



2021 MINI- FRIDGE BUYING GUIDE

Yale Refrigerants Initiative (YRI)
and the Climate Friendly Cooling Campaign



REFRIGERANT GASES ARE A CLIMATE THREAT.

Refrigerants, the cooling chemical in refrigerators, are typically hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) greenhouse gases. The refrigerant most commonly used in student mini-fridges, R-134A, is 3,830 times more potent than carbon dioxide. These gases leak into the atmosphere during the life of a refrigerator and contribute to global climate change. Refrigerators also expend a massive amount of energy.

Project Drawdown has ranked refrigerant management as the #1 climate issue, with the potential to prevent up to 1 degree Fahrenheit of warming by 2050.

NATIONWIDE HFC PHASE-DOWN



In the second 2020 stimulus package, Congress passed the AIM Act, legislation that authorizes EPA to phase down HFC refrigerants. Then-Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer called the climate package “the single biggest victory in the fight against climate change to pass this body in a decade.”

The bill does not yet mandate the replacement of existing HFC refrigerators, but does lay out a path for individuals and businesses to purchase new sustainable HVAC equipment. Consumers buying mini-fridges today should consider imminent HFC phase down before making purchasing decisions.

OUR GUIDE



- There are already quite a few energy-efficient mini-fridges that use low-GWP* refrigerants on the market.
- This guide applies to students interested in buying a new mini-fridge, with the understanding that reusing working equipment or forgoing mini-fridge purchases is always the most sustainable option.
- We have done our best to provide the highest-rated and most-competitively priced green mini-fridges on the market, but of course our list is not exhaustive.

*Global Warming Potential (GWP), a measure of the potency of greenhouse gases, relative to carbon dioxide, which has a GWP of 1. R-134A, the common refrigerant in mini-fridges, has a GWP of 3,830.



ECO-MAX 3.2 cu. ft

- Available for rent through Yale Associated Student Agencies – cost TBD
- 2.23 cu. ft fridge and .93 cu. ft freezer
- Adjustable temperature, true zero freezer
- Adjustable leveling legs and reversible door hinges
- Industry-best 199 kWh annual energy use and sustainable R-600 refrigerant



MAGIC CHEF 1.7 cu. ft

- \$80.99 at Home Depot
- Adjustable thermostat control
- 1.7 cu. ft and freezer-less
- Sustainable R-600A refrigerant and Energy Star certification



INSIGNIA 2.6 cu. ft

- \$89.99 – \$119.99 at Walmart
- Adjustable thermostat control
- 2.6 cu. ft and freezer-less
- Can storage options and glass shelves
- Sustainable R-600A refrigerant and Energy Star certification



MAGIC CHEF 2.6 cu. ft

- \$128.45 at Home Depot
- Adjustable thermostat control
- 2.6 cu. ft with small freezer and two shelves
- Sustainable R-600A refrigerant and Energy Star certification



HOTPOINT 1.7 cu. ft

- \$169.00 on the General Electric site
- Adjustable thermostat control
- 1.7 cu. ft with a half-width freezer compartment
- Glass shelves and 2 L bottle holder
- Sustainable R-600A refrigerant and Energy Star certification



MAGIC CHEF 4.4 cu. ft

- \$179.00 at Home Depot
- Adjustable thermostat control
- 4.4 cu. ft with freezer compartment and can holders on interior door
- Sustainable R-600A refrigerant and Energy Star certification



HOTPOINT 2.7 cu. ft

- \$189.00 at Lowe's
- Adjustable thermostat control
- 2.7 cu. ft with separate freezer compartment and a variety of door storage options (includes 2L bottle storage)
- Sustainable R-600A refrigerant and Energy Star certification



WHIRLPOOL DUAL DOOR

- \$193.99 at Home Depot
- Adjustable thermostat control
- 3.1 cu. ft with separate freezer and two fridge shelves
- Stainless steel construction
- Sustainable R-600A refrigerant and Energy Star certification



GE 5.6 cu. ft

- \$499.00 at Lowe's
- Interior lighting
- Clear crisper for fruits and vegetables
- 5.6 cu. ft with freezer compartment and can holders on interior door
- Sustainable R-600A refrigerant and Energy Star certification



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Curious about other energy-efficient and/or low-GWP equipment?

Look for Energy Star and R-600A refrigerant designation on mini-fridges.

[Energy Star-qualified refrigerators that use low-GWP refrigerants](#)

[Full list of Energy Star-certified HVAC equipment](#)

[Danby mini-fridges](#) (primarily low-GWP, check for R-600A designation)

Email: tilden.chao@yale.edu with further questions