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NOW YOU'RE COOKIN'

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If you are building a new home, you may be faced with the decision of whether to install a gas or electric range.

Your choice will depend on your personal cooking style and preference.

"The cost to purchase an electric range is generally lower than the cost to purchase a gas range. However, the cost to operate an electric range is generally higher," says Mark Antonuk, with ATCO EnergySense.

Electric ranges offer three styles of cook tops: Coils, disk elements and smooth-top.

Smooth tops cook with radiant heat or with modern halogen or induction elements.

Smooth tops and solid disks are easy to clean and operate most efficiently with cookware that has flat bottoms.

For safety reasons, look for a cooking surface that includes an indicator to alert people when an appliance is hot.

Gas ranges are available with open and sealed burners.

The sealed burner prevents food particles and spills from falling into the area beneath the cook top, which simplifies cleaning. The instant heat in a gas range means you don't wait for a burner to heat up or cool down.

This also eliminates wasted energy. The flames of a natural gas range can be set at any intensity, and with accuracy.

Today's natural gas ranges eliminate the need for continual burning pilot lights and operate with higher-efficiency automatic ignition systems. If you have small children, you may want to choose a model that does not have easy-to-reach controls located in front of the appliance.

To save money on operating costs, choose an energy-efficient electric range. All electric ranges sold in Canada have Natural Resources Canada's EnerGuide label. The label lets you easily compare the energy-efficiency of different models.

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