

Guide to Choosing a Deep Soaking Tub

Deep soaking tubs have become enormously popular in recent years. Cabuchon developed the world's first modern deep soaking tub in 1991 but since then, the market has become flooded with competing products of varying quality. As a result, choosing the right one has become increasingly difficult. In this guide, we'll aim to show what makes a good soaking tub and how to choose one that delivers years of trouble-free performance.

First, though, it may be useful to start with a definition.



What is a Deep Soaking Tub?

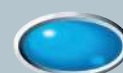
A deep soaking tub is a small, compact bath in which the user adopts a seated position. The neck and shoulders are much more upright than in a conventional bath, which alleviates strain and leaves the upper body far more relaxed. (For a more detailed definition, please see our [Deep Soaking Tubs FAQ](#).)

First designed by our late founder, [Jeffrey Harrison](#), the modern deep soaking tub was inspired by the traditional Japanese *ofuro*. In it, the bather maintains the same upright posture, while submerged to the upper chest. However, unlike the *ofuro*, a good modern soaking tub should incorporate a low seat; even a small difference in height between the feet and the rest of the body can make a big difference to the bather's comfort.

The resulting combination of compactness and comfort has made modern deep soaking tubs exceptionally popular. They are often now specified in hotels, for bedroom *en-suites*, and for smaller bathroom conversion projects. Besides their ability to fit into smaller spaces, other advantages include excellent heat retention, their frugal use of water and energy, and ready compatibility with hydrotherapy systems.

Cabuchon® Bathforms
Tel: +44 (0)1524 66022
Email: info@cabuchon.com
www.cabuchon.com

Cabuchon® Bathforms
A Division of Design & Form Ltd
Whitegate, Lancaster,
Lancashire, LA3 3BT ENGLAND



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How to Choose the Best Deep Soaking Tub

People's needs and preferences vary but if you want to choose a deep soaking tub that's perfect for you, please consider the following:

Size:

Choose a deep soaking tub that suits your physique and the size of your room. It need only be big enough to be comfortable for the largest bather in the household. If it's wider or longer than it needs to be, you may find you're using more water and energy than you need to.

Seating:

Look for a soaking tub with an integral seat; years of research and customer testing have shown that it makes a significant difference to the comfort of the bath. Look for evidence of careful shaping, too. A well contoured seat will be much more comfortable than a hard, flat bench. Likewise, a properly sculpted backrest and rim will make for a much more relaxing bathing experience.

It's also important to check that there is room in the seat to allow the bather to slide forward or back in order to adjust the effective water depth. This has a direct bearing on the versatility of the bath. Some deep soaking tubs, such as the [Yasahiro](#), the [Takara](#), or our 'armchair style' [Nirvana](#) have armrests above the seat, and footrests that allow easy repositioning.



An internal view of the Takara deep soaking tub, showing its seat, armrests and footrests.

Personal Fit:

The best way to test the comfort of a bath is to visit the manufacturer and test it out for yourself. Don't hesitate to get into it and test how well the seat supports you. Even fully dressed, you'll get a good sense of how well the bath suits your shape.

Visiting in person will also give you an appreciation for the tactile qualities of the bath material. Does it feel cold to the touch, or does it have a pleasantly warm feel? Does it feel strong and hard enough to resist scratches, or is it made from a soft, flexible material that could easily be marked or damaged?

If you're thinking of having a hydrotherapy system fitted, choose a bath with rigid, non-flexing interior walls and flush-fitting nozzles; eyelets that obtrude into the bathing area can be an uncomfortable nuisance.



Visiting the manufacturer is also a great way of evaluating how much care and craftsmanship goes into the production processes. However, if a visit isn't feasible, then at least talk to the manufacturer's design team; a reputable company will do everything possible to answer your questions and make sure you're comfortable with your choice.

Shape:

The original wooden *ofuro* baths were rectangular with steep sided walls. The best deep soaking tubs retain these features. A rectangular shape will always make the best use of the space in a smaller room, whereas oval or circular 'barrel-like' tubs will leave dead space around the edges.

Steep sided walls are important for supporting an upright posture and for promoting a sense of security. They are also much better suited to the

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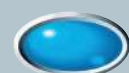
Email: info@cabuchon.com

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use of a hydrotherapy system, because steeply angled walls will put the jets much closer to the body, enabling them to transfer heat effectively and to deliver a genuinely therapeutic massaging action.



