divan beds
How to choose the base for your ideal bedroom centrepiece
Choosing the most popular and simple style of bed around

The divan is the most popular selling bed in the UK, and for good reason. Not only are they the simplest of bed styles, they are also more affordable than most other bed types and their comfort is unsurpassed.

A divan bed’s best feature is arguably their ability to fit well in tight spaces, making them ideal if your bedroom is short on space. They are made up of a compact square base that can take up less room than a bed frame, and often feature drawers with ample storage.

Divans may be simpler and less extravagant than a bed frame, but that can all change with the help of some delightful finishing touches. If you want to discover how to apply them beautifully and pick a size and style that is perfect for you and your bedroom, read on and let our Divan Bed Buying Guide explain.

The Bensons Bed Buying Team

About divan beds

Divan beds help to furnish bedrooms with little space. The divan base is designed to be a discreet storage solution and feature 2 drawers, 4 drawers, and in some cases an ottoman option. A divan bed normally consists of a base that usually comes in two parts. A divan bed is typically an upholstered wooden base and a mattress that sits on top of it. The divan acts as a base for the mattress and has either a solid top for a firmer feel or springs that works in harmony with your mattress for a slightly softer feel. This type of bed is designed to maximise cushioning and support. A headboard can be attached to the top end of the bed for extra comfort and support.

History of the divan

The divan bed is perceived as a reasonably modern invention, but it has actually existed for hundreds of years. In the Middle East around 1300-1400, divans were put to the side of a bedroom on the floor. A frame would sometimes raise these divans and cushions would lean against it. The divan didn’t become established in Europe until the 18th century, peaking in popularity between 1820 and 1850 – history’s Romantic Period.

Divans were originally designed to be a three-seat cushion couch and most had a low back. They were decorated with lots of large pillows and designed to be both comfortable and beautiful. However, because the divan was so large it slowly evolved from a couch into a bed.

To learn more about origins of the bed and its evolution through time, read our History of the Bed article.

Why divans are good for small rooms

If you have a small bedroom, your bed has to be able to offer good space saving solutions. A divan bed may be a better option than a bedstead as they can take up less space. They may look less ornate than a bedstead, but a glamorous headboard will add instant style.

Even better, they often have storage drawers discreetly placed and in the case of an ottoman they have a storage space underneath.

Did you know?
The word divan is taken from ancient Persian, meaning long cushion seat.
Difference between divans and bed frames

A divan base is a platform for your mattress. A sprung edge divan has springs on top for extra comfort. There are also platform top divans that have a firmer base and tend to be the more affordable divan option. Divans are more flexible in tight spaces due to their compact base.

However, a divan base is generally less decorative than a bedstead/bed frame, but you can apply more style by adding decorative headboards, footboards and valance sheets. Rather than having a simple square base, bedsteads (or bed frames) are frames built with a mattress base, legs, headboard, and often a footboard. You can get a bedstead in a variation of styles, including sleigh beds, faux leather beds and four-poster beds. Unless they come pre-assembled, bedsteads come in parts. That makes them easy to transport into your home, but more time-consuming than a divan to assemble.

Divan advantages

• Storage is limited to drawer options
• Less decorative and contemporary in design without additional headboard or valance.
• Most divans feature drawers that are hidden in their bases to provide extra storage space. They are enclosed, making them a discreet storage solution that keeps your belongings out of sight.
• Divans are easy to move as their base normally comes in two parts, making them easily accessible through those tight spaces in your home. They also tend to feature castors for extra convenience.

Divan disadvantages

• Divan beds have a more neutral style than a bed frame. That means they are more versatile when being integrated into your bedroom décor. There is also more flexibility on how you can personalise the design of your divan through the use of a headboard or valance.
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How to choose between a divan and a bed frame

Bedsteads and divans are the two most popular choices of beds. But how do you choose between the two? Here are a few important things to consider before making your decision:

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To gain a comprehensive guide as to why you might consider a bed frame/bedstead for your bedroom as an alternative, take a look at our Bed Frame Buying Guide.

Buying bed linen for your divan bed

When buying bed linen for a divan bed, a popular choice is often a valance. They cover the bottom ‘box’ part of the bed and are an extra decorative feature that adds style to your divan bed. These days coloured divans are becoming more popular, meaning a valance is no longer necessary. Bensons for Beds have a wide range of coloured divans, using various fabrics.

Divan bed accessibility to your home

Most larger divan bases are split to provide easy access to your property and feature castors for easy manoeuvring. However, it is better to double-check if your selected divan bed has a split base first and assess whether it can be moved into your bedroom. All Bensons beds are split for ease of manoeuvrability and are available in double size (135 cm) and upwards.

View Bensons for Beds full range of divan bed sizes here.
Types of divan bed

**Sprung-edge divans**
These have a pocket spring unit or complete open coil mounted on the frame. They are regarded as the most luxurious type of divan, providing even support across the whole mattress. With no hard edges they have a softer feel that takes strain off the mattress and make it more comfortable and increase the life expectancy of your mattress.

**Platform-top divans**
These normally have a rigid, non-sprung top panel, often made from hardboard that is upholstered with a layer of padding over the top. They feature a firm base, are generally cheaper than sprung bases and are commonly partnered with an orthopaedic mattress.

**Firm edge divans**
These are less common than other divans. They often feature a small amount of large, heavy duty springs within a fixed, wooden sided frame. They can help prevent ‘roll out’ and soften your mattress. Firm edge divans are also solid but do not offer the comfortable edge you find on a sprung edge base.

