

## **Fire Pits**

Many homebuyers are adding fire pits because it gives them a warm, cozy sitting area for entertaining. The fire pit might be part of a patio or be placed between a patio and outdoor kitchen.

Some people add a fire pit off to the side of their patio and put a few chairs around it, while others carve out a larger space with brick pavers.

The options in fire pits have expanded significantly in recent years, as outdoor entertaining has become more popular. You'll find basic chimineas, which are portable and have a shape that mimics a fireplace and chimney, starting around \$50, and going up to \$300 to \$500. There also are many square, round or bowl shaped freestanding models priced from \$75 to \$400.

Built-in fire pits are ideal for those who have created a landscaping plan and know where they want to have the fire pit. A landscaper or other contractor can dig a hole, line it with brick or stone and create a border around the opening.

The cost to add a patio, fire pit and retaining wall for seating around the fire pit is can start around \$3,000 and go higher with your imagination. Those with smaller budgets often turn to portable fire pits, as they can be purchased for less money. Portable fire pits also are ideal for homeowners who have limited space. Or, they may have a deck and patio to warm, so they want a fire pit that can be moved according to where the party is.

Safety is a consideration when buying a fire pit. The fire pit shouldn't be too close to a house, garage or other structure. It also should be a few feet away from the people sitting around it.

This is particularly important with wood burning fire pits because of the danger of fire. And, of course, children should be closely supervised around a fire pit.

Some municipalities have placed restrictions on wood-burning fire pits because of safety concerns, so check with your local building department before buying one.

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