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# Steam ovens are an amenity at luxury condos. Should you buy one for your apartment?



Some of the kitchens at [1 Seaport](#) feature built-in Gaggenau steam ovens, shown at right. *Williams New York*

If you know your way around a kitchen even just a little, you're likely to think of steam as something you do to vegetables, but it's actually part of a trend in small appliances. Meet the steam oven, which New York City developers are using to replace traditional microwaves in luxury condos.

Professional cooks have been using them for years, and more recently they've been turning up in home kitchens. Now they're an amenity in high-end buildings. High-end steam ovens from Miele can be found built into kitchens at [196 Orchard](#) on the Lower East Side and at [108 Leonard](#) in Tribeca, and there are Gaggenau steam ovens in kitchens of select condos at [1 Seaport](#).



Architect Jeffrey Beers, founder and CEO of Jeffrey Beers International, designed the kitchens at 108 Leonard (seen above).

“In the past few years wellness has become a part of everyday life for New Yorkers. You see it in fashion, on the menu, and in the changes in people’s schedules. As an interior architecture and design firm, we’ve specifically seen steam ovens become an important appliance for chefs and restaurants,” Beers says, who is now adding steam ovens to his firm's residential kitchen designs. “They are perfect for the health-conscious resident looking to bring wellness, innovation, and delicious food to their home.”

## How does it work?

Natascha Kruusi, brand manager of Gaggenau USA, explains that the company’s combi-steam oven combines heat with five different humidity levels to enable steaming and baking, as well as simmering, braising, regenerating, juice extraction, and sous-vide cooking.

“Anything from French baguettes, casseroles, steamed vegetables to poached eggs can be prepared in this oven thanks to its versatility. Dishes are often easier to prepare in the combi-steam oven. For example, when preparing crème brûlée, no stove-top stirring or water bath is needed, simply place the ramekins directly into the steam oven and let the oven do its magic,” says Kruusi.

Reviewers point out that conventional ovens dry out food, while steam ovens keep the moisture intact. And because water conducts heat more efficiently than air, steam ovens offer faster cooking times.

## What does it cost?

Gaggenau's 400 series combi-steam oven (which runs about \$4,000) features an automatic self-cleaning system (at that price you would hope it cleans the entire kitchen). This model has a broil element, so it can replace the regular oven, too. If a \$4,000 model is not in your price range, Cuisinart and Breville have countertop versions that run \$252 to about \$400.

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