

Wouldn't it be nice if there was one compact and lightweight stove that could be used for everything? The fact is, there isn't a lightweight hiking stove that performs perfectly in every climate and activity - there will always be some compromises that need to be made.

With four kinds of stoves available - canister, integrated canisters, ethanol and liquid fuel stoves, each with their own pros and cons, it can be tricky to figure out which one will suit your needs. However, there is a process that will help you narrow down your options when choosing a single stove that will complement your outdoor adventures.

We will cover all the questions you should ask yourself when choosing a stove, and give you a rundown on each style of stove below - so keep reading for all the details.



Once you know what to look for, you can narrow down your choice. Image: [BioLite](#)

Consider these things when deciding what lightweight stove to choose:

1. What are you cooking? Are you a gourmet camp chef, or do you like the convenience of freeze-dried/dehydrated food?
2. What environment will you be using it in? Target your choice to suit the climate in which you will be undertaking most of your adventures.
3. Which fuel will you use? Think about where you are travelling and which types of fuel may or may not be available. It's also worth researching whether the area observes restrictions over summer due to fire danger season as liquid fuel stoves may not be permitted.



Think about your fuel, environment, and types of meals you'll cook. Image: [Sea to Summit](#)

1. Canister stoves

These are the most popular, fuss-free stoves, and are probably what the majority of people picture when they think of a hiking stove. They use resealable gas canisters with Lindal valves which have a common thread and are interchangeable between brands.

Pros

- They are lightweight and compact
- Simple and easy to use
- Provide good heat control
- Very affordable
- Little to no maintenance



Cons

- Poor performance in the cold (unless regulated or inverted)
- You need to carry the empty canisters with you when hiking
- The upright models are not as stable
- It can be difficult to gauge the remaining fuel level
- Fuel canisters can be hard to find in some areas of the world, so they're not ideal for international use

Best for

These suit most users who need a versatile, straightforward stove for all types of cooking and activities in warmer environments.



Canister stoves are easy to use for all-around use. Image: [JetBoil](#)

2. Integrated canister stove

Utilising the same canisters with a Lindal valve, all-in-one stoves incorporate a cooking pot and burner in the same unit. They provide quick and efficient boiling of water and usually incorporate windbreaks in their design.

Pros

- Fuel efficient
- Quick boil times
- Easy to set up and pack up
- Reasonable performance in cold conditions

Cons

- Not as versatile as you cannot simmer with them
- You are not able to use other cooksets with it
- Can be on the pricey side in comparison to other styles of stoves

Best for

Integrated canister stoves are ideal for people who travel fast and light and want to boil water for beverages and dehydrated or freeze-dried meals.



An all-in-one canister stove is perfect for those travelling light. Image: [JetBoil](#)

3. Metho (ethanol) stoves

These could be categorised under liquid fuel stoves, but metho stoves deserve a category of their own on account of their uniqueness and simplicity.

Pros

- Reliable and safe
- Durable as they have no moving parts
- Usually includes all pots, pans and windbreaks that you might need
- Performs in most conditions
- Burns silently
- Uses cheap fuel that's readily available

Cons

- Slower boil time
- Bulky when purchased as a package with pots and pans
- Usage may be restricted during fire danger season

Best for

These are a good all-around option for people who are happy to wait a little longer for their coffee and don't mind the bulk of a stove and pot package. It's one for the traveller who prioritises simplicity and reliability from their gear.



These are a classic and reliable design. Image: [Trangia](#)

4. Liquid fuel stove

These stoves burn in any condition and can use a wide variety of fuels. They are a little fussier to use and maintain, but some of us find that therapeutic!

Pros

- Perform even in alpine environments
- No empty canisters to carry out



- Inexpensive fuel
- Easy to gauge fuel level
- Some run on a variety of fuels (diesel, kerosene, unleaded)
- More environmentally friendly as fuel bottles are reusable

Cons

- Heavier than canister options
- Require priming
- Can be on the expensive side
- Require the purchase of fuel bottle
- Need to be maintained
- Usage may be restricted during fire danger season

Best for

Those who spend their time in particularly cold environments, or who travel remotely and need to utilise whatever fuel is available, or, if you are like me, just want one because it looks cool. Some come with a simmer control making them ideal for group cooking. They are also more eco-friendly as you can refill the fuel bottle over and over instead of throwing away empty gas canisters.



When travelling remotely or in cold climates, a liquid fuel stove is ideal. Image: [MSR](#)
Knowing the pros and cons for each stove type will help you to narrow down your selection, however, there are still further considerations within each category. Hopefully, this makes the process a little easier and you find the perfect stove for your adventures.

What's the best lightweight stove you've ever used?