

THE ULTIMATE HOT TUB BUYERS GUIDE

One of the most important things to consider before you purchase your hot tub is whether a 110V spa or a 220V spa is the right fit for your lifestyle. The cost to install electricity for a 220V spa typically ranges from \$500 to \$1,500 making the free and convenient installation of a 110V plug an attractive alternative for many consumers. Plug in spas of yesteryear weren't terribly energy efficient and were lacking in jets but recently several innovative manufacturers have developed advanced 110V spas with power that's similar to their 220 counterparts.

Because hot tubs are so versatile, they transition easily from your personal sanctuary into a popular gathering place. Watch the sunrise and plan your day. As the sun sets, you disconnect, leaving your telephone and computer behind with the buzzers, beeps and rings as the warm, swirling water washes away your stress.

By the time your family arrives, you're relaxed and engaged. Whether you're telling the story of your day or you're listening as your family tells theirs, it's time well spent.

A hot tub is the perfect place to reconnect with your family. Conversation is inevitable when we're not distracted by electronic devices.



**WORK HARD,
PLAY HARD,
REJUVENATE HARD.**



BUDGET

When shopping for a spa, you should consider both the purchase price AND the ongoing operating costs



**THE RIGHT PRICE TODAY
AND OVER THE LIFE OF THE SPA**

Manufacturers offer a wide selection of models in a variety of sizes with prices from \$2,000 to more than \$25,000 for the largest luxury models and swim spas. You don't have to spend a fortune to get a great spa. You can expect to pay around \$4,500 for a great 5 person hot tub with lots of extras and even less if you're looking for a smaller one. You can choose the spa that's the best fit without breaking your budget or breaking into your savings when you take advantage of financing options that are available.

Unlike a swimming pool, hot tubs are easy to care for and economical to operate. And while your pool has to be shut down when the weather turns cold, your hot tub is ready to enjoy 365 days a year. Operating costs vary by the size, climate, maintenance and energy efficiency. You can reduce those costs by choosing a spa with programmable controls that reduce energy consumption, a passive heating system that helps keep the water warm without electricity, and adequate insulation in the cover and inside the cabinet. Some manufacturers offer a variety of insulation packages that are specifically designed to minimize operating costs in different geographic regions which will prevent your spa from overheating if you live in a warm climate and reduce energy consumption if you live in a colder one.



If you've ever visited a spa showroom and started looking for the exit after you looked the prices, it's a safe bet the sales associate tried to explain away the high prices saying the operating costs were lower and if you paid any less for your spa, it would cost twice as much over the life of the spa. If that were true, then the operating costs on exactly the same spa would be higher if you paid a lower price at a different showroom. The truth is, the manufacturer determines the price, not the dealer and while the operating costs vary for a number of reasons, the purchase price isn't one of them!

To cover the cost of rent, utilities, payroll and other expenses, dealers have to mark up prices 45 to 50% and while mass merchants can offer better pricing, they just aren't equipped to help if you have a simple question or a more complex problem that requires technical support. Recently, manufacturers have started selling directly to consumers online and in manufacturer direct retail outlets where prices are marked up as little as 10 to 15%. Whenever you can buy directly from the manufacturer you'll get a better price and a new hot tub is no exception.

Chemical consumption is directly related frequency of use and the number of users.

Proper maintenance doesn't take much time, but keeping your spa clean can reduce energy consumption considerably. The filters in your spa catch dirt, grease and other fine particulates and when your filters are dirty, water circulation becomes increasingly difficult, causing an increase in energy consumption, utility costs and causing unnecessary strain on the spa components.

Changing your filters every 3 to 4 months will improve



Just like the hot tubs they have for sale, retailers mark up chemicals between 55 & 60%. You'll find significant savings when you purchase your chemicals online

SIZE

Maybe you picture yourself cozied up in a tub for two or maybe your picture is a family of 6. Whatever it looks like, the amount of space you have for a spa and its capacity are big considerations.



If you have plenty of room in your yard or if your plans include a larger family or lots of friends, you'll need a larger spa, otherwise a smaller one might be a better fit for your lifestyle.