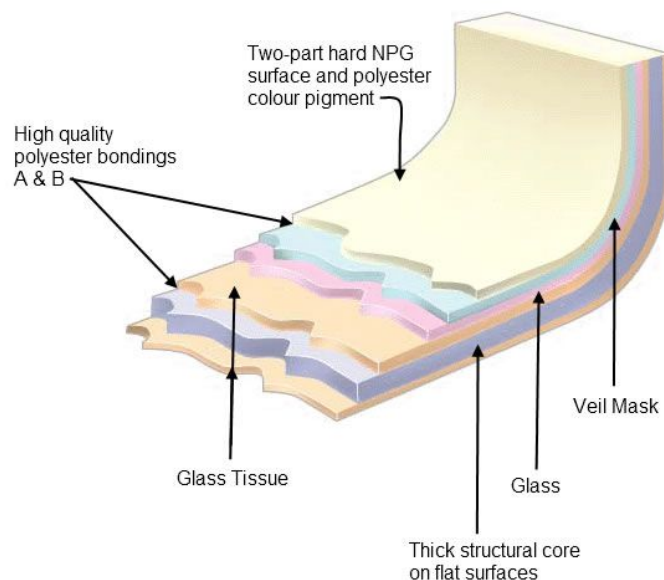
An internal view of a deep soaking tub with six hydrotherapy jets fitted in the backrest.

Material:

Many cheap soaking tubs are made from acrylic or fibreglass, which can tend to flex and lose heat more quickly than purpose-made composites such as Ficore®. Watertight seals are harder to maintain if the material is prone to movement, so rigidity is an especially important factor if you are considering a hydrotherapy system or chromotherapy lights.

This is another good reason to try the bath out before making any decision. A live test will allow you to get a good sense of how well-engineered the bath feels. A good deep soaking tub won't flex or creak when you get in. This is a good sign; a rigid bath will last longer, perform more reliably and be a far better long-term investment.

For baths that are likely to be used and cleaned regularly, their resistance to abrasion and cleaning agents will also be important. A material such as Ficore is strong, rigid, chemical resistant, abrasion resistant and – in the very unlikely event of damage – easy to repair.



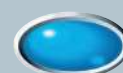
A cross section through a sample of Ficore, showing its composition.

Specialist composites like Ficore offer the added advantage of heat retention. Independent tests have shown that Ficore will keep the water hot over six times longer than acrylic and over twelve times longer than vitreous enamelled metal. For bathers who enjoy a long soak, this can translate into extended relaxation and appreciable savings on water and energy.

For more details about Ficore, please visit the [Cabuchon Quality](#) page on our website, or download our [Ficore Technical Data Sheet](#).

Colour Choice:

Colour is often an important design consideration. In some cases, the challenge will simply be to match the colour of the bath to that of another sanitaryware product such as a hand basin. In others, the designer might want to match the colour of a painted wall, or the base colour of a natural material such as wood or stone. Some manufacturers offer a limited range of colours; others, like Cabuchon, can produce their baths in literally any colour. Before making a final selection, it's a good idea to talk to the manufacturer to understand exactly what your options are.



Practicality and Daily Use:

As with any bath installation project, there are some practical issues to consider. For example, will the chosen soaking tub fit through doorways and stairwells? In most cases, the answer will be 'yes' because deep soaking tubs tend to be substantially smaller than conventional baths, and should present no difficulties with access.

Another consideration is whether you intend to use your soaking tub with an overhead shower. Some soaking tubs have larger, flatter foot wells than others. If you plan to use the shower regularly, choose a tub with a suitably sized foot well and no trip hazards. It is also sensible to check whether your preferred deep soaking tub is compatible with a bath/shower screen. (All Cabuchon soaking tubs are.)



The Calyx deep soaking tub, with shower screen and overhead shower.

Deep soaking tubs are not often associated with shared bathing, but some two-seater versions, such as the Xanadu, are available. The Xanadu permits two bathers to sit side by side or opposite one another.



Availability of Optional Extras:

When you choose a deep soaking tub, it's sensible to consider what additional features might be available. For example, can the manufacturer fit a hydrotherapy spa system? Or might you want underwater lighting for chromotherapy? Do you want an inline water heater to keep the temperature constant during longer soaks? Or do you want to add another dimension to the bathing experience by including a Bluetooth sound system?

A good manufacturer should be able to factory-fit additional items such as these on request. It should also be able to advise you on compatible accessories such as shower screens, taps/faucets and other brassware. Ordering accessories as part of the bath purchase can often simplify the purchasing process. It can also yield significant cost savings.

Track Record and Testimonials:

As a general rule, it makes sense to look for a manufacturer with a long track record of designing high quality soaking tubs. It's also worth looking for suppliers that have their own design and manufacturing capability and a technical team that is happy to answer detailed questions.

A good deep soaking tub should last many years but it represents a significant investment, so check suppliers' websites for testimonials. If there aren't any online, don't be afraid to call them and ask.

Guarantees:

A reputable manufacturer should be prepared to support its deep soaking tubs with a meaningful guarantee. At Cabuchon, we guarantee all our deep soaking tubs for 25 years.

More Information:

For more information or technical advice, please contact our customer support team:

Tel: +44 (0)1524 66022

Email: info@cabuchon.com