrellas, others for use under a table with an umbrella hole.

### FOR SMALLER PORCHES OR BALCONIES

Roller shades are a good choice because they are inexpensive and quick to install. (Check out the Coolaroo Cordless UV Blocking

Fade Resistant Fabric Exterior Roller Shade, 72x72 inches, \$62; homedepot.com.) If your deck or patio is right off your home, a shade sail or awnings that attach to the wall can provide plenty of overhead shade, Cervoni says. Many, like the Veikous awning at right, retract when you want to let the sunshine in.

### FOR LARGER YARDS

A gazebo or pergola will offer the most shade and protection. There are freestanding pergolas as well as ones that can be attached to a wall to extend a living room, for example, says Gary McCoy, store manager at the Lowe's in Central

## Easy Shade Solutions

### PREFAB GAZEBO

◀ Sunjoy 2-Tier Backyard Portable Pop Up Gazebo  
\$220 [sunjoyshop.com](http://sunjoyshop.com)

### PREFAB PERGOLA

Veikous 10'x10' Aluminum Outdoor Pergola Canopy  
\$500 [veikous.com](http://veikous.com)



### PATIO UMBRELLA

Treasure Garden 9-Foot Deluxe Auto-Tilt Umbrella  
\$287  
[amazon.com](http://amazon.com)



### AWNING



Veikous 10'x8' Retractable Patio Awning with Manual Crank \$193 [walmart.com](http://walmart.com)

Charlotte, N.C. Freestanding options include a pergola with a retractable canopy, such as the Veikous model above, that opens for good weather or closes to keep rain out. Or for even more coverage, consider a gazebo like the more portable Sunjoy model above, which has both a canopy and mesh curtains to help keep insects away.



## Warm up a chilly evening

### FOR AMBIENCE AND A LITTLE HEAT

If you don't have much room, tabletop fire pits—small fire-safe vessels that burn isopropyl alcohol, bioethanol, or wood pellets—can provide an inviting glow (but not a lot of warmth). To use one safely, keep the flame away from low-hanging branches or fabrics; place it in the center of a sturdy, flat, noncombustible surface; and never leave it unsupervised, says Russ Dimmit, director of education for the Chimney Safety Institute of America. The tiny Colsen Portable Fire Concrete Bowl Pot Fireplace (\$40, Amazon) can use its

own brand of fuel or others and burns for about 40 to 50 minutes—enough time to roast your marshmallows. The smokeless Mesa (\$120, solostove.com) burns for about as long but uses wood pellets or mini logs. TerraFlame's Basin Fire Bowl Table Top (\$100, terraflame.com), made of concrete, burns up to 3 hours on a gel fuel that comes in a can. For all tabletop fire pits, follow the manufacturer's instructions and use only the fuel that is recommended. If you have more space, consider a smokeless fire pit (see two CR Recommended models, below). Just be sure to place it in an open area, at least 6 to

10 inches off the ground on a metal or noncombustible surface, and ideally 10 to 20 feet away from flammable structures, trees, shrubs, and wires.

### FOR EXTRA WARMTH

Try a standing propane heater, like Style Selections 48,000-Btu Stainless Steel Patio Heater (\$169, lowes.com), which runs on a grill-style propane tank. To warm a 200-square-foot area, you'll need between 46,000 and 48,000 Btu, McCoy says. Follow the manufacturers' safety guidelines and keep kids away. Propane patio heaters can be tricky, Dimmit says.

CR'S  
TOP PICKS  
SMOKELESS  
FIRE PITS

#### ✔ Cuisinart Cleanburn Fire Pit \$249

90 OVERALL SCORE

#### ✔ Inno Stage Smokeless Fire Pit \$95

86 OVERALL SCORE



### TIP

**SMART STORAGE** There are hundreds of outdoor storage solutions, from hinged plastic bins to shelved sheds, but Cervoni recommends that you look for stealthy storers, such as the Zimtown Beige Fir Potting Bench Garden Workbench (\$100, walmart.com), based on the size of your space and what you need to stash close at hand. “Sturdy, durable materials, such as composites, metals, and hardwoods, tend to be the most watertight and last the longest,” she says.

## Keep the biters at bay

### HOW TO FIGHT BACK AGAINST MOSQUITOES

If you don't have a screened-in porch, try an oscillating pedestal fan, which reduced mosquito landings on people sitting nearby by 45 to 65 percent in one CR test. And keep gutters free of debris and your yard clear of empty pots and troughs. “Mosquitoes lay eggs in standing water, so reducing such breeding sites can significantly reduce their population,” says Jody Gangloff-Kaufmann, an entomologist and coordinator of the New York State Integrated Pest Management Community program at Cornell University.

### FORGET BUG ZAPPERS

Research suggests they kill very few mosquitoes (and zap many insects that actually eat those biters). Citronella candles are no good either; their scent, which does the work, floats away on the breeze. Instead, the best approach is an integrated one: a fan, screens (where possible), and a good insect repellent—see CR Recommended options below—that will provide several hours of protection.

CR'S  
TOP PICKS  
INSECT  
REPELLENTS



✔ 3M Ultrathon Insect Repellent8 \$11

94 OVERALL SCORE



✔ Repel Lemon Eucalyptus Insect Repellent2 \$8

90 OVERALL SCORE

# SIMPLIFY OUTDOOR EATING

Dining on your deck with good friends on a summer evening is one of life's great pleasures. That said, all the lugging and toting from the house can be a headache. Here are pro tips to make your setup and cleanup as easy as possible, from Meg Critchell, owner of Meg Critchell Events in Greenwich, Conn.



## Entertaining Must-Haves

### DINNERWARE

◀ **Crate & Barrel Marin Blue Outdoor Melamine Dinner Plate** \$10 each [crateandbarrel.com](http://crateandbarrel.com)

### FLATWARE

**Annova Silverware Set, Retro Style** \$43, 20 pieces [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)



### WINEGLASSES

**Michley Unbreakable Stemmed Wine Glasses** \$32, set of 4 [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)



### NAPKINS

**Ramanta Home Oversized Cotton Dinner Napkins** \$25 for 12 [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)



## 3 GRILL CLEANUP TIPS

That gunk on the grill isn't just unsanitary, it will also keep your burgers, steaks, seafood, and veggies from tasting delicious. A clean barbecue also means safer food and less risk of a sudden flare-up. Here are three quick cleaning tips from Consumer Reports' grilling experts.

### 1. Scrape off built-up grease.

The best time to clean the grill is right after cooking, when the grates are still warm (food comes off more easily). Scrape both sides thoroughly with one of the tools mentioned at right. For stainless steel grates: Wash with soapy water and rinse them well.

### 2. Avoid using bristle brushes.

Metal bristles left on the grates can end up in your meal, then someone can swallow one and wind up in the ER. Instead, try cleaning your stainless steel or porcelain-coated grill grates with a tool such as a pumice stone or a coil-shaped bristle-free brush.

