

What is a Direct Vent Fireplace?

While a traditional fireplace provides an open burning chamber that vents through a chimney, a direct vent fireplace does not require a chimney and can vent horizontally out a sidewall or vertically to the roof. It also has a completely enclosed chamber that is highly efficient, drawing in air for combustion from the outside and expelling gasses to the outside as well. The front glass enclosure is porous, allowing radiant heat to pass into the room. This type of fireplace heats a room without robbing it of oxygen or of the heated air it is providing, while also keeping it free of fumes and combustible materials such as embers or ash.

A direct vent fireplace can be a wonderful choice for rooms in which a traditional fireplace is not practical or possible. Aside from providing clean warmth and the cheery glow of real fire, it saves space by allowing furniture to be positioned directly to either side with "zero clearance." This simply means that while heat is radiated out the front glass, the sides are safe for combustibles to butt up against the firebox. The fireplace can also be optionally inset into a wall.

The venting system of a direct vent fireplace consists of a double-walled pipe, or pipe-within-a-pipe. The inner pipe provides venting to the outside, while the outer pipe carries outside air into the fireplace. As the outside air is sucked into the venting system, it's heated by the hot central venting pipe, improving efficiency. Though this type of fireplace does not require electricity, it does require a propane or natural gas pipeline for fuel and burns logs specifically made for direct vent models.

A direct vent fireplace can come in many configurations with various kits and trim. Some kits are designed to look like a traditional fireplace, complete with mantle, while others are more modern. Many carry the certification of wall gas furnaces, and their flexibility makes them extremely popular. Prices vary depending on manufacturer, installation needs and model, but in general they are far less expensive than installing a traditional fireplace, while providing many advantages.

If you've always wanted a fireplace but didn't think it was possible — or considered the traditional fireplace too messy — you might consider a direct vent model. It could be just what your home needs for those crisp winter nights.