In addition to how many people will be using the spa, think about the size of the people. Whether you buy a big hot tub or a smaller one, the seating depth should be varied to accommodate people of varying heights.

seats than shorter people. If a seat is deep enough for the water level to be perfect for someone who's 6'2", the water level will be uncomfortably high in that seat for someone who's only 5'2". Conversely, when someone very tall sits in a seat that's designed for someone who's much shorter, most of their upper body and maybe even their knees will be above the water line. Whenever possible, you should sit in the spa to try it on for size before you buy.

Taller people need more leg room and deeper

ENERGY CONSUMPTION & EFFICIENCY

110V Plug in or 220V Hardwired?

One of the most important things to consider before you purchase your hot tub is whether a 110V spa or a 220V spa is the right fit for your lifestyle. The cost to install electricity for a 220V spa typically ranges from \$500 to \$1,500 making the free and convenient installation of a 110V plug an attractive alternative for many consumers. Plug in spas of yesteryear weren't terribly energy efficient and were lacking in jets but recently several innovative manufacturers have developed advanced 110V spas with power that's similar to their 220 counterparts.

Ultimately, 220V spas will always be equipped with more options, but the smaller equipment in a 110V spa generally makes them slightly less expensive to operate.

Be wary of manufacturers who make claims about energy efficiency but can't back them up with numbers, including the actual energy cost. While technology and innovation have improved energy efficiency, sometimes the tried and true methods are the most effective and efficient way of doing things, at least for the time being.

While many forms of insulation have been tested, nothing has proven to be more effective at reducing energy costs and energy consumption than full foam insulation.

Always ask where a spa was made before you buy. Looking at the outside it's impossible to tell and if you don't find out until you need service, it may already be too late. Spas that are manufactured in a foreign country are often made from inferior parts that deteriorate quickly and are difficult if not impossible to replace. Whenever possible, buy a hot tub made in the USA using parts that are well recognized and readily available.



Picking the right hot tub & putting it in the right place.

LOCATION

1

Putting the right hot tub in the right location can make your house and your yard look better. If you plan to enjoying your spa during cold, snowy months it's a good idea to choose a location that close to a doorway with a clear path so you can get in and out quickly and without getting dirt in the tub or your house. Close proximity to changing rooms eliminates wet floor coverings when you come back inside.



2

You'll want to choose a place with some privacy, secluded from your neighbors view. Gazebo enclosures are nice options that create privacy on all four sides and overhead. Install a privacy wall instead of planting trees or other shrubbery. Splashing water is inevitable and the chemicals that sanitize your water can be harmful to plants. Keep your spa away from overhanging trees, gutters, and power lines and make sure there's adequate drainage away from your hot tub to prevent pooling at the base of your spa.



3

Consider the aesthetics looking from inside the hot tub, too. Make sure your view is unobstructed, that it isn't too close to bright streetlights and the air is fresh and pleasant smelling. Since you're running electricity to the spa, consider running extra electricity for landscape lighting and outdoor speakers. Finish it off with potted plants and hanging baskets, arbors and shrubbery so that the view from your spa is just as beautiful as the view of your spa.



INSTALLATION

If your foundation hasn't been poured yet, decide which spa you're going to buy first so you can

A STURDY FOUNDATION FOR A LIFETIME OF ENJOYMENT

N When a spa is filled to capacity with water and bathers it can weigh over 5,000 pounds. To prevent damage that will occur if your spa settles and isn't level, your spa must be placed on a solid level foundation. Placing your spa on a concrete slab that's at least 4" thick and 12" larger than the spa footprint will protect the spa frame and electronic components from ground moisture. If you need a concrete pad installed

and you haven't chosen your spa, it's a good idea to pick the spa first so the concrete is the right size.

If you're thinking of putting the hot tub on a deck, contact a contractor that is qualified to determine if the deck needs to be reinforced before you buy it. If you want the spa indoors, a contractor should determine if there's adequate ventilation to prevent chemical gas from building up and to install a floor drain that can eliminate water pooling around the spa which will damage the flooring and the hot tub.