## Stock your cupboard

### REPLACE THE DISPOSABLE PRODUCTS

Paper and plastic are outdoor dining staples for good reasons—safety, easy cleanup—but their disposability is neither cost- nor eco-conscious. The alternative: tableware and flatware that are light, nonbreakable, and cost effective in the long run.

### MELAMINE DISH SETS

They come in pretty designs like traditional dishware but are lightweight, shatter-resistant, and not plastic; they're not for use in a microwave, though. (See one attractive example from Crate & Barrel, on the facing page.) Our editors also liked the fun pattern, scratch-resistance, and durability of the Certified International Talavera Melamine 12-pc Dinnerware Set for 4 (\$127, Amazon). For flatware, think simple and sturdy: for example, the Annova stainless set on the facing page.

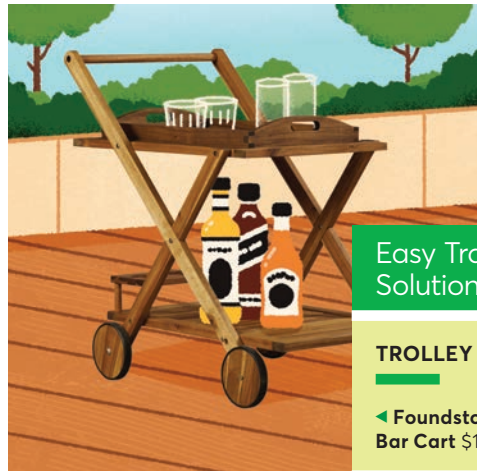
### NONBREAKABLE GLASSES

One convenient choice is wineglasses that won't shatter, like the Michley 15-ounce stems on the

facing page, which are plastic but look remarkably like glass. To keep wine cool on hot nights, consider Corkcicle's Classic Stemless Insulated Wine Tumblers (\$30, corkcicle.com). And check out Tossware glasses (\$17 per 12-pack, tossware.com)—they're shatterproof, recyclable, and made from BPA-free, single-use water bottles. "They can't go in the dishwasher, but you can use them a few times and not feel bad about tossing them," Critchell says.

### CLOTH INSTEAD OF PAPER NAPKINS

While you're working at reducing waste, you might swap out paper napkins for cloth ones such as the 12-pack of Ramanta Home 20x20-inch Cotton Dinner Napkins, on the facing page. Just toss them in the wash after each use and agree to be casual about wrinkles. "Napkins that retain full wrinkle-free status aren't absorbent—they do nothing but smear food around," says Chris Mooney, chief marketing and merchandising officer at Welspun, a global textile company. Look for cloth napkins that have little or no polyester.



### Easy Transport Solutions

#### TROLLEY

◀ Foundstone Calla Straight Bar Cart \$150 wayfair.com

#### COOLER CART

Vinego Gray Resin Rolling Cooler Cart \$270 lowes.com



#### TRAY WITH HANDLES

14"x20" Natural Woven Tray with Handles \$23 target.com



## Limit the lifting

### TRAYS AND TROLLEYS

Eating alfresco can be relaxing, but carrying all the dishes, food, and drink in and out of the house? Not so much. A handled tray can help you carry more, minimizing the back-and-forth. Opt for rattan, like the one at right, which is lightweight and comfortable to carry. (A safety tip from Bowser: Carry your tray slightly to the side, rather than in front of you, so that you can see your feet; it increases stability.) A rolling cart can carry even more, especially if it has holders for drinks and glasses that prevent toppling in transit. Some—such as the Foundstone Calla Straight Bar Cart, above—come with a liftoff tray to make the transfer to the table easier. Just be sure that whatever trolley you choose is easy to maneuver over your threshold, Bowser says.

### ENERGY-SAVER: A ROLLING COOLER

Tall versions, like the Vinego Cooler Cart above, are preferable—they don't require thirsty guests to bend or squat. Look for one with a shelf, where you can keep glasses and bottle holders; locking wheels (essential, says Bowser); and a drain for easy emptying.

### CR'S TOP PICKS GRILLS

### 3. Look for buildup on the underside of the grill lid.

What's there is carbon, and it can flake off when you slam the lid, producing a shower of ashlike bits. Scrape it off with your grill-cleaning tool, then wipe it down with a cloth soaked in soapy water.



✓ Weber Q 2200 540600001 Grill \$250

71 OVERALL SCORE



✓ Cuisinart GAS2256AS Grill \$300

68 OVERALL SCORE



✓ Even Embers GAS8560AS Grill \$400

78 OVERALL SCORE





# GET WHAT YOU NEED FROM **WARRANTIES**

They're supposed to protect you if a product you bought is defective, but sometimes they don't. Here, solutions to six common problems.

by **BETH BRAVERMAN**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY **MATT CHASE**



**MAYBE YOU'RE SHOPPING FOR A NEW** refrigerator, one with plenty of space and an icemaker that will churn out cubes for years to come. Perhaps you're seeking a smartphone

that won't cost a bundle. Or it's high time to replace your mattress and you're looking for one with just the right firmness. When you're on the hunt for a big-ticket item—one that will cost hundreds or thousands of dollars—you may focus on features, price, and reliability to guide your purchasing decisions. But warranties, a manufacturer's guarantee that the company will repair, replace, or give you a refund for a problematic product within a certain period, are also important to consider before you buy.

A good warranty—one that's long, covers key parts, and has a simple process for resolving problems—

### **When I went mattress shopping, one brand had a one-year warranty and another offered a lifetime warranty. Is there any reason not to go with the product with the lifetime one?**

● The mattress with the longer warranty is probably a better value. But that's not always a sure bet, in part because how "lifetime" is defined may be up to individual manufacturers. "Often it means as long as the buyer owns the product," Brasler says, "But sometimes it means a period of time that the manufacturer states the product should reasonably be in service." So if a mattress or appliance manufacturer discontinues a product or stops making parts for it, it may consider the lifetime to have ended.

And while a longer warranty may be better (there's no federal minimum, but some states require at least a year), other provisions are also key. So read carefully before you buy. Some warranties have compensation limitations, so if a sofa begins sagging before its time, for instance, the manufacturer may pay you for its current, depreciated value rather than the replacement cost. And sometimes certain parts are excluded, like the

digital displays on smart appliances. That means if the display on a smart washer goes haywire eight months after you buy it, you may have to dig into your own wallet for repairs.

In some cases, warranties cover parts but not labor or require you to pay to send small items—say, a multi-cooker—to a repair facility. "Often the shipping costs more than the item is worth," Schmitz says, "so that can be tremendously frustrating when you try to exercise your rights under the warranty."

Another red flag is a forced arbitration clause. This limits your right to take a company to court if serious problems with your product arise. It also prevents you from joining a class-action suit, Schmitz says.

