

ZhiFa Vaporizer Buying Guide

The world of vaporizers is expanding rapidly. The variety of choices can be confusing, even for people who already use a vaporizer. How can someone who is just getting started decide which device to buy? But [what is a Vaporizer?](#) There is no universal “best” vaporizer, just the best one for your needs. To determine which one that is, evaluate them based on the criteria that are important to you. Here is a list of points to consider, but it’s up to you to decide the order of importance.

BUDGET

Although price and quality tend to be related, there are some excellent inexpensive vaporizers. Prices at ZhiFa range from \$55 for the simple, yet effective VaporGenieup to \$669 for the Volcano Digit, which some consider the Cadillac of vaporizers. The widest selection falls in the \$150 - \$300 price range which includes some of the most highly regarded units available.

There are much cheaper devices for sale on eBay and other sites, but these tend to be knockoffs or just cheaply made using questionable materials and processes. They usually are not covered by warranty, or warranty service isn’t available when you need it. Brand name units priced significantly lower than the manufacturer’s list price are often sold by unauthorized dealers, which can complicate warranty service, or are outright counterfeits.

Always keep in mind that the best quality or most expensive vaporizer does not deliver good value if it does not match your needs.

RELIABILITY

Reliability is important if you depend on your vaporizer for activity. In general, simple designs are more reliable because there is less to go wrong. More complex devices require high quality construction and materials to ensure reliable performance. Check online reviews and forums to learn more about the reliability of the vaporizers you are considering. A good track record indicates a well-built device. Finally, if you can afford it, consider getting a second vaporizer as a backup.

WARRANTY

No matter how reliable your vaporizer is, there is always a chance that you will have to rely on the warranty. If you cannot afford to be without your vaporizer, you must have good warranty service. It is not enough to have a good warranty on paper; the service must live up to the guarantee. Again, check online reviews and forums to learn what to expect.

Read the warranty carefully and pay attention to the conditions, since the warranty period for parts of some vaporizers (typically batteries) might be shorter than the overall warranty, and some parts (typically glass) might not be covered at all. Check whether an RMA is required and to see who pays shipping costs. Some manufacturers will not honor a warranty for a device that was not purchased from an authorized dealer. There is no concern if you purchase from ZhiFa,

since we are authorized dealers for all vaporizers that we sell.

WARM-UP TIME

Because vaporizers work their magic through heat, all of them have to warm up to operating temperature. Some can do this in a matter of a few seconds, others can take as long as 30-45 minutes. Vaporizers that use a direct flame as their heat source heat up quickly, as do some portable battery-operated devices. On the other end of the scale, vaporizers employing ceramic heaters usually require a long warmup; however, some of these are designed to be left on all day, which means they are instantly usable once they have reached operating temperature.

PORTABILITY

For convenience, you might not want to be tied to a specific location when using your vaporizer. While most vaporizers can be moved around readily, some are specifically designed to be used on the go. Portables are small, light, fit easily into a pocket or small carrying case, and do not need to be plugged in to use.

Some users feel that portables do not work quickly enough, or in some cases are just not as effective as non-portable devices. Some types have a better reputation than others, however, and remember that what does not work for someone else could be just fine for you.

LEARNING CURVE

Getting the best from most vaporizers requires learning correct technique. For example, many whip or tube delivery systems depend on proper draw speed. (“Whip” is the term used for small diameter tubing, usually silicone or PVC) Flame-powered units need both correct flame distance and draw. Vaporizers that fill balloons, on the other hand, have no such limitations.

While the learning process can be frustrating at first, you are usually rewarded with excellent results; however, if you are the impatient sort, look for a device that you can use effectively right out of the box.

EASE OF USE

The number of hands required to prepare and use your vaporizer can be an important consideration. Some vaporizers require both hands to use correctly, and some require dexterity that might not be possible if you have limited use of your hands. This applies to preparation as well as use, since some vaporizers require that the material be finely ground, and you might not be able to use a grinder easily.

