

What to Look for in a Good Chef's Knife

1

Blade that is from 6 to 12 inches long (8 inch works well for most women, men with bigger hands may prefer the 10 or 12 inch knife).

2

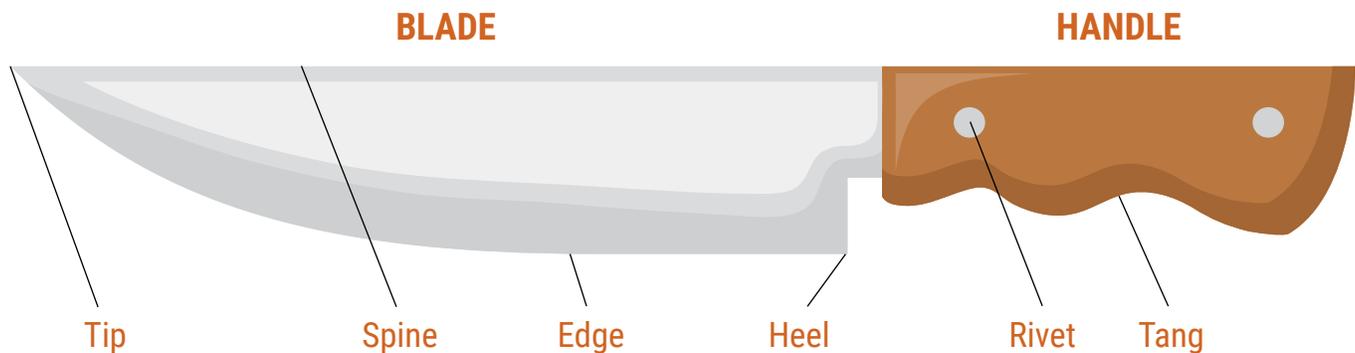
Blade made of a high-carbon stainless steel. This metal can be honed to an extremely sharp edge and does not rust, corrode, or discolor.

3

Full tang. That means the metal runs the full length of the handle. It is one piece of forged steel from tip to end. This gives the knife heft and durability.

4

Balance. You should be able to lay the knife flat on your finger and balance it between the handle and the blade. This feature makes working with the knife much easier because cuts will be smooth and even.



GRIP 1



Grip handle with all four fingers and hold thumb gently but firmly against handle on opposite side.

GRIP 2



Grip the handle with three fingers, rest the index finger flat against the blade on one side, and hold the thumb on the opposite side of the blade to give additional stability and control.

Types of Knife Cuts

THE DRAW



- Especially good for cutting strips.
- Only uses the tip of the blade. It is easiest to do this with a paring knife.
- Put index finger on top of blade to help guide and control your movements.
- Put tip of knife on cutting board away from you, then draw tip of knife through the food toward you.

THE SLICE



- Uses the middle portion of the blade.
- Loose grip on handle.
- Place tip on board and push tip away from you as you push down and away. The heel of the knife falls down to make the cut.
- The free hand grips the ingredient to be cut. Curl the hand into a claw with the thumb and pinky tucked behind the other three fingers. This protects the fingers from cuts.

THE CHOP



- Use the entire blade.
- Place tip of knife on board.
- With other hand, place four fingers on top of knife.
- Gently push knife down and away, but keep tip on cutting board the entire time.
- Cut in many semi-circular motions, keeping tip of knife on board and rotating handle.
- Flip knife over and scrape ingredients back to center, then continue chopping.

Storing Knives



- Protect the blade by storing your knife in a block made for knives or by keeping a sheath on the knife if stored in a drawer. A simple sheath can be made with an empty cereal box or folder. Make sure to put the edge of the knife facing the fold in the cardboard. Use two or three layers of tape at the end of the sheath to keep the knife tip from poking through.

Keeping Knives Sharp

- The surface you cut on makes a difference. A cutting board is an important partner to your knife. Hard wood or hard plastic or rubber boards are preferred. Any of these can harbor harmful bacteria, so care should be taken to clean and sanitize them after each use.
- Ceramic, glass, and tile are very hard on the knife's blade and should be avoided as cutting boards.
- Another tool important to a good, sharp knife is the steel. A steel is used for truing and maintaining the knife's edges between sharpening and immediately before sharpening with a stone. Using the steel to maintain the edges of your knife is called honing. Ideally, you will hone your knife each time you use it for repeated cuts. Only making one or two slices or cuts? Don't worry about it!
- Honing: Place steel perpendicular to cutting board and hold knife at a 90° angle. Then angle the knife up half way and then half way again. Now you should be holding the knife at a 20° angle to the steel. With a loose grip on the knife, draw the knife down and toward you. Repeat this three or four times, then do the same thing on the other side of the blade three or four times.