### **My vacuum isn't picking up dirt, and my warranty expired a few weeks ago. Can I still get it fixed without paying for repairs?**

● It's possible. First, do a quick online search using the brand name of the product and the problem ("vacuum has no suction"). You may find that certain parts are under a recall or that the manufacturer will replace them on request because a number of other consumers have had similar issues.

indicates that the manufacturer is confident its product will last, says Kevin Brasler, executive editor of the nonprofit Consumers' Checkbook, which rates service providers in the U.S.

But warranties can vary significantly. Some are as short as 90 days, while others stretch out for 10 years or a product's lifetime. And there can be a host of stipulations. For instance, they usually don't cover wear and tear or user errors, like a coffee spill that damages a computer. "Often there are so many exclusions that the warranty is not worth a whole lot," says Amy Schmitz, a consumer law expert and professor at the Ohio State Moritz College of Law. Plus, some manufacturers are more likely than others to honor warranties, she says.

All of these factors make it essential to read the fine print. The expert advice here can also help you navigate.

Even if no such information comes up, call the manufacturer's customer service department (or ask the retailer to help connect you with someone there) and clearly describe the problem. While the company no longer has a legal obligation to you, some will extend coverage or offer discounted repairs or a new product as an expression of goodwill. Certain manufacturers—typically those that make high-end products, such as Orvis, Patagonia, and Le Creuset—seem to have robust customer service. Le Creuset, for example, promises to replace defective cookware and give you a piece of equivalent value if the product is no longer being made.

And if you bought the item with a credit card, check with your card issuer. Many offer warranty protection, typically adding another year to the original warranty.

### **My laptop isn't working right but the company said I voided my warranty by having an "unauthorized" repair person work on it a couple of months ago. Now what?**

● Warranties should spell out actions that can void your coverage, such



# IS THAT WARRANTY LONG ENOUGH?

To find out what the typical length of a warranty is for five different types of products, read on below.



## REFRIGERATORS

**TYPICAL MANUFACTURER WARRANTY:** *one year on parts and labor*

**WHAT TO KNOW:** While most manufacturers offer one-year warranties, Nish Suvarnakar, a CR senior market analyst, says some higher-end refrigerators, such as those from Sub-Zero and Thermador, have two-year warranties, as do Samsung's Bespoke models. And in some cases, certain important parts may have longer warranties. The sealed system (key for maintaining a fridge's proper temperature) may have a parts and labor warranty that's five, 10, or more years.

## SMARTPHONES

**TYPICAL MANUFACTURER WARRANTY:** *one year on parts and labor*

**WHAT TO KNOW:** One year is pretty reasonable, because issues that would be covered under the warranty generally show up within this time, says Henry Parra, head of CR's phone testing. Buying refurbished? Apple and Samsung guarantee their refurbished phones for a year, as does Back Market. Amazon and Walmart generally have 90-day guarantees on such phones.

## WASHERS

**TYPICAL MANUFACTURER WARRANTY:** *one year on parts and labor*

**WHAT TO KNOW:** A few manufacturers may have longer warranties on certain models, says Richard Handel, a senior test project leader and laundry expert at CR. For instance, Asko and Fisher & Paykel offer two-year warranties, Maytag's warranties are up to five years and Speed Queen's are up to seven years. And many manufacturers offer longer warranties on certain parts, says Mark Allwood, a CR senior market analyst, so check.

## MATTRESSES

**TYPICAL MANUFACTURER WARRANTY:** *10 years*

**WHAT TO KNOW:** According to the warranty information that CR collects, which covers about one-third of all the mattresses we test, most are a decade long. But some are 12 to 25 years—and a handful are even lifetime. Ideally, a mattress warranty should be 10 years or more, says Chris Regan, who oversees CR's mattress testing.

## TVs

**TYPICAL MANUFACTURER WARRANTY:** *one year on parts and labor*

**WHAT TO KNOW:** A handful of companies (including Hisense, Samsung, and Sony) have 24- or 36-month warranties on some models. You may also find longer warranties on certain TVs at, say, warehouse clubs, says Rich Sulin, who leads TV testing for Consumer Reports. In a few cases, manufacturers may offer a special warranty on a specific part, like the five-year warranty on the OLED panel on LG's higher-end OLED sets.

as failing to maintain a product the way the manufacturer specifies—like putting the wrong type of detergent in your dishwasher.

But while some companies may claim that using “out of network” servicers or parts voids their warranty, in most cases this is illegal under provisions in the federal Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act. “Manufacturers can control where you get free, in-warranty repairs, but they can’t dictate where or whether you have your product serviced otherwise,” Brasler says. (And be aware that states are beginning to pass right-to-repair laws, which may be of additional help.)

Tell the manufacturer it’s legally required to cover you unless it can prove that an aftermarket part (or outside repair person) caused the problem, says Nathan Proctor, senior director of the Right to Repair campaign at PIRG, a public interest advocacy group. You can also report the company to the Federal Trade Commission, your state’s attorney general’s office, and the Better Business Bureau, says Laurel Lehman, a policy analyst with Consumer Reports.

### **A salesperson is pushing me to get an extended warranty on the fridge I want to buy. I’m not sure what to do.**

● In most cases, extended warranties are a bad deal for consumers and a big money-maker for retailers. One survey found that nearly half of people who purchased goods worth more than \$500 bought an extended warranty along with it. In 2019 the extended warranty market in the U.S. was worth nearly \$50 billion, and it’s likely to keep rising.

Most extended warranties are really service contracts, where you pay a fee ahead of time and then get free or discounted repairs if the product fails after the manufacturer’s warranty expires. They may have more



restrictions on the types of problems or repairs they cover, Brasler says. And repairs or replacement may not be very speedy.

Plus, retailers often have third parties facilitate these warranties and handle repairs, says Erin Witte, director of consumer protection at the Consumer Federation of America, so it’s key to understand what party you’re entering into an agreement with. And the warranty may duplicate coverage you already have through your credit card.

In many cases, Schmitz says you’re better off putting some cash into an emergency fund rather than paying for a service contract you might never use. That’s especially likely with smaller, less expensive items. But your decision may also depend on how complex a product is or who’s using it. If you’re buying a laptop for a teen who’s hard on possessions, an extended warranty might be worth the peace of mind.

### **My 6-month-old dishwasher is making strange grinding noises, and I can’t find my warranty anywhere. What should I do?**

● You may be able to download a copy of the warranty from the manufacturer’s website. Otherwise, contact the customer service department and give it the information you have, such as the model or product number and date of purchase. Even if you don’t have those, the retailer may be able to help.

And if you never registered your product, don’t sweat it. Doing so isn’t necessary for your warranty to be in effect. But registering does give the manufacturer the ability to contact you in case of a product recall, where repairs or replacement could be covered even after a warranty expires. (Of course, it’s always wise to keep your warranty, product serial numbers, and receipts in a convenient spot at least until the warranty period has ended, even if mostly for your own comfort.)

### **My almost-new headphones stopped working. I emailed the manufacturer several times but got no response.**

● Is it within the return window? Ask the retailer to exchange the faulty pair for a new one. Outside of that, gather documents like receipts, and if you can, take a photo or video that shows the problem. Email all of this to the manufacturer’s customer service department one more time, along with a description of the issue. That gives you a written record.

