



The
**Chopping
Block**

KNIFE SKILLS 101

GUIDE & RECIPE COLLECTION

A Guide to Knives
How to Use them Properly
with Recipes and Videos

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OUR MOST POPULAR CLASS

Knife Skills has been The Chopping Block's most popular class since we opened our doors in Chicago in 1997. There's good reason for that! Knowing how to use a knife properly not only keeps you safe but also cuts down your prep time and increases the quality of your work in the kitchen. Becoming comfortable with a knife is a goal every home cook should strive for, and we're here to help!

This guide will give you everything you need to know about knives from how they are made, how you should care for them and how to be safe. We'll cover how to hold a knife as well as basic knife cuts such as dicing, mincing and chiffonade.

There's no better way to improve your knife skills than practicing. We have compiled our favorite recipes that will not only help you practice the skills you learn in this guide, but also create some delicious food.

Read through this guide, watch the videos and practice by making these recipes at home. Of course, the best way to learn is in person with a professional chef by your side which is why we always offer numerous Knife Skills classes each month at our Lincoln Square location.

The first step to great food is knife skills!

KNIFE CONSTRUCTION

SHAPE & DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SLICING & CHOPPING

Though there are obviously many different types of knives available, there are really just main two categories of knives: knives for chopping and knives for slicing. Each of those categories contain thousands of different shapes within it.

Chopping knives, such as a Chef's knife, have a wide base and a narrow tip. Slicing knives, such as a bread knife, are narrow at the base and also narrow at the tip.

There are some types of knives that would not fall into either category such as boning/fileting knives and cleavers that are generally used for butchering.

To better understand these two categories of knife shape, it's helpful to understand the difference between the motions of slicing and chopping. When you slice, you are cutting as the knife moves toward you or using a sawing motion. The knife is lifted off the cutting board completely. Think of slicing bread or a prime rib. You use a back and forth motion to slice a piece of either food.

The slicing knife is narrower in part so that it has less surface area for the food to stick to it. Most home cooks generally rely on slicing techniques in the kitchen.

Chopping is the technique that many of our students are less familiar with. When you chop, you cut as you move your knife forward. As the knife moves forward, it cuts while never completely being lifted off the cutting board. A chopping blade is wider at the base with a narrow tip that rests on the cutting board. The wide, fat edge rocks down and forward on the cutting board. There's a lot of contact with the food with a chopping knife, but the motion knocks the food off. A Santoku or hollowed ground knife with indentations in the blade can also help with this. This type of knife breaks the surface tension of the food and helps it fall off the blade easier.

A Chef's knife is the most practical and useful knife because you can use it as a slicer, but you can't necessarily use a slicer as a chopping knife.





SIZE

A knife is like a pair of shoes. It has to feel comfortable to you or it won't work well for you. Each knife will feel differently, so it's best to test drive a knife before purchase. A typical Chef's knife ranges from 8 to 10 inches. Most people feel more comfortable with an 8" knife, but the larger your knife is, the more efficient you will be. You'll work more quickly and safely because you won't have to lift the knife off the board as much as you would with a smaller knife. The more you lift the knife off of the board, the more likely you are to get your fingers or knuckles nicked.

Your height may affect your choice in a knife. A petite person may have an easier time managing a smaller knife, while a taller person would be more comfortable with a larger knife. A taller person will be less likely to hunch over the cutting board like they may tend to do when holding a smaller knife.

The blade width is also something to consider when selecting a knife. A thinner knife moves through food more easily than a thicker knife. When you cut through a carrot, you'll hear a thicker blade make a crunching sound as it moves through the food. A thinner blade will simply glide through. Think of a canoe going down a river versus a giant ship. A lot of water needs to part for the giant ship to get through versus the canoe which just glides through.

MATERIAL

Most knives made today are constructed from a combination of stainless steel and carbon steel.

Stainless steel is relatively stain resistant, but it will rust and corrode. It's a hard metal that doesn't break easily but this also makes knives high in stainless very difficult to sharpen. Stainless also doesn't have razor keen sharpness compared to other metals. Carbon steel will stain, corrode and can chip very easily as it is a very soft metal. The soft metal advantages are that it sharpens easily and achieves a razor sharp edge.

All of the knife lines we carry at The Chopping Block combine a spectrum of stainless and carbon steel. This allows the knife maker to mitigate the less favorable qualities while enhancing the better qualities.



FORGED VS STAMPED

There are two ways to make a knife: by stamping and by forging. Think of a cookie cutter being used when making stamped knives. The shape of the blade is cut from a large sheet of metal and a handle is added to it. These types of knives are typically very inexpensive, but they won't be very balanced or have the best edge to the blade.

Forged knives are a crafted product. A piece of metal is heated and pounded over and over, primarily by hand. This adds a lot of strength, balance, keenness of edge and durability to the knife. Choose a forged knife over a stamped one for quality.

BOLSTER

It used to be that most forged knives had a bolster. But now, very few new knives are being made with a bolster. A bolster runs across the back of the blade of the knife to create weight distribution in the middle of the knife for balance. It's also a place for your finger to rest above the blade.

So, why eliminate it?

Bolsters get in the way of sharpening. You can get a finer, thinner keener edge on your blade without a bolster. Bolsters also increase the weight of a knife and some people prefer a lighter knife. If you aren't sure, a good gourmet store can tell you which knives are forged.

KNIFE SHARPENING

Having a properly maintained knife will ensure it does a better job for you. After all, if you are going to invest in a quality knife, you are going to spend some money. You want to make sure your investment lasts with proper care.

