

A convertible sofa by any other name is still a convertible sofa

Just what are you supposed to call a sofa that has a pull-out bed? A sofa bed? A convertible sofa? A sleeper sofa? They've also been called a pull-out or a hide-a-bed. When you add futons and other flip-ables into the mix, the name calling really gets confusing.

But say you're looking for a sofa that will perform double duty as a bed for guests. Regardless of what the thing is called, how do you choose well? Like any other important life question, the answer lies in self-discovery.

Although you may be tempted to start this process with your budget, you really are better off starting with other key facts: quality, durability, comfort.

Quality

One of the most important questions to ask yourself is how long do you hope to own your convertible sofa? Top dollar is paid for antique furniture. Quality design, quality materials and quality craftsmanship have value. The older a well-made piece of furniture is, the higher the price it fetches. If furniture is well made, it can weather the stormy seas of many generations of use.

Durability

Clear plastic may have perfectly preserved your neighbor's sofa for the last 50 years, but you can't encase a convertible sofa in plastic. How would you get the bed out? But it's not unusual for families to keep a well-made piece of furniture in their home for 20 years or more. If you have the means to switch out furniture as fast as the Kardashians switch out husbands, then durability won't be an issue for you. But if you consider furniture a major investment that needs to be around for many years, then that's an important point to share with your furniture salesperson.

Just how durable does your convertible sofa need to be to last 20 years? If you live alone, have no pets and are never tempted to eat or drink on your convertible sofa, then just about any choice will last 20 years. However, if you have children and/or pets and you expect to occasionally or frequently enjoy meals on your convertible sofa, you definitely want to let your salesperson know so he or she can steer you in the right durability direction.

Comfort

There's no question that comfort is important to everyone – the people who will sit on the sofa part and the people who will sleep on the bed part of your convertible sofa. The question is *how* comfortable does everybody need to be? If you have frequent guests who will use the convertible sofa's bed, the considerate thing to do is to provide a comfortable mattress. When it comes to convertible sofas, not all mattresses are created equal. Rate mattress comfort on a scale of one to 10 and communicate the rating to your salesperson.

The results are in

At last, the big reveal as to why you shouldn't start with your budget when choosing a convertible sofa. You certainly won't need to pay antique auction prices, but if premium durability and comfort are

important to you, don't shy away from a higher priced item. A convertible sofa may be your family's movie night seating, your in-laws' guest bed and your kids' sleepover hangout. It's going to see a lot of use over the course of many years. It makes sense to consider it an investment.