Then call the customer service line, and if the first person you talk to isn’t helpful, ask for a supervisor. If you still get nowhere, consider posting something about the problem on the manufacturer’s social media—like Facebook or Twitter—asking for help. Many companies have a separate customer service team dedicated to responding to social media posts, and they may be more responsive and eager to make you happy, Schmitz says.

Your credit card company may also help you score a chargeback—but only if you’ve already tried to remedy the situation directly with the manufacturer. Your written record will come in handy here.

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**NOTE: Auto warranties have specific rules and complexities. Get the lowdown on page 60.**

# ROAD REPORT



NEWS & EXPERT  
ADVICE TO  
KEEP YOU  
AHEAD OF  
THE CURVE™

## FIRST DRIVE

### 2023 Lexus LX

The LX 600 has a powerful turbocharged V6 engine, safari-level off-road capability, and a full complement of upscale amenities. It is a luxury version of the Toyota Land Cruiser, a model that is sold in other countries.

**CR'S TAKE:** This is a true do-it-all vehicle, but its old-school rear suspension compromises third-row room and cargo space. While capable off-road, it's less well suited than its domestic peers to daily life, and it is less refined than competitors from BMW, Land Rover, and Mercedes-Benz.



#### BASE PRICE RANGE

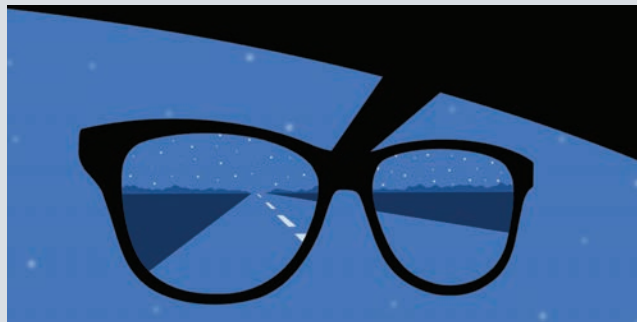
\$89,315-\$129,405

**DESTINATION CHARGE** \$1,345

**PRICE AS DRIVEN** \$109,945

## ASK OUR EXPERTS

I don't see as well as I'd like to when driving at night. What should I do?



This is a common problem, even for those who wear corrective lenses. Improve your nighttime vision by reducing the "light pollution" around you. Put the rearview mirror in the night position to dim the glare of headlights behind you. Also **turn down the brightness of dashboard gauges and screens.** As other vehicles approach, focus your eyes on the lane lines to the right, away from oncoming headlights. Finally, don't drive at night if you're nervous, but if you must, **try to keep to familiar roads after dark.**



## FREE UPDATE

### Hyundai/Kia

Hyundai and Kia will provide a free software update to keep vehicles from being started without a key—a TikTok video trick that's led to car thefts. Kia reached out initially to Optima, Sorento, and Sportage owners for the free update. Hyundai started with Elantra, Sonata, and Venue owners. This is not a recall.

**WHAT TO DO:** Hyundai and Kia owners with a traditional key ignition can contact their local dealership to confirm eligibility and schedule an appointment.

## THE VITAL STATISTIC

# 68%

**Percentage of Americans concerned about fully self-driving vehicles,**

according to a new AAA survey—13 percent more than a year ago. Though there is no fully self-driving car for sale today, trust in such a car is still a long way off.



## YOUR MONEY'S WORTH

### How to Save on an Auto Loan

Interest rates on car loans continue to soar, now averaging about 6.3 percent for a 60-month loan, according to Bankrate. With new-car prices averaging about \$48,000, that means it's more important than ever to shop for financing.

Credit unions tend to offer the best rates. If possible, get pre-approved for a loan by one—or second best, by a bank—before you step foot in the dealership. Then compare the dealer's financing offer. Loans offered through an auto-

maker's financing arm can be decent deals. But be very cautious about dealer loans made through third-party lenders. These can be the priciest ways to finance a car because the dealer is a middleman and takes a cut.



# Skip These Best-Selling Cars

Just because a vehicle is popular doesn't mean it's a top performer. Here's what to buy instead.

by Jeff S. Bartlett

MID-SIZED SUVs



**WITH THE AVERAGE** purchase price of a new car hovering around \$48,000, choosing which vehicle to buy is a high-stakes financial decision. It's

an emotional decision, too.

Buyers must weigh how much car they get for the money and how well factors like cargo room work for them, along with more subjective considerations like how the car looks, the image it projects, and the brand's reputation. The models that allow buyers to check those key boxes attract them in droves.

"Consumers tell us they prioritize factors such as reliability and safety when shopping for a car, but when it comes time to buy, very often a car's styling or its image tips the decision," says Jake Fisher, senior director of auto testing at Consumer Reports.

That's why it's important to approach each new-car shopping experience with an open mind and use CR's ratings to find the best-performing vehicles in the class and price range you're considering. Our testing shows that some new cars

outperform others you see on the road everywhere you go.

The top-selling Ford Explorer SUV is a perfect example of this. The original Explorer from 1991 helped pioneer an entire genre and defined mid-sized SUVs for decades. But the performance of the latest version can't match that of the Kia Telluride, a CR Top Pick still in its first generation, which sells at a much smaller volume.

On paper, those two models seem similar. Even a brief test drive might not reveal much of a difference. But when we measured performance on our track and reviewed detailed reliability data from thousands of owners, the differences between the two SUVs were significant—as you can see reflected in their scores.

At CR, we rate and rank cars based on testing and what our members tell us in surveys. The cars that excel in all of the areas we examine earn the highest Overall Score.

To help guide you to better choices, we've selected some of the top-selling models (based on sales and registration data) in nine key categories and provide compelling alternatives that have a higher Overall Score.





POPULAR  
CHOICE

## Ford Explorer

\$36,760 - \$56,075

The Explorer may be a common sight in your neighborhood, but that doesn't mean it's the best choice. In fact, while this mediocre SUV ranks near the bottom in the three-row category, it outsells the excellent Kia Telluride by more than 2 to 1. It handles with relative agility, but an overly firm ride, rough shifts, and a noisy engine hurt the Explorer's road-test score. Plus, reliability is well below average.

49 OVERALL SCORE   74 ROAD TEST   ⚠️ RELIABILITY   ⚠️ OWNER SATISFACTION

## ✓ Kia Telluride

\$35,890 - \$52,985

The Telluride has set the benchmark for three-row midsize SUVs since it was introduced for the 2020 model year, and it has earned CR's Top Pick designation for four years in a row. Its secret is that it does everything well. Power, ride, comfort, controls ... you name it. But don't just take our word for it. Our members also love it, as reflected in its high owner satisfaction score.