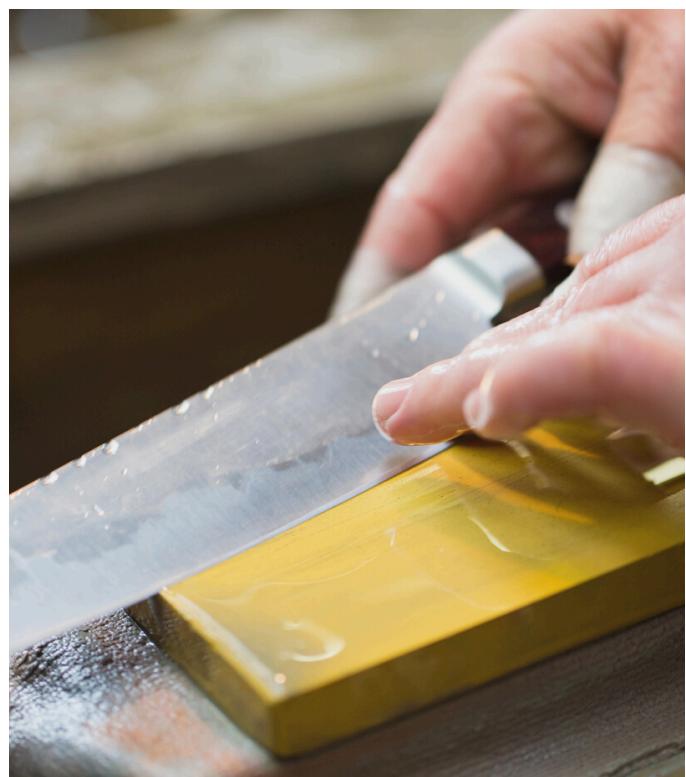
There are two ways to keep your knives sharp and performing well: sharpening and honing. These terms can be confusing since the words are often interchanged. However, they are actually two different processes.

Sharpening is actually removing material from a knife blade's edge. This is usually accomplished by grinding the edge of a knife against a sharpening stone or passing it over a diamond steel.

Honing is basically maintaining an already sharp edge. When you hone, you straighten out the burr (the fine edge of the knife that begins to bend with use) which reduces friction and allows the knife to cut into material better. Honing doesn't remove metal but it does help preserve the knife.

Simply put, sharpening is making your blades sharper and honing is keeping them that way. If you regularly hone your knife, you shouldn't need to sharpen it but once or twice a year. Remember, the more you sharpen, the more knife you lose.

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SHARPENING STONE

A stone is the best tool for sharpening a knife. Electric sharpeners can wear away too much of your expensive knife without making a good edge. You can also have them professionally sharpened if you can't achieve the results you want or don't feel comfortable doing this task. However, once you learn how simple it is to sharpen your knife, you'll be able to do it on your own!

First, hold the knife firmly. Start with the heel of the knife and work toward the tip against the stone and hold the edge against the stone at a 20-degree angle. Use the guiding hand to keep an even pressure on the blade.

Start to draw the knife over the stone. Press very gently on the blade. Keep the motion smooth, using even, light pressure. Draw the knife across the stone all the way to the heel of the blade. Repeat on other side.

STEELS

A steel can be used for bringing back the sharp edge on your knives. A traditional honing steel is simply used to re-align your blade, or keep it in good condition. But unlike traditional steels, diamond steels, which we carry at The Chopping Block, also contain fine abrasives that will sharpen your knife in addition to re-aligning the blade. The procedure for using either kind of steel is the same.

To hone your knife using a steel, hold the steel and knife away from your body. With the knife in a vertical position, and at a 20-degree angle to the steel, touch the steel with the heel of the blade.

Pass the knife lightly along the steel, bringing the blade down in a smooth arc.

Complete the movement, being careful not to strike the guard of the steel with the tip of the blade.

Repeat the motion on the other side of the steel.

Another technique is to place the steel's tip on the cutting board for more stability and draw the knife down toward the board.

Whether you are using a stone or a steel, you'll want to wipe your knife clean after you hone or sharpen to remove the bits of the blade that have come off during the process.

It's also recommended that the same person always sharpen all knives in a household. Each person will have a little bit of a different angle, so this will ensure consistency.



NOT SURE YOUR KNIFE IS SHARP?

Put it to the test!

Try slicing through a tomato or a piece of paper as you hold it up in the air. Sharp knives can easily slice through tough tomato skin without damaging the soft flesh inside or make a clean cut through a piece of paper.

KNIFE SAFETY

A lot of people say a dull knife is more dangerous than a sharp knife because it requires more force. Both types are dangerous, so here's how to stay safe around your knives.

Never try to catch your knife if it falls. This is also a good argument for wearing closed toe shoes in the kitchen.

When carrying a knife or passing it to another person, always hold the blade down and by the handle.

