# American expat reveals surprising electrical quirks in British household appliances



Maxine, an American expatriate living in the UK for the past 23 years, has recently shared her experiences with British household appliances, revealing a number of peculiarities that bewildered her upon her arrival. In a viral TikTok video, she outlined five specific items that caught her off guard, racking up over 36,000 views and striking a chord with both Americans and Brits alike.

Among the most startling differences for Maxine was the power shower—a common fixture in British homes equipped with a built-in electrical pump that delivers a higher flow rate. She confessed that the first time she encountered a power shower, she was apprehensive about the integration of electricity in such a potentially hazardous setting. “I had genuinely never seen a power shower before I moved over here. And I'll be honest with you, when I first used a power shower, I was terrified that I was going to be electrocuted,” Maxine remarked.

This sentiment resonates with many Americans who have not encountered such appliances before. In the United States, traditional shower systems rely more on gravity-fed hot water systems or standard faucets, minimizing concerns over their electrical setups. Additionally, the absence of radiators in American homes is noteworthy; Maxine expressed surprise at discovering them, having only lived with forced air heating systems. This highlights a broader stylistic difference between British and American heating methods, where radiators are a staple in British décor and functionality.

Another curious feature for Maxine was the plug socket specifically designed for razors, which sparked a discussion among her followers. “I had never seen... those razor sockets in the bathrooms before,” she explained, adding that such direct interaction between electricity and water was a concept she'd been taught to avoid. This contrasts sharply with the US bathroom standards, where such fixtures are not only uncommon but often considered unsafe.

Maxine also encountered the washer-dryer combo units that are prevalent in many UK homes. These machines, which handle both washing and drying in one unit, are a stark departure from the American norm of having separate, standalone machines. While these combo units are gaining some popularity in the US, they remain relatively unusual. Particularly in a country where space often dictates the design of laundry facilities, the efficiency of multifunctional appliances is appreciated.

These insights are not merely anecdotal; they capture a broader cultural exchange between Brits and Americans. As Maxine's commentary illustrates, household norms greatly vary across the Atlantic. In a spirited dialogue, other Brits chimed in to share their own experiences when visiting the US, noting the absence of kettles in American hotel rooms and the bewildering practice of tipping in restaurants. Such differences in everyday life foster a rich vein of cross-cultural understanding.

Moreover, the disparities extend beyond appliances. Maxine has spoken in previous videos about the norms that exist in both cultures, including the perceived rudeness of American guests who might give a tour of their homes, a practice she identifies as socially acceptable in the US but potentially invasive in the UK. “It’s just weird; it would be considered rude in this country,” she explained.

These reflections, informed by her lengthy residence in the UK, challenge stereotypes about American and British customs, suggesting that while both share a common language, their interpretations of domestic life can diverge significantly. As Maxine concludes her explorations, she invites others to share their surprises, further promoting an ongoing dialogue that enriches both cultures.

The continuous interplay of these cultural exchanges exemplifies how expatriates can serve as valuable bridges between their home and host countries, shedding light on the nuanced ways that everyday life is experienced. From the curious power showers to the multifunctional washer-dryers, each discovery opens a window into the heart of British domestic life, providing learning experiences that resonate well beyond the simple act of adapting to a new appliance.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14739159/American-living-UK-common-household-appliance-terrified.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14739159/American-living-UK-common-household-appliance-terrified.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.swoonworthy.co.uk/2017/09/10-things-americans-might-find-strange-uk.html/), [[6]](https://mentalhealthathome.org/2021/12/27/british-north-american-homes/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14739159/American-living-UK-common-household-appliance-terrified.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://applianceslabs.com/appliances/can-european-appliances-be-used-in-north-america-voltage-and-plug-differences-explained/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14739159/American-living-UK-common-household-appliance-terrified.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.iheartbritain.com/the-differences-between-british-american-kitchens/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14739159/American-living-UK-common-household-appliance-terrified.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://www.thefocus.news/lifestyle/5-weird-things-in-british-homes-that-still-dont-make-sense-to-an-american/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14739159/American-living-UK-common-household-appliance-terrified.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.swoonworthy.co.uk/2017/09/10-things-americans-might-find-strange-uk.html/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14739159/American-living-UK-common-household-appliance-terrified.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.iheartbritain.com/the-differences-between-british-american-kitchens/), [[6]](https://mentalhealthathome.org/2021/12/27/british-north-american-homes/)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14739159/American-living-UK-common-household-appliance-terrified.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14739159/American-living-UK-common-household-appliance-terrified.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.swoonworthy.co.uk/2017/09/10-things-americans-might-find-strange-uk.html/> - This article discusses ten aspects of British life that Americans might find unusual, including the prevalence of washing machines in kitchens, the use of small sinks for washing dishes, and the widespread presence of electric kettles. It highlights how these practices differ from American norms and provides insights into British household routines.
3. <https://www.iheartbritain.com/the-differences-between-british-american-kitchens/> - This piece compares British and American kitchens, focusing on appliance differences. It notes that while dishwashers are common in the U.S., they are less prevalent in the UK. Additionally, it highlights the rarity of coffee makers in British homes, where tea is more popular, and the commonality of electric kettles in the UK.
4. <https://www.edinburgharchitecture.co.uk/uk-electrical-appliances-in-usa> - This guide addresses the challenges of using UK electrical appliances in the USA, emphasizing the voltage differences. It explains that UK appliances designed for 230V may not function properly in the U.S., which operates on 120V, and discusses the need for voltage converters to ensure safety and functionality.
5. <https://applianceslabs.com/appliances/can-european-appliances-be-used-in-north-america-voltage-and-plug-differences-explained/> - This article explores the compatibility of European appliances in North America, focusing on voltage and plug differences. It explains that European appliances typically operate on 220-240V, while North America uses 110-120V, which can lead to operational issues or damage if not addressed with appropriate adapters or converters.
6. <https://mentalhealthathome.org/2021/12/27/british-north-american-homes/> - This article examines the differences between British and North American homes, including laundry practices. It notes that in British homes, washer/dryer combos are often located in the kitchen, whereas in North America, separate machines are more common and typically found in dedicated laundry rooms or bathrooms.
7. <https://www.thefocus.news/lifestyle/5-weird-things-in-british-homes-that-still-dont-make-sense-to-an-american/> - This article highlights five aspects of British homes that Americans might find perplexing, such as the presence of separate hot and cold taps, plug sockets with switches, and the absence of ice dispensers in refrigerators. It provides insights into how these features differ from American household norms.