87 OVERALL SCORE   92 ROAD TEST   ⚠️ RELIABILITY   ⬆️ OWNER SATISFACTION



BETTER  
CHOICE

POPULAR CHOICE

SMALL CARS



**Hyundai Elantra**

\$20,950 - \$32,900

With sleek styling, an impressive infotainment system, a roomy interior, and good fuel economy, it's easy to see why the Elantra is popular. It even has a good road-test score. The Achilles' heel here for the regular Elantra is reliability: Its spotty track record should give buyers pause. The Elantra Hybrid is a little better, with average reliability. But there are smart alternatives that deliver on the same virtues.

**65** OVERALL SCORE    **79** ROAD TEST    RELIABILITY    OWNER SATISFACTION

BETTER CHOICE



**Toyota Corolla Hybrid**

\$23,050 - \$26,890

Updated for 2023, the Toyota Corolla Hybrid earned a place among our Top Picks this year. Stellar reliability, standard advanced safety features, and outstanding fuel economy are among its strengths. The regular Corolla returned 36 mpg overall in our tests. For just a little more money, the hybrid delivers 48 mpg overall, making it our choice from the Corolla lineup.

**82** OVERALL SCORE    **75** ROAD TEST    RELIABILITY    OWNER SATISFACTION

POPULAR CHOICE

SMALL SUVs



**Toyota RAV4**

\$28,275 - \$39,530

The RAV4 is one of the most popular models on the market. In the red-hot small SUV segment, it draws buyers by being reliable and fuel-efficient. But the recent move to a lower, wider appearance has compromised interior space. Plus, its bland cabin, droning engine noise, and ride comfort that trails the competition would have us shopping elsewhere. The hybrid version is quieter and more efficient.

**72** OVERALL SCORE    **73** ROAD TEST    RELIABILITY    OWNER SATISFACTION

BETTER CHOICE



**Subaru Forester**

\$26,495 - \$36,795

Subaru has nailed the ideal small SUV configuration, with compact exterior dimensions, a tall roof, and a surprisingly roomy interior. Throw in a fuel-efficient four-cylinder engine, essential safety features, and a standard all-wheel-drive system that out-claws rivals, and the Forester is a true gem. Subaru has honed this package for years, perfecting a model that's easy to recommend.

**87** OVERALL SCORE    **90** ROAD TEST    RELIABILITY    OWNER SATISFACTION

PHOTOS, PREVIOUS SPREAD: FORD; LISA SHEEHAN



POPULAR CHOICE

MINIVANS

BETTER CHOICE



## Chrysler Pacifica

\$37,270 - \$60,345

Chrysler popularized the minivan in the 1980s. Today, the Pacifica line offers many family-friendly innovations like foldaway center seats, second-row entertainment screens, all-wheel drive, and even a plug-in hybrid version. Those may seem like good things, but the Pacifica lacks the refinement found in rival vehicles, and more significantly, it has a long track record of below-average reliability.

## ✓ Kia Carnival

\$33,100 - \$46,200

The Carnival is roomy, comfortable, and refined. In its second model year, it feels much more contemporary than the Pacifica, which debuted in 2017. The V6 delivers plenty of power, backed by a smooth-shifting transmission. The ride is well controlled, handling is secure, and the attractive cabin is inviting. The icing on the cake? Strong ratings from our member surveys for reliability and satisfaction.

63 OVERALL SCORE 81 ROAD TEST ⬇️ RELIABILITY ⓘ OWNER SATISFACTION

84 OVERALL SCORE 85 ROAD TEST ⬆️ RELIABILITY ⬆️ OWNER SATISFACTION

POPULAR CHOICE

MIDSIZE PICKUP TRUCKS

BETTER CHOICE



## Toyota Tacoma

\$28,250 - \$50,390

Tacomas seem to be everywhere, thanks to strong sales and limited design changes since 2005. It's no surprise that the Tacoma feels like it was born in another era. Challenging access and an odd seating position, a noisy engine, a stiff ride, and clumsy handling may evoke nostalgia, but not in a good way. The rugged Tacoma has a loyal fan base, but it isn't the easiest truck to live with.

## ✓ Honda Ridgeline

\$38,800 - \$46,230

The Tacoma outsells the Ridgeline about 6 to 1, but it shouldn't. The Ridgeline feels like driving a well-mannered SUV with a refined engine, a smooth ride, and decent handling. The quiet cabin is nicely finished and comfortable, front and rear. The innovative pickup truck bed has underfloor storage and a tailgate that folds down or swings open. This is all the truck many weekend warriors need.

52 OVERALL SCORE 42 ROAD TEST ⬆️ RELIABILITY ⓘ OWNER SATISFACTION

76 OVERALL SCORE 83 ROAD TEST ⓘ RELIABILITY ⬆️ OWNER SATISFACTION

PHOTOS, THIS SPREAD: MANUFACTURERS; JOHN POWERS/CONSUMER REPORTS

⬇️ ⬆️ ⓘ ⬆️ ⬆️  
WORSE ————— BETTER

✓ CR RECOMMENDED

🌿 CR GREEN CHOICE

POPULAR CHOICE

**ELECTRIC VEHICLES**


BETTER CHOICE



**Volkswagen ID.4**  **\$38,995 - \$55,245**

The ID.4 kicked off a wave of electric vehicles from Volkswagen destined to share a platform and major components. It's quick, quiet, and roomy. But its touchscreen infotainment system responds slowly and many common tasks require multiple steps. Plus, range is a modest 209 miles for the base rear-drive version and 255 miles for the all-wheel-drive version. The biggest concern, though, is that reliability has been below average.

- 65** OVERALL SCORE
- 83** ROAD TEST
-  RELIABILITY
-  OWNER SATISFACTION

**Kia EV6**  **\$48,700 - \$61,600**

The EV6 is one of the best electric vehicles we've tested. It outperforms the ID.4 in almost every way, including acceleration, braking, handling, range, and efficiency. The sleek-looking EV6 is a treat to drive. Its cabin is roomy and uncluttered. Its electric hardware allows for rapid charging at home and on the road. The standard range is 232 miles, with the long-range version going up to 310 miles.

- 91** OVERALL SCORE
- 90** ROAD TEST
-  RELIABILITY
-  OWNER SATISFACTION

POPULAR CHOICE

**LUXURY SEDANS**


BETTER CHOICE



**Mercedes-Benz C-Class** **\$44,850 - \$62,700**

The Mercedes-Benz brand may have cachet, but this popular sedan ranks almost last among luxury compact cars. Sure, it has a beautiful cabin, a punchy powertrain, fine-tuned handling, and respectable fuel economy at 29 mpg overall. But a stiff ride, long stopping distances, and overly complicated controls hurt its road-test score. And below-average predicted reliability craters its Overall Score.

- 53** OVERALL SCORE
- 75** ROAD TEST
-  RELIABILITY
-  OWNER SATISFACTION

**Lexus ES Hybrid**  **\$42,640 - \$51,430**

With a premium cabin, absorbent ride, and abundant standard features, this sumptuous sedan has a much higher Overall Score than the C-Class, factoring in a stellar 91 point road-test score and high marks in our member surveys. There's no mystery as to why: It's a great car that delivers on all counts. Plus, the hybrid offers an outstanding 42 mpg overall.