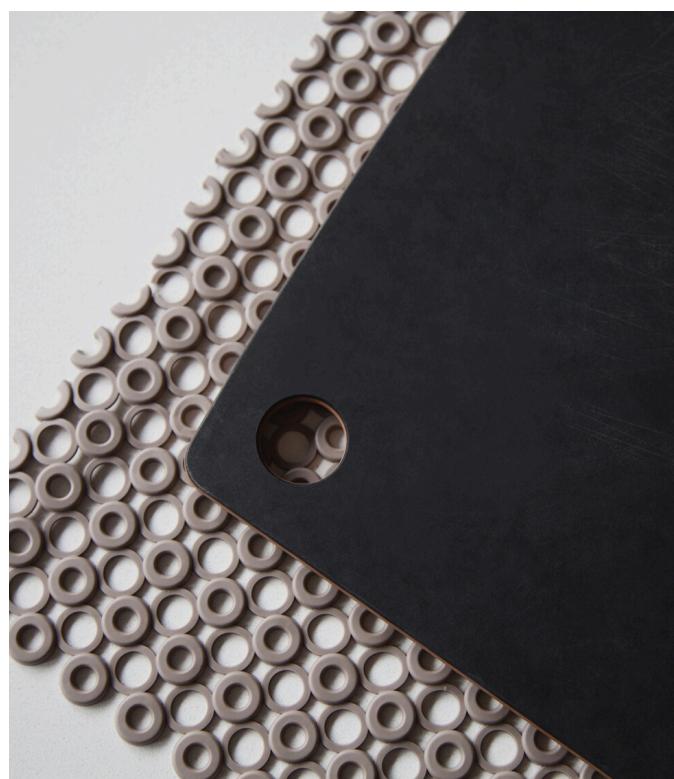
When wiping off your knife with a towel, always do it with the sharp edge away from you.

Never leave your knives in a sink of soapy water. They will be hard to see and can be a dangerous hazard when you reach into the sink.

CUTTING BOARDS

Safety also relates to cutting boards.

Your cutting board should always be bigger than your knife. If the food is falling off the cutting board, that's not a safe situation. You need a cutting board that will allow you enough room to do your prep work. Save the bar boards for slicing lemons and limes for drinks!



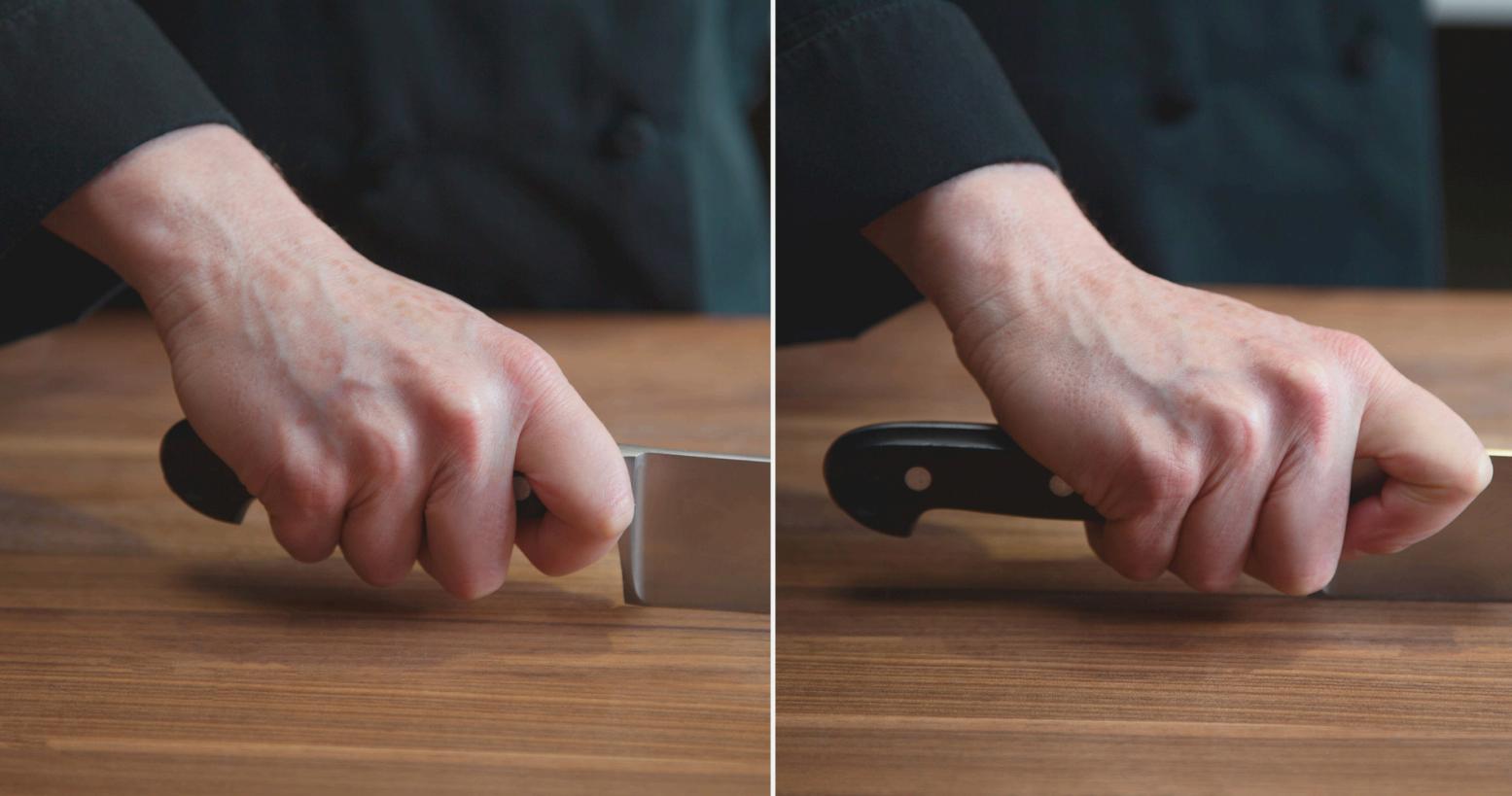
It's important to properly secure your cutting board by placing a damp towel or nonslip mat underneath it. This will help keep the board from moving around which can be dangerous.



