

Title:

Quality - Cooks Knives - A Cutting Edge Investment

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Summary:

Of all the tools and utensils used in the kitchen today, it is probably the knife that rewards the most careful selection. When you consider it, a knife is an extension of your hand.

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Article Body:

Of all the tools and utensils used in the kitchen today, it is probably the knife that rewards the most careful selection. When you consider it, a knife is an extension of your hand. To fillet, slice and chop requires manual dexterity. If a knife allows you to move and handle your ingredients in a natural and easy way, this will add to your cooking enjoyment and mastery.

There are a wide variety of cooks knives available today. In addition to the quality traditional European brands