- 86** OVERALL SCORE
- 91** ROAD TEST
-  RELIABILITY
-  OWNER SATISFACTION

POPULAR CHOICE

2-ROW SUVs

BETTER CHOICE



### Volvo XC60

\$43,450 - \$74,150

The XC60 has an elegant, high-quality interior with superb seats. But it doesn't excel otherwise, ranking among the low-scoring SUVs in the category. Problems include an unpleasant-sounding engine, an overly stiff ride, distracting controls, and mediocre fuel economy. Safety has long been a brand hallmark. The XC60 packs in all of the latest features, but so do its chief rivals.

### ✓ Lexus NX Hybrid

\$42,655 - \$58,755

The NX is available in several configurations, but it's the hybrid that shines brightest. It's about half a second quicker from 0 to 60 mph than the XC60, and it returns 38 mpg overall compared with 23 mpg. Responsive steering, eager handling, and a well-finished cabin are among its other strengths. CR members give it top marks for reliability and satisfaction. This is truly one of the easiest models in our ratings to recommend.

64 OVERALL SCORE 77 ROAD TEST RELIABILITY OWNER SATISFACTION

87 OVERALL SCORE 84 ROAD TEST RELIABILITY OWNER SATISFACTION

POPULAR CHOICE

FULL-SIZED PICKUP TRUCKS

BETTER CHOICE



### Ford F-150

\$34,585 - \$84,910

Ford proudly boasts that the F-Series has been the best-selling truck line in America for 46 consecutive years. That big volume—and subsequent profit—fuels the ongoing innovations seen in the F-150, such as high-tech tools to make towing easier and safer. But all the bluster doesn't make the F-150 the best truck. Its ride, handling, and reliability come up short.

### ✓ Ram 1500

\$37,410 - \$84,355

Marketing for full-sized trucks tends to boast big numbers for payload and towing. But what matters for most drivers is balancing capability with livability. This is something the Ram 1500 does quite well with its nicely finished cabin, easy controls, and extraordinary ride, thanks to its SUV-like coil-spring rear suspension. The Ram can even satisfy commercial users with its comfort and brawn.

58 OVERALL SCORE 75 ROAD TEST RELIABILITY OWNER SATISFACTION

68 OVERALL SCORE 83 ROAD TEST RELIABILITY OWNER SATISFACTION

WORSE ————— BETTER

CR RECOMMENDED

CR GREEN CHOICE





# Your Guide to Car Warranties



**FACTORY WARRANTIES OFFER** new car owners protection from unexpected repair bills that can cost thousands of dollars. But they don't cover everything, and some automakers offer far more generous warranties than others. That's why it's a good idea to research and compare factory warranties when deciding which new car to buy. Fifty-one percent of internet users who said they were planning to buy a car within the next three years said they would research the vehicle warranty before making their purchase, according to a survey from Mintel, a market research firm.

Unlike extended warranties, which cost extra and which CR doesn't recommend, factory warranties are included in the price of a new vehicle. But they can be voided if you put the car through anything that could be considered abuse, such as driving the vehicle off-road or failing to maintain it according to the carmaker's guidelines.

Here are the warranties that may come with a new car and what they cover. (For information about warranties on other big-ticket products, see page 48.)

## Bumper-to-Bumper

**WHAT IT COVERS:** This is the primary warranty, which covers all non-wear items and ensures that the car operates like new while it's in effect. It would cover a power window failure or buggy infotainment system, for instance, but not maintenance or wear-and-tear items like brake pads, tires, and wheel damage.

**HOW LONG IT LASTS:** All major automakers provide at least three years or 36,000 miles of coverage. Many luxury brands offer at least four years or 50,000 miles.

## Powertrain

**WHAT IT COVERS:** This provides extended coverage for the major powertrain parts, including the engine, transmission, drive axles, and even turbo-chargers. On electric vehicles, it covers the motors. (The large battery pack that drives the motors usually has its own warranty.)

**HOW LONG IT LASTS:** Most warranties last for five or six years, or 60,000 to 70,000 miles, whichever comes first. Genesis, Hyundai, Kia, and Mitsubishi powertrain warranties stretch to 10 years or 100,000 miles.

## Corrosion

**WHAT IT COVERS:** Perforating (with holes) and non-perforating (surface) corrosion. Rust caused by extreme environmental factors such as flooding and regular exposure to road salt is not covered.

**HOW LONG IT LASTS:** Coverage varies. For example, Ford guarantees that its vehicles will remain free of non-perforating corrosion for three years or 36,000 miles, and free from rust perforation for five years and unlimited mileage. BMW, Porsche, and Volvo provide 12-year corrosion warranties.

## Emissions

**WHAT IT COVERS:** Provides coverage to ensure that the emissions systems in vehicles will pass an emissions test.

**HOW LONG IT LASTS:** The federal government requires auto manufacturers to guarantee that a vehicle's emissions system will function as designed for two years after it is purchased new, or for 24,000 miles. The major components—the catalytic converter, electronic emissions control unit, and onboard emissions diagnostic computer—are covered for eight years or 80,000 miles.

## Electric Vehicle Battery

**WHAT IT COVERS:** The batteries that power the electric motor or motors in hybrids, plug-in hybrids, and EVs.

**HOW LONG IT LASTS:** Battery warranties vary by manufacturer, but most cover expensive hybrid and EV batteries for at least eight years or 100,000 miles. The federal government does not currently require manufacturers to warranty hybrid and EV batteries, but many will replace the battery if it falls below a 70 percent charging capacity threshold.



# ROAD TEST

EXCLUSIVE RATINGS & REVIEWS  
BASED ON TESTING AT CR'S  
327-ACRE AUTO TEST CENTER



LUXURY ELECTRIC SUVs

## ✓ BMW iX

High-Scoring,  
High-Tech EV

85

OVERALL  
SCORE

### ROAD-TEST SCORE 97

**HIGHS** Luxurious ride comfort, agility, quick acceleration, quiet cabin, high-quality interior, lots of passenger space

**LOWS** Confusing controls

**POWERTRAIN** 516-hp, dual electric motors; 1-speed direct-drive transmission; all-wheel drive

**RANGE** 324 miles

**PRICE** \$87,100-\$111,500 base price + \$995 destination charge  
**Total MSRP as tested** \$92,695

**THIS IMPRESSIVE EV** is speedy and ultraquiet, and it delivers a cushy ride. Even with its complicated controls, the iX earned one of the highest road-test scores ever.

Thanks to a prodigious 516 hp, the iX can launch down the road with a seemingly never-ending crescendo of smooth, forceful power. At just 4.3 seconds from 0 to 60 mph, it's about half a second quicker than the Tesla Model X.

An EPA-estimated 324-mile range means the iX can go for days of typical driving without recharging. Its 11-kilowatt onboard charger can gain about 35 miles of range per hour for relatively quick at-home charging on 240 volts, while its 200-kW maximum acceptance rate at public DC fast chargers is competitive.