**Zip and linking divans**
These are the best option for couples that have different comfort preferences. They can separate into individual single beds when required, allowing one partner to rest without being disturbed by the other. Zip and linking divan beds also provide the option of using two different mattresses, which zip together and separate as and when required. Each half of the mattress can vary based on yours and your partner’s requirements, including comfort and height.

**Adjustable beds**
These beds are becoming increasingly popular as the demands grow for the bedroom to evolve into a more multi-functional space, from eating breakfast in bed and working in bed on your laptop to alleviating discomfort if you have a medical complaint. Adjustable beds are designed to slide backwards as the head end comes up. This keeps you close to your bedside table while other adjustable beds fit side tables that can be moved alongside rails. Mattresses are specially made for adjustable beds so it is best to buy them together. If you are buying an electrical adjustable bed, check the electrical parts are separately guaranteed and fully compatible with UK electrics.

**Common bed sizes**
- **Small single divan bed** (75 x 190cm) 2'6" x 6'3"
- **Single divan bed** (90 x 190cm) 3'0" x 6'3"
- **Small double divan bed** (120 x 190cm) x 6'3"
- **Double divan bed** (135 x 190cm) 4'6" x 6'3"
- **King divan bed** (150 x 200cm) 5'0" x 6'6"
- **Super king divan bed** (180 x 200cm) 6'0" x 6'6"
Divan beds offer a variety of storage options that is ideal when space in your bedroom is limited. Remember, storage options do not affect the comfort of your bed but they will cost more. Here are some of the most popular divan storage options available.

2 Drawer divan
They are the perfect option when you have bedroom space on both sides of your bed.

Ottoman divan
This style of divan has the base opening up like a suitcase to reveal a large storage space underneath. It lifts easily with the aid of a gas hydraulic system or use of tension springs, providing the perfect storage space for items like bedding and towels.

4 Drawer divan
These have four drawers, two on each side of the bed. They are the perfect option when you have bedroom space on both sides of your bed to pull out two large drawers. Please bear in mind that the drawers at the top of the bed will obstruct any bedside table or cabinet you plan to put there.

2x2 drawer divan
Like the 4 drawer divan, this divan has four drawers on each side. However, the drawers nearest to the top of the bed are smaller in width to allow for bedside cabinets.

Slider divans
Side slider divan
If you have only a small amount of room on just one side of where you are planning to place your bed, then a side slider is the smart solution. These slide sideways to maximise your bedroom space and provide easy access to a large storage area.

End slider divan
Like the end drawer bed frame, this divan style has a drawer at the foot of the bed. The difference lies in how the end slider drawer opens, as it slides to the side rather than out towards you. This means they need less space to open and are perfect for bedrooms that have limited space around the bed area.

Buying a valance sheet
Valance sheets are a welcome addition to any divan, as they provide an extra layer of luxury and enhance the overall design. Valances are gathered material that hangs over the divan base as an extra decorative feature.

Valance sheet style and design
Valances traditionally come in white. But there is now a wider range of colourways that can have a real striking effect on your divan and bedroom décor, from vibrant colours to designs that match your room and bedding set.

Valance size
When choosing a valance sheet, ensure it can sit neatly along the length and width of the bed base without touching the floor. Valances are available in various sizes, including single, double, king size and super king size.

Valance material
Cotton and polyester are two of the most popular materials, as not only are they attractive but easy to clean too. Velvet is another option if you are looking for something more luxurious.
The importance of a headboard

Headboards create a focal point in your bedroom. Not only do they have a strong influence on the style of your bed, but the bedroom décor as a whole.

Divan beds are traditionally minimalistic in design. There is a wide range of divan headboard styles to choose from and, if you ever feel like giving your bedroom a refresh, they are easy and relatively inexpensive to change.

If you are buying your headboard separately to your divan base, consider first how you use your bedroom and what type of style you want your headboard to help set, then measure your bed fittings as not all headboards fit all beds.

Headboard styles

Upholstered divan headboards
These are ideal for comfort and can make a style statement in the bedroom when a bold design or fabric is chosen. Upholstered headboards can come in sleeker shapes too for a more contemporary look. If you like to watch TV in bed, then an upholstered headboard will be better for you as you can lean back on it comfortably for long periods.

Leather divan headboards
These are both comfortable and provide a more luxurious look and feel to your divan. Leather divan headboards are also easier to clean than other headboards. A dry or damp cloth is all you’ll likely ever need to keep the leather in good condition.

Wooden divan headboards
This type of headboard is great for traditional, shaker and country-style bedrooms. They can help make a room feel inviting and offer a timeless look and feel. However, they don’t provide the same level of comfort as an upholstered headboard.

Metal divan headboards
Metal headboards can be wonderfully lavish, featuring delicate curls and detailing that adds a more glamorous finish to your divan bed. They can give your bedroom a chic and urban feel, which works wonders in a bedroom with a minimalistic design.

Headboard sizes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Width (in cm)</th>
<th>Width (in”)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small single headboard</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2'6”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single headboard</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3’0”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small double headboard</td>
<td>120</td>
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<td>150</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>180</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Some headboards do stand proud of the bed and stand larger than the bed, so check first that your bedroom plan can accommodate for it. Don’t forget, if a headboard has wings you cannot choose a 4 drawer option on the base.
APPENDIX

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http://www.which.co.uk/home-and-garden/home-improvements/guides/choosing-a-bed/types-of-bed/
http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/divan
http://www.channel4.com/4homes/design-decorate/decorating-ideas/buy-a-bed-08-06-10
http://www.thehome.com/timeless-luxury-with-leather-beds/
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