KNIFE CARE

Staying safe also applies to how you store your knives. Keep them in a knife block or individual guards to maintain the blades and keep them away from fingers reaching into drawers.

Your dishwasher is no place for your knives. It's dangerous and detergents will actually dull your blade. Instead, always hand-wash and air-dry or towel-dry your knives. But having the blades exposed in a dish rack also isn't the safest idea, plus other dishes may damage them. It's extremely important that you dry your knives, otherwise they can rust. If they do, use a small amount of Soft Scrub and that should remove the discoloration.



HOW TO HOLD A KNIFE

HAND POSITIONING

A Chef's knife is designed to rock back and forth on your cutting board, so rocking will be the motion of your dominant hand. With that hand, you may hold the knife on its handle extending your finger along the back of the knife. Many chefs prefer to choke up on their knife, where your fingers are on the actual blade of the knife. Knife companies design knives with the intention that the handles are to be held, not the knife blades. However, there are times when choking up on a knife can be helpful. When you choke up on your knife you are using more force and pressure. For harder foods like carrots, this may prove easier but keep in mind you will tend to tire quicker as you chop with the more force that you use.

Some people also feel that the further up they hold the knife, the more sure their grip is. When you hold the handle of the knife, you are letting the blade do the work. This can take some practice, because it means you must maintain control of the knife. You should hold the knife where it's most comfortable for you.

Your opposite hand should be in a relaxed claw position (think of holding an egg in your hand at all times), your wrist parallel to the cutting board, your thumb tucked under with your fingertips resting on top of the ingredient you are about to cut. Your knuckles will actually rub against the knife blade, which is perhaps the most frightening part of knife skills. You use your knuckles as a guide for the knife so that you know where the knife is at all times as you move your knife back and forth to create consistent cuts. The knife blade is never lifted above the knuckle, so you aren't in danger of cutting yourself, but it's certainly a position that takes some practice and getting used to. It's perfectly fine to go slow so that you get a feel for the motion of chopping and knowing where your fingers and that knife blade are at all times.

We've all seen chefs on TV look up to talk to the camera as they are chopping. While we don't suggest getting that fancy at first, there are some real-life scenarios that could require you to move while chopping (i.e. screaming child or barking dog), so it's good to know that your fingers are still protected because you know where that knife is based on your knuckle placement.

KNIFE CUTS

Learning how to cut properly can make the difference between cooking as being a chore or a joy. Our chefs even go so far to say that having good knife skills can change your life! We've compiled our top cutting techniques here for a handy reference guide.

HOW TO CHOP AN ONION

An onion is perhaps one of the trickier foods to cut, and you'll see chefs do it many different ways. Our method always uses a cutting motion down to the cutting board for safety rather than toward your hand. It's important to always create a flat, stable base for your food to rest on when chopping.

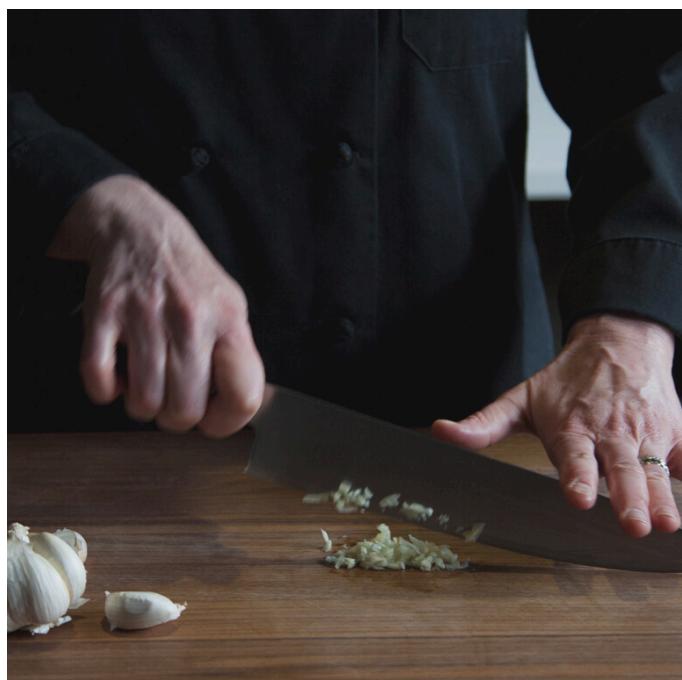
[Watch our video](#)



HOW TO MINCE GARLIC

Save the garlic press for making vinaigrettes which need a very fine mince, and use your knife for mincing. We use the "rock-chop" method which uses both hands. Place the tip of the knife on the cutting board and hold it with your free hand. Rock the knife up and down, reorganizing the food under your knife occasionally, until it is as finely minced as want it.