The iX's standard air

suspension gobbles up anything thrown at it, no matter how bumpy the road. And although the iX is tall and heavy, it takes corners with enthusiasm.

The front seats are wide and comfortable, and rear-seat passengers will find plenty of room and good underleg support. The cabin is luxurious, made even more special thanks to a package that gives some of the controls a fancy, crystal-like look.

Many of the controls are confusing, though. BMW's iDrive 8 system moves most functions to a touchscreen, and it requires more steps to accomplish even basic tasks.

BMW's Active Driving Assistant suite includes most active safety features, but it's disappointing that highway-speed AEB is optional, instead of standard.



COMPACT ELECTRIC VEHICLES

## ✓ Kia Niro EV

Budget-Friendly,  
With Decent Driving  
Range

80

OVERALL  
SCORE

### ROAD-TEST SCORE 84

**HIGHS** Smooth power, hatchback practicality, good driving range for a budget-friendly EV

**LOWS** Rear and side visibility, annoying split-use audio/climate control panel

**POWERTRAIN** 201-hp, electric motor; 1-speed direct-drive transmission; front-wheel drive

**RANGE** 253 miles

**PRICE** \$39,550-\$44,550 base price + \$1,325 destination charge  
**Total MSRP as tested** \$42,595

**THE REDESIGNED NIRO EV** is a standout offering among lower-priced electric vehicles. We enjoy the way it drives, and its EPA-estimated 253-mile range puts several higher-priced EVs to shame. But like with the rest of the crop of EVs that cost less than \$45,000, all-wheel drive isn't available.

Acceleration is effortless and swift—it's almost 2 seconds quicker from 0 to 60 mph than the Niro hybrid. But the cabin is noticeably louder than most EVs because of pronounced road and wind noise. The 11-kilowatt onboard charger allows for quick home charging, gaining about 35 miles of range per hour. But its meager 85-kW max acceptance rate at public DC fast chargers means it will recharge more slowly on a trip than most other EVs.

Handling is responsive,

aided by the low-mounted battery. The Niro performed admirably when pushed to its limits through our avoidance maneuver—which simulates swerving quickly to avoid a vehicle or an obstacle on the road—achieving a 3- to 4-mph higher speed than rivals.

The front seats are comfortable, and there's lots of headroom. In the rear, the EV has tight foot space under the front seats and less leg support than the hybrid. The rear roof pillars create huge blind spots.

Kia's split-use climate/audio touchscreen panel is annoying; it's distracting when you want to control the radio and the panel is on the climate system, or vice versa.

The Niro EV comes standard with the Kia Drive Wise suite of active safety and driver assistance features.



LUXURY MIDSIZED SUVs

**✓ Lexus RX**   **✓ Lexus RXh** 

Better MPG, Less Refined Engines

**81** OVERALL SCORE

**ROAD-TEST SCORE 79**

**HIGHS** Fit and finish, rear-seat room

**LOWS** Rear/side visibility, unintuitive controls, louder four-cylinder engine

**POWERTRAIN** 275-hp, 2.4-liter turbo 4-cylinder engine; 8-speed automatic transmission; AWD

**FUEL** 24 mpg on premium

**PRICE** \$47,400–\$61,600 base price + \$1,150 destination charge  
**Total MSRP as tested** \$55,595

**86** OVERALL SCORE

**ROAD-TEST SCORE 86**

**HIGHS** Fit and finish, rear-seat room, fuel economy

**LOWS** Rear/side visibility, unintuitive controls, louder gas engine

**POWERTRAIN** 246-hp, 2.5-liter 4-cyl. hybrid engine; eCVT; all-wheel drive

**FUEL** 34 mpg on premium

**PRICE** \$49,000–\$61,600 base price + \$1,150 destination charge  
**Total MSRP as tested** \$59,955

**FOR MORE THAN** two decades the RX has been the epitome of quiet and comfortable luxury cruising. Sadly, the redesigned 2023 model's new powertrains take the refinement down a notch. But both the conventional RX and the RX hybrid have improved fuel economy, sharper handling, and finely furnished cabins.

The turbocharged four-cylinder in the regular RX packs a midrange punch that allows for surges of acceleration without needing to rev the engine high. But the engine has a gritty note that makes us long for the old silky-smooth V6. The RXh combines a four-cylinder with electric drive, replacing the previous hybrid's V6. It transitions seamlessly between gas and electric, but the engine takes on a loud, buzzy sound when quick acceleration is needed. It managed an

impressive 34 mpg overall—a 5-mpg improvement over the previous RX hybrid.

Handling is slightly better than in the past for both RXs; they are reasonably responsive through corners. The ride is still comfy, but it lacks the previous generation's plushness.

The cabin is finished with lots of padded surfaces, soft leather, and stitching. The seats are comfortable front and rear, and the roomy driving position is free of any intrusions from the center console.

Lexus' infotainment system is easier to use than in the previous RX, although some common tasks still require multiple steps. It's unfortunate that the optional head-up display brings with it unlabeled steering-wheel controls. The electronic door latches are also unintuitive.

Both RXs come with many active safety features standard.



LARGE SUVs

**Toyota Sequoia**

Brawny SUV Takes a Few Steps Backward

**59** OVERALL SCORE

**OVERALL SCORE**

**ROAD-TEST SCORE 57**

**HIGHS** Robust powertrain, large towing capacity

**LOWS** Clumsy handling, jostly ride, long stopping distances, no automatic 4WD system, tiny third-row seat

**POWERTRAIN** 437-hp, 3.4-liter turbo V6 hybrid engine; 10-speed automatic transmission; 4WD

**FUEL** 18 mpg on regular

**PRICE** \$58,365–\$78,365 base price + \$1,595 destination charge  
**Total MSRP as tested** \$70,508

**THE REDESIGNED SEQUOIA** boasts a high-tech hybrid powertrain, but overall it feels considerably more old-school than the previous model. Clumsy handling, a jiggly ride, and basic furnishings make this large three-row SUV far less appealing than domestic competitors, as reflected in its low road-test score.

The 437-hp turbo-V6 hybrid powertrain is unquestionably the best thing about the new Sequoia. With so much available power, a mere prod of the accelerator pedal moves the Sequoia quickly, and the automatic performs buttery-smooth upshifts. Its 18 mpg overall is a 3-mpg improvement over the previous version, and tops within this fuel-thirsty class.

A less sophisticated solid rear axle is shared with the Tundra pickup, and it shows. Bumps are announced into the cabin with

a shuddering sensation, and occupants get jostled around noticeably. Handling is "trucky," too; the SUV leans mightily through corners, making it one of the clumsiest vehicles we've tested recently.

The tall cabin feels rather utilitarian, without the high-quality feel of competitors such as the Jeep Wagoneer. We do appreciate the infotainment system's ease of use, as well as the volume knob and physical climate-control buttons.

