Liquid-Fuel Stoves

Fuel: White gas in a refillable bottle, as well as kerosene and diesel fuel for multifuel stoves

Advantages: Durable construction; improved performance in windy and cold (under 40°F) weather; cheaper and more available fuel source

Disadvantages: Noisy; heavier than canister stoves; requires pumping and priming before lighting, as well as periodic cleaning and maintenance

Cost: $60–$150

Manufacturers: MSR, Optimus, Coleman

Best for: Four-season backpackers; international travelers

Liquid-fuel stoves like this burn pressurized gas stored in a separate fuel bottle.

Canister Stoves

Fuel: Butane, propane, and isobutane blends in a closed canister

Advantages: Backpacking models (including JetBoil-style systems) are smaller, lighter, and cheaper than liquid-fuel stoves; easy to operate; minimal maintenance; finer flame control

Disadvantages: Poor performance in windy and cold (under 40°F) weather; nonrefillable fuel canisters; fuel can be hard to obtain

Cost: $30–$150

Manufacturers: JetBoil, Primus, MSR, Brunton, Optimus, Coleman, Snow Peak

Best for: Car-campers (multiple burner units); ultralight hikers; summer backpackers

Canister stoves are the easiest to set up and operate and burn a blend of butane-propane gas.