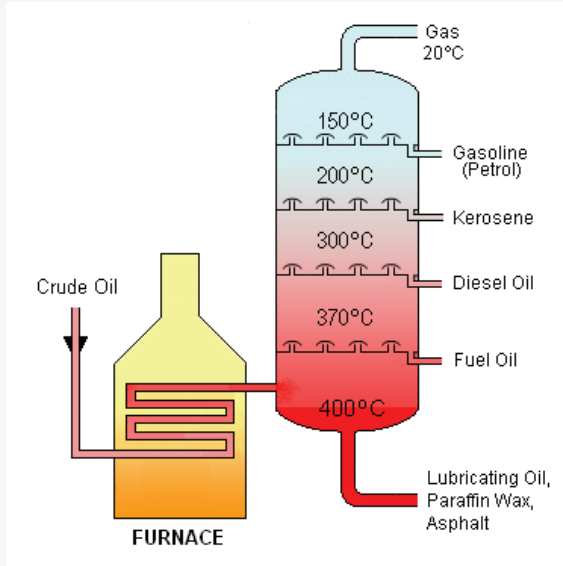


FRACTIONAL DISTILLATION IN PETROLEUM INDUSTRY



Inside the Fractional Distillation Column

Industrial fractional distillation columns

Fractional distillation is the most common form of separation technology used in petroleum refineries. It is used to separate crude oil into useful components. It is performed in large, vertical cylindrical columns known as 'fractionation towers'. These towers have outlets at intervals up the column. Different fractions or products having different boiling ranges are withdrawn through these outlets. The lowest boiling fraction is taken out from the top of the columns and highest boiling fraction is taken out from the bottom of the column. All the fractions are processed further in other refining units.