DESIGN

There are two basic types of heating: [Conduction](#) , which heats directly through contact with a hot surface, and [Convection](#) , which heats indirectly by moving hot air through and over the aromatic blends. All vaporizers have some

elements of both, but they are primarily one type or the other. Most modern vaporizers use some form of convection, but new conduction designs are appearing.

Convection designs are generally considered superior because it is easier to avoid combustion, hot air penetrates the material better and heats more evenly, and temperature control is easier. Conduction designs heat mostly the surface, so they usually require a finer grind, and you must stir or shake the material between draws to expose more surface area to heat. They tend to be simpler, smaller, and cheaper than convection devices. The newest conduction designs have minimized or eliminated the shortcomings, and you should not rule them out simply because of the heating method.

TRANSFER SYSTEM

Vapor can be transferred directly through a whip, tube or stem, or by drawing right from the device itself. These methods are sometimes called direct draw. opposed to forced air, which involves filling a bag or balloon using a fan or pump.

The method of transfer affects flavor: drawing right from the vaporizer provides the best taste, followed by tubes or stems, then whips, and lastly balloons or bags. The latter suffer from a high vapor to air ratio, and vapor held in a bag starts to condense and deteriorate. Additionally, accumulated vapor on the surface of anything used to deliver vapor will eventually affect the taste.

MATERIALS AND VAPOR PATH

Vaporizer users should be concerned about the materials used in construction, and particularly what is in the vapor pathway. Reputable manufacturers usually state which materials are used, but many cheap vaporizers (usually sold through eBay and not by dealers such as ZhiFa) do not specify what materials are used, so buyer beware.

TEMPERATURE CONTROL

Many vaporizers offer digital displays that supposedly show the temperature being used, although it is usually the heater temperature and not the vaporization temperature. The important point here is that although they do not display the actual vaporization temperature, they are providing a means of consistently using the same temperature.

Other vaporizers have just a graduated dial, which serves the same purpose by allowing you to select the same setting every time. Some vaporizers have fixed temperature points that can be selected, again providing a consistent experience, and some vaporizers are fixed at a specific temperature.

Vaporizers that are not fixed and do not offer a control depend on your draw speed to regulate the temperature. This requires learning the correct technique for your device: drawing too fast results in cooling so that vapor does not form, and drawing too slow can result in overheating.

POWER SOURCE

Vaporizers derive their heat from either flame or electric power.

Flame powered vaporizers usually use butane fuel, normally from an external source such as a torch lighter. For that reason, some people avoid even those vaporizers that have been constructed specifically to keep butane out of the air path. In some cases the butane fuel is used internally, powering a catalytic converter.

Electrically powered vaporizers are more common, usually using some variation of a ceramic heater. They can either depend on being plugged in or on batteries. Plug-in vaporizers are obviously less portable and are often called desktop models. Battery operated vaporizers, on the other hand, are portable. Some vaporizers operate with removable batteries, but usually the battery is an internal rechargeable. The issue with these is whether you can easily replace the battery yourself. Usually you can't, and although manufacturers offer a replacement service for a reasonable fee, this involves shipping a used vaporizer and a loss of use until it is returned.

EFFICIENCY

Vaporizers have a well-deserved reputation for efficiency, but keep in mind that this efficiency can be offset by an increase in consumption.

Some vaporizers are considered more efficient than others, but this is typically achieved by keeping the vaporization temperature low and the load small. This improves taste and yields smoother, tastier vapor. Users who are converting from combustion often want the thicker vapor that comes only at higher temperatures, but the disadvantage of this is harsher vapor and faster consumption.

DISCRETION

Because vaporizing can be easily misinterpreted, some users need to be concerned about discretion. Small portable vaporizers are readily concealed, and some are designed to resemble other items so as not to attract attention. Other vaporizers are designed to blend into the décor, and can even be attractive pieces of art. If discretion is important to you, consider how easily and quickly the device can be put away.