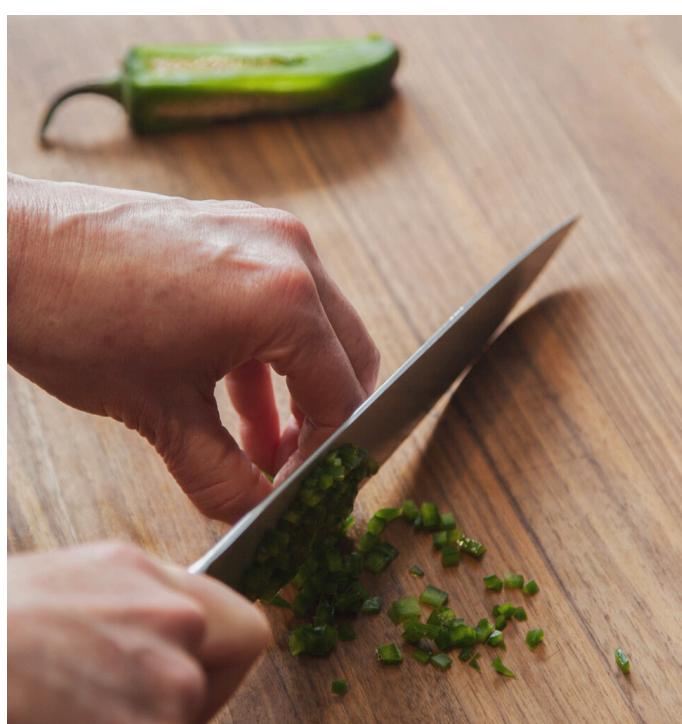
[Watch our video](#)



HOW TO CUT PEPPERS

Peppers can have a puzzling shape, but we use the same technique for cutting chili peppers as we do for bell peppers. The trick is to contour your knife around the pepper in order to remove the seeds and thin white ribs, also called membranes.

[Watch our video](#)



KNIFE CUTS

HOW TO CHIFFONADE

Chiffonade is a cutting technique that is great for chopping leafy foods, such as basil, cabbage and lettuce. It's an easy way to cut uniform, curly, strips of food quickly and elegantly. Stack the leaves together and roll them up tightly. Cut thin strips off of the roll and separate the bundle with your hands.



HOW TO CUT WATERMELON

Watermelons can be challenging to cut up because they are large, awkward and super messy. But a 10-inch Chef's knife makes an easy job of this task. It's also totally okay to not be exactly precise when cutting up a watermelon.

[Watch our video](#)



HOW TO SEGMENT CITRUS

Supreme or segmenting citrus is a fancy way to remove all of the zest and pith from the fruit. We typically use citrus segments in salads or as garnishes. This type of cut is most easily achieved with a pairing knife.

[Watch our video](#)



PUT YOUR KNIFE SKILLS TO WORK



GRILLED THAI BEEF SALAD

Yield: 4 servings

Active time: 35 minutes

Start to finish: 1 hour, 5 minutes

FOR THE MARINADE & DRESSING

1 cup lime juice, freshly
squeezed
1 1/2 tablespoons dark brown
sugar
3 tablespoons fish sauce
1 tablespoon roasted chili paste
(nam prik pao)
1/2 cup cilantro stems
1 jalapeño pepper, halved and
seeds removed, if desired
4 cloves garlic, peeled
1 1/2 pounds flank steak
Extra virgin olive oil to taste

FOR THE SALAD

1 red bell pepper, julienned
1/2 small red onion, thinly sliced
1/2 seedless cucumber, julienned
1 carrot, peeled and cut into long
julienne
3 scallions, thinly sliced on the
bias
1/2 cup cilantro leaves, rough
chopped
1/2 cup Thai basil leaves,
chiffonade (Italian basil can be
substituted)
1 romaine heart, cut into bite-
size pieces
1/3 cup peanuts, toasted and
rough chopped

GRILLED THAI BEEF SALAD

- 1.In a blender or food processor, combine the lime juice, brown sugar, fish sauce, chili paste, cilantro stems, jalapeño and garlic. Puree until smooth.
- 2.Place the flank steak in a sealable bag or a shallow baking dish, and pour in half of the marinade. Allow the beef to marinate for about 30 minutes.
- 3.Pour the remaining marinade in a small mixing bowl, and whisk in just enough olive oil as needed to balance the flavors to create the dressing for the salad. Set aside.
- 4.While the beef is marinating, prep the salad ingredients. In a large bowl, toss together the red peppers, red onions, cucumbers, carrots, scallions, cilantro, basil and romaine. Refrigerate until ready to serve.
- 5.Heat a grill pan over medium heat.
- 6.Grill the flank steak on the first side until well caramelized, 4 to 5 minutes. Flip and repeat. Continue grilling the steak until done to your liking. An internal temperature of 125° is ideal for medium rare. Transfer the steak to a cutting board and allow to rest for 5 minutes.
- 7.While the steak is resting, dress the salad with just enough of the reserved dressing to coat.
- 8.Cut the steak into thin slices against the grain, and place on top of the salad.
- 9.Garnish with the chopped peanuts and serve.

We kick off our Culinary Boot Camp with a lesson on Knife Skills, and this salad is what the students prepare for lunch on day one. It is a fresh, crisp salad that contains an assortment of different vegetables and cuts. Practice your chiffonade with the basil and lettuce, julienne the bell pepper, cucumber and carrots and slice the scallions on a bias, or diagonal cut. Add the steak for practice in slicing against the grain of the meat.



MEDITERRANEAN SALAD

Dicing tomatoes can result in a mushy mess if you are working with a knife that's not sharp enough. Watch [our video](#) that includes two methods for working with tomatoes: simply dicing and then peeling, seeding and dicing.



Yield: 4-6 servings as an appetizer

Active time: 20 minutes

Start to finish: 30 minutes

4 slices pita bread

Extra virgin olive oil to coat

Salt and pepper to taste

2 tablespoons za'atar spice blend (see note, below)

2 plum tomatoes, medium dice

1 seedless cucumber, medium dice

4 scallions, thinly sliced on the bias

1 tablespoon fresh parsley, rough chopped

1 tablespoon fresh mint, rough chopped

1 clove garlic, minced

Red wine vinegar and extra virgin olive oil to taste

Salt and pepper to taste

1. Preheat the oven to 400°.

2. Cut the pita bread into 1-inch pieces and place in a bowl. Toss with extra virgin olive oil, salt, pepper and zatar spice blend.

3. Place the pita on a sheet tray lined with parchment paper. Toast in the oven for 10 to 15 minutes or until crisp and light brown.

4. In a large bowl, combine the chopped tomatoes, cucumber, scallions, parsley, mint, and garlic.

5. Add salt, pepper, vinegar, olive oil and the toasted pita. Toss well to combine, and serve.



SWEET POTATO & CELERY ROOT HASH

Yield: 4 servings as a side

Active time: 35 minutes

Start to finish: 35 minutes

2 tablespoons neutral oil

2 small sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into medium dice

1 medium-size celery root, peeled and cut into medium dice

1/2 red onion, small dice

1/2 red pepper, small dice

1 tablespoon fresh chives, minced

2 tablespoons fresh parsley, rough chopped

Salt and pepper to taste

1. Heat a sauté pan over medium-high heat and add the oil. Sauté the sweet potatoes and celery root, tossing occasionally, until caramelized and softened, about 10 minutes.

2. Add the onions and peppers and continue to cook until tender, 3 to 4 minutes.

3. Stir in the chives and parsley and season with salt and pepper to taste.

Think of making a hash as practicing scales for your knife skills. This version includes dicing sweet potatoes as well as celery root. The knobby outside of this root vegetable may be intimidating, but once you peel off that layer (a Rosle peeler makes easy work of it but you can also use your knife), a smooth dense vegetable is left ready for you to dice in perfect cubes.

If you aren't familiar with celery root or celeriac as it's also known, [watch our video](#) that includes two different dishes for celery root. First, the root vegetable is served raw in a salad and then sautéed in the second dish.





PINEAPPLE, MANGO & TOMATO SALSA

A salsa is a great way to hone your knife skills because it involves smaller cuts. This version contains a combination of pepper, herbs, mango, tomato and pineapple. Pineapple can be a fickle fruit to cut because there is so much waste. Watch [our video](#) to see how we keep waste to a minimum.



Yield: 2 1/2 cups

Active time: 20 minutes

Start to finish: 50 minutes

1/2 fresh pineapple, peeled, small dice
2 scallions, thinly sliced on the bias
1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and minced
1 ripe mango, peeled and cut into small dice
2 plum tomatoes, small dice
1 tablespoon fresh mint, rough chopped
1 tablespoon fresh cilantro, rough chopped
1 lime, zested
Lime juice and extra virgin olive oil to taste
Salt and pepper to taste
Tortilla chips

1. Mix together all of the ingredients for the salsa.

2. Allow the flavors to blend for 30 minutes before serving with tortilla chips.



MINESTONE WITH FARRO, CHICKPEAS & KALE

Yield: 6-8 servings

Active time: 45 minutes

Start to finish: 1 hour

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 medium onion, small dice

1/2 fennel bulb, small dice

2 carrots, peeled, small dice

2 stalks celery, small dice

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 to 1 teaspoon red chili flakes

3/4 cup farro or wheat berries

Two 28-ounce cans whole

tomatoes, lightly crushed

6 cups vegetable or chicken stock

3 tablespoons red wine vinegar

2 teaspoons dried oregano

1 bay leaf

Salt and pepper to taste

1 cup cauliflower, cut into small florets

1/2 bunch Tuscan kale, leaves cut into chiffonade

One 15-ounce can chickpeas, drained and rinsed

Grated parmesan cheese for garnish

1. Heat a large, heavy pot over medium heat, and add the olive oil. Sauté the onion and fennel until lightly caramelized, 7 to 8 minutes.

2. Add the carrots and celery, and sauté for 5 minutes, or until slightly softened. Stir in the garlic and chili flakes and cook until aromatic, about 1 minute.

3. Mix in the farro, tomatoes, stock, vinegar, oregano and bay leaf. Bring to a boil, and then reduce to a simmer. Cook for about 30 minutes, uncovered, until the farro and vegetables are tender.

4. Add the cauliflower, kale and chickpeas, and simmer until the cauliflower is tender, about 5 minutes.

5. Season with salt and pepper to taste and garnish with a grating of parmesan cheese.

A lot of our students tell us they go home from our Knife Skills class and make Minestrone Soup with their leftover, already-cut veggies. It's a great way to use up extra vegetables, and you can alter the recipe based on what ingredients you have on hand.

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BRUSCHETTA WITH CAPONATA & GOAT CHEESE

With a wide variety of vegetables requiring consistent medium dice, this recipe offers excellent practice in precision and uniformity. The chiffonade of basil and fine mince of garlic further reinforce essential knife techniques. By engaging with a range of shapes, sizes, and textures, this recipe builds foundational skills in vegetable prep while yielding a vibrant, restaurant-quality dish.

Yield: 4-6 servings

Active time: 45 minutes

Start to finish: 45 minutes

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
1/4 cup golden raisins, rough
chopped

2 to 3 tablespoons extra virgin
olive oil
1 small eggplant, medium dice
1/2 onion, medium dice
2 stalks celery, medium dice
1 red pepper, seeded and cut into
medium dice
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 teaspoon red chili flakes
1 teaspoon tomato paste
Salt and pepper to taste

2 plum tomatoes, medium dice
1 tablespoon capers
2 tablespoons fresh basil,
chiffonade
Sugar as needed
Salt and pepper to taste

1/2 French baguette, cut into 1/2-
inch slices on the bias
2 to 3 tablespoons extra virgin
olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

4 ounces goat cheese, room
temperature
3 to 4 tablespoons heavy cream
Salt and pepper to taste



BRUSCHETTA WITH CAPONATA & GOAT CHEESE

1. In a small bowl, measure together the red wine vinegar and raisins. Allow to sit for 30 minutes in order to plump up the raisins.
2. Heat a large sauté pan over medium-high heat, and add the oil. Sauté the eggplant, stirring occasionally, until lightly caramelized and softened, 5 to 6 minutes, adding additional oil if necessary. Transfer the cooked eggplant to a plate and set aside.
3. Add another splash of oil to the pan, and gently sauté the onions, celery and peppers until softened, 4 to 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
4. Stir in the garlic, chili flakes and tomato paste, and cook for an additional minute or until aromatic.
5. Add the tomatoes, cooked eggplant, capers, soaked raisins and red wine vinegar. Cook until the fresh tomatoes cook down and become saucy.
6. Stir in the basil and season with sugar (if necessary), salt and pepper. Cool to room temperature.
7. Heat a grill pan over medium heat.
8. To prepare the bruschetta, brush both sides of the sliced bread with the olive oil and season with salt and pepper to taste.
9. Grill the bread on both sides until golden brown. Transfer to a platter.
10. To prepare the whipped goat cheese, place the goat cheese, heavy cream, salt and pepper in a food processor. Puree until smooth and creamy.
11. To assemble the dish, spread the whipped goat cheese on the bruschetta and top with a spoonful of the caponata.
12. Top the grilled bread with a spoonful of the grilled caponata and serve.



ESSENTIAL KNIVES

We firmly believe in purchasing knives individually, rather than in sets. That's because each knife is different. You may love one particular brand of Chef's knife but a different brand of slicing knife. Sets often come with a bunch of knives you may never even use. If you are just getting started with your knife collection, there are really just three knives that you need to get started. Then, you can add on as you need more knives for specific jobs. We'll start with the "must-haves."

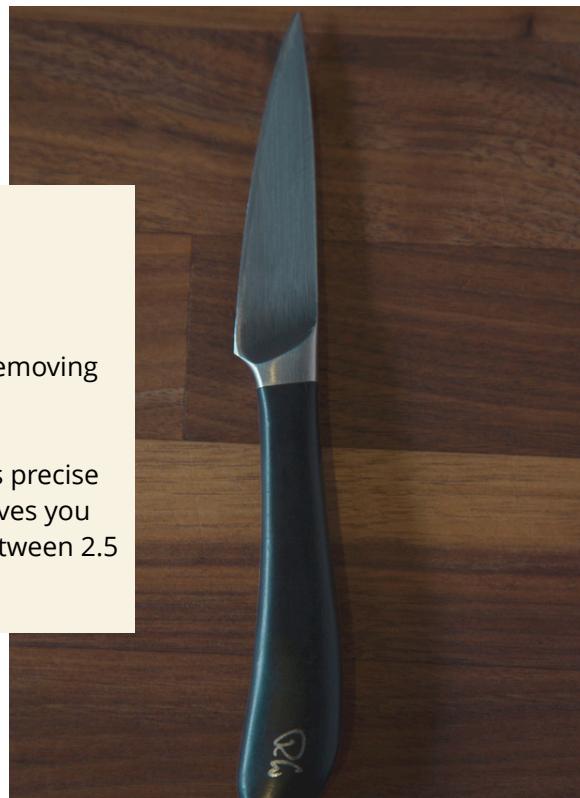


CHEF'S KNIFE

Chef knives typically come in 10" and 8" length. As you become more comfortable with this knife, you may move up to a larger size. Chef's knives are the workhorse in the kitchen, and this will be the knife you turn to for most jobs, so make sure you are comfortable using yours.

PARING KNIFE

A paring knife is used for small jobs, like removing stems from tomatoes and strawberries, segmenting citrus and peeling fruits and vegetables. Use it for any job that requires precise and delicate cuts. The small handle gives you control over the blade, which is usually between 2.5 and 4 inches.



SERRATED KNIFE

A serrated knife, also known as a bread knife, plays an important role in your collection. You won't use it as much as the other two essential knives, but there is simply no other tool that does its job. This thick bladed knife will easily slice through cakes, pies and bread (even soft, delicate rolls) as well as tomatoes without crushing any of them.

USEFUL KNIVES

Specialty knives - like utility knives, slicers, or boning/filet knives - are great tools for specific tasks such as carving meat, slicing crusty loaves, or breaking down fish with precision. While they're not essential when starting your knife collection, they can make certain jobs easier and more efficient as your skills and confidence grow in the kitchen.



UTILITY KNIFE

Think of the utility knife as a mini-chef's knife that you can use on medium-sized fruits and vegetables. They are the in-between knife of Chef's knives and pairing knives, usually between 4 and 7 inches. They can be used in the hand (like a pairing knife) or on a cutting board (like a Chef's knife).

SLICER

Slicing and carving knives are long and straight for smooth, even slicing. They can be 8 to 14 inches long, and have thinner blades than Chef's knives. They are meant to be used with a sawing motion to cut meat into clean, even slices.