We like that the front seats are wide and accommodating, but a lack of side support means they don't hold you in place through corners. The second row is roomy, but the third row is tiny and uncomfortable, especially for such a large vehicle.

The standard Toyota Safety Sense 2.5 suite includes lots of active safety features.



**Ratings** > **Gas, Hybrid, or EV?** The two Lexus RXs gained better fuel economy but louder engines; BMW and Kia EVs have good range and power; Toyota's Sequoia failed to impress.

Make + Model	Overall Score	Survey Results		Road-Test Results										Active Safety Features		
		Predicted reliability	Owner satisfaction	Road-test score	Overall mpg	Range, miles	Seat comfort, front/rear	Usability	Noise	Ride	Fit + finish	Routine handling	Avoidance-maneuver speed, mph	Acceleration, 0-60 mph, sec.	Dry braking, 60-0 mph, ft.	AEB, pedestrian

**2-ROW SUVs \$50,000-\$65,000**

✓ BMW X5 3.0T	87	↓	↑	94	23	495	↑ / ↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	52.0	6.0	129	S	0	S
✓ Lexus NX350h 2.5H	87	↑	↑	84	38	550	↑ / ↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	53.0	7.6	138	S	S	S
✓ Lexus RX350h 2.5H	86	↑	↑	86	34	585	↑ / ↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	52.5	7.8	137	S	S	S
✓ Lexus RX350 2.4T	81	↑	↑	79	24	420	↑ / ↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	51.5	7.5	132	S	S	S
✓ Lincoln Nautilus 2.7T	79	↑	↓	78	18	340	↑ / ↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	53.5	7.2	128	S	S	S
✓ Genesis GV70 2.5T	76	↓	↑	81	24	410	↑ / ↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	54.5	7.5	135	S	S	S
✓ Cadillac XT5 3.6L	67	↓	↓	75	20	445	↑ / ↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	53.5	7.1	132	S	0	0

**3-ROW SUVs \$65,000-\$75,000**

Ford Expedition Max 3.5T	60	↓	↑	66	16	460	↑ / ↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	46.5	7.3	143	S	S	S
Toyota Sequoia 3.4T+H	59	↓	↑	57	18	395	↑ / ↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	44.5	6.8	145	S	S	S
Chevrolet Suburban 5.3L	55	↓	↓	69	16	440	↑ / ↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	49.0	7.6	145	S	0	0
Chevrolet Tahoe 5.3L	52	↓	↓	67	17	400	↑ / ↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	49.0	7.8	145	S	0	0
Jeep Wagoneer 5.7L	51	↓	↓	66	15	395	↑ / ↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	48.5	7.1	149	S	S	S

**ELECTRIC CARS \$35,000-\$45,000**

✓ Kia Niro EV	80	↓	↑	84	113 (1)	253	↑ / ↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	56.5	7.1	128	S	S	S
✓ Nissan Leaf	70	↓	↓	73	104 (1)	212	↑ / ↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	52.5	7.0	139	S	S	S
Chevrolet Bolt	49	↓	↓	78	120 (1)	259	↓ / ↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	53.0	6.8	138	S	-	0
Chevrolet Bolt EUV	45	↓	↑	80	115 (1)	247	↓ / ↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	53.0	7.2	137	S	0	0
Hyundai Kona Electric	41	↓	↓	76	120 (1)	258	↑ / ↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	53.5	6.6	135	S	0	S

**ELECTRIC SUVs OVER \$75,000**

✓ BMW iX	85	↓	↑	97	86 (1)	324	↑ / ↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	53.5	4.3	127	S	0	S
Audi E-Tron	63	↓	↓	90	74 (1)	226	↑ / ↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	49.5	6.3	131	S	S	S
Jaguar I-Pace	58	↓	↓	82	76 (1)	246	↑ / ↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	52.0	4.3	136	S	S	S
Tesla Model X	52	↓	↑	72	102 (1)	348	↑ / ↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	53.5	4.9	127	S	S	-

> Digital and All Access members can find the latest, complete ratings at [CR.org/cars](https://www.cars.com). When you're ready to buy, configure the vehicle and find the best price in your area by clicking the green "View Pricing Information" button on the model's dedicated page.

**HOW WE TEST:** Overall Score combines road-test results, survey data for predicted reliability and owner satisfaction, and advanced safety,

which includes crash-test results and the availability of crash-prevention features, such as automatic emergency braking, pedestrian

detection, blind spot warning, and rear cross traffic warning. A dash (-) means no such safety system is offered; 0 means it's optional on at least some

trim levels; S means that the feature is standard on all trims. We deduct points if a model's gear selector lacks fail-safes to prevent the vehicle from rolling away.



(1) Miles-per-gallon equivalent (MPGe).

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# But They Promised!

With these products, what you see on the label isn't necessarily what you'll get.




**We Guess They Meant 'South' American?**  
Which is why it's a little confusing to feature the U.S. flag on the label.  
Submitted by Meredith Bertz, Cary, NC

**PRODUCT OF CHILE  
PRODUIT DU CHILI**



**You Had One Job**  
If only this phone stand could actually float.  
Submitted by Marcia Elkins, via email

**DOES NOT FLOAT!  
NE FLOTTE PAS!**



**Those Are the Breaks, Kid**  
Here's a hard lesson: Some things just don't live up to the claims.  
Submitted by Fred Crater, Clemmons, NC



**When Life Gives You Lemonade ...**  
Looks tasty but definitely not "just" ice tea.  
Submitted by Scott Yost, Greensboro, NC



Be on the lookout for goofs and glitches like these. Share them with us—by email at [SellingIt@cro.consumer.org](mailto:SellingIt@cro.consumer.org) or by mail to Selling It, Consumer Reports, 101 Truman Ave., Yonkers, NY 10703—and we might publish yours. Please include key information, such as your name and location.



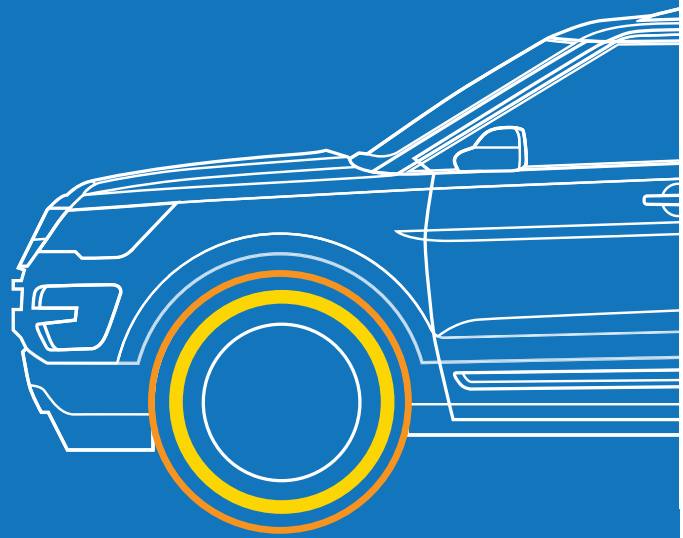
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