

Don't Get Soaked with the Wrong Spa

How to Buy a Hot Tub (Courtesy of Hot Spring® Portable Spas and Baker Pool & Spa)

Buying a spa is a decision you shouldn't feel rushed or pressured into, so be sure to ask the dealer a lot of questions. Like shopping for anything else, knowledge is everything. Before you take the plunge into buying a spa, ask for a private "test soak" so you can feel the jets and the overall comfort of the spa.

Here is a checklist of things to consider. We recommend printing it out to take it with you when you comparison shop. If you don't understand why any of the items below are important, please be sure to check with one of our spa consultants.

1. Learn about the spa's specific features, ease of use and maintenance.

- When the spa is not in use, does the water always remain hot and clean?
- Do the jets and jet systems allow you to customize your [hydromassage experience](#)?
- Does the spa offer a [variety of jets](#) which are designed to specifically target certain areas of the body?
- How loud are the jets and pump?
- Does the spa offer a [balanced filtration system](#)? Is the water continuously filtered 24 hours a day to ensure clean, clear water?
- Are the filters top-loaded for easy access?
- Is the heating and filtration system fully automatic with no programming required?
- Is there an automatic clean-up cycle after you exit the spa?
- Inquire about the heater—typically the most vulnerable component of any spa. Make sure corrosion will not occur.
- Is the exterior of the unit made of maintenance free materials?
- Are the [controls](#) user-friendly, easy to operate and adjust?
- Are there multiple [water care system options](#), including an integrated [salt water system](#)?
- Are there [optional features](#) to make spa ownership easier?
- Does the spa include a [tranquil water feature](#)? Does it include a "tranquil mode"?
- Is there a [lighting system](#)? Is it multi-colored and dimmable? Is it energy efficient?
- What [entertainment systems](#) are available? Is the spa "ready" for sound or TV or does it need to be ordered that way?
- Are there a [variety of cover removal systems](#) available? Do they support a variety of installation applications and price points?
- Does the manufacturer include, at no additional charge, the G.F.C.I. protected electrical sub-panel (or G.F.C.I protected water proof receptacle for 115v models) required to meet electrical codes? Not only will this add up to an additional \$350, the wrong one could be dangerous. Hot Spring® includes this item to ensure that no corners are cut with this important piece of protective equipment.

2. Learn how the spa was constructed and its energy efficiency.

- The components should be fully tested and backed by the [manufacturer's warranty](#).
- Make sure the spa is [totally insulated](#), not just fully-foamed.
- Ask how to estimate your [monthly operation costs](#). (Beware of less expensive spas which can cost in excess of \$50 per month to operate).
- Are the estimated [monthly spa operating costs](#) based on documented, un-biased, third-party testing?