BONING/FILET KNIFE

A boning or filet knife is used for removing meat from bones and cutting fish or poultry. Boning knives can have different widths of blades as well as flexibility. Since you'll be cutting around bones and skin, this knife gives you more control when making those precise cuts.

OUR KNIFE LINES

As our long-time customers know, adding a knife line to The Chopping Block's inventory is a big deal. We don't do it often, and we only do so after extensive testing by our chefs. Here's a timeline of the knife lines that we have carried since we opened our doors and what makes them so special.

FRIEDR. DICK

This German knife line was the very first one we carried at The Chopping Block. These knives are a little lighter weight than their German counterparts. It has a contour to the blade so you have a lot of contact with the surface of the cutting board. It's a knife with a straighter edge.



GLOBAL

We added Global knives from Japan to our collection next. The two most innovative features of Global knives are their fine, sharp edge and the way they are balanced. These light-weight knives are designed to stay sharp longer. To balance their knives, Global uses a hollow handle which is then filled with just the right amount of sand to create the correct balance.



SHUN

Another Japanese knife line called Shun caught our eye next because of the suppleness of its blade. This knife feels like you are working with a carbon knife because it's a little softer so it's extremely comfortable to chop with, yet incredibly sharp. This line is made in the tradition of samurai swords: every knife is handmade and requires at least 100 handcrafted steps to complete.

OUR KNIFE LINES



CHROMA

Our Chroma knives are designed by Porsche, but are actually a very good value for the price. They offer a 9" chef knife which is very unusual and bridges the gap between the typical 8"-10" size of this knife. The ergonomic handle actually allows the knife to rest upright on the counter, and our customers love that it props up on its own for both safety and coolness factor.

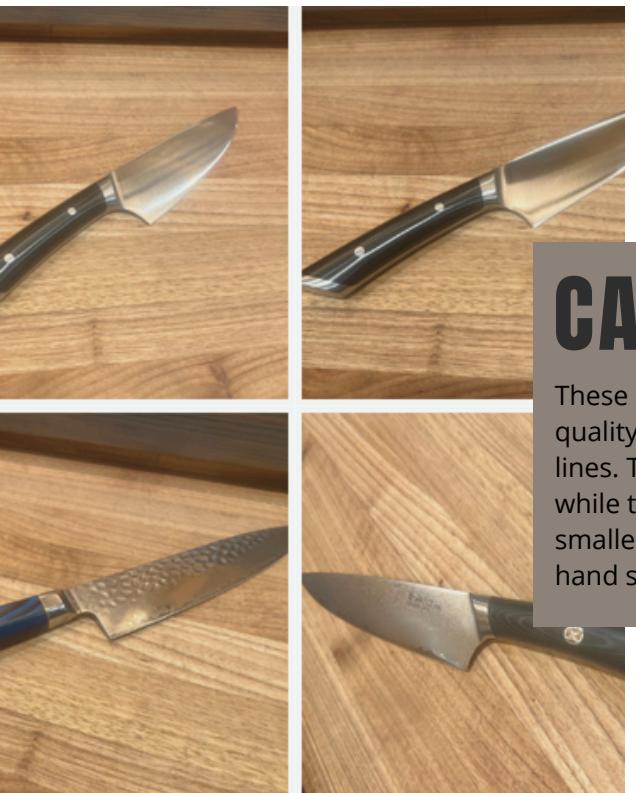
BOB KRAMER

Our knife line by Bob Kramer features hand-crafted high carbon blades. These knives have the ultimate edge: maximum sharpness, edge retention, ease of sharpening; and thus, optimal performance. The heat treatment used is a seven step process that takes over six hours to complete for each blade.



CANGSHAN

These knives are more affordable than some of our other lines with excellent quality steel and beautiful, sleek, designs. We carry the Kita, Helena, and Kuro lines. The Kita has a gorgeous blue handle for a pop of color in your kitchen, while the Helena is offered in both a 6inch and 8inch size making them great for smaller hands, or younger kid/teen chefs. Some knives, like the Kuro, are even hand sharpened!



KAI PRO & KAI LUNA

These knives have the expensive look and feel of a Japanese knife at a much lower, approachable price point. These knives tend to be lighter in weight than our other lines. We began carrying the Kai Pro line because the Yanagiba knife was of particular interest in our popular sushi classes. We find that a lot of students enjoy using these as starter knives, or even as a great option for camping or getaways when looking for something reliable.



SHARPEN UP

Are you ready to take the next step to improve your knife skills? Get hands-on experience while receiving feedback from professional chefs! Sign up for our most popular class, Knife Skills, which is offered at The Chopping Block several times each month. Then, move up to Next Level Knife Skills, which covers those hard-to-chop fruits and vegetables.

[Sign Up for a Knife Skills Class](#)

If it's time for you to invest in a quality knife, visit our retail store in Lincoln Square to try out our knives to find your match!

ABOUT THE CHOPPING BLOCK

At The Chopping Block, our mission is to empower home cooks of all skill levels to feel confident, capable, and inspired in the kitchen. Whether you're just starting out or looking to refine your technique, our chef instructors break down the fundamentals into approachable, hands-on lessons that are as fun as they are educational. From mastering knife skills to creating balanced, delicious meals your family will love, we're here to make cooking feel less like a chore and more like a joy. Join us, and discover how cooking at home can be simple, satisfying, and truly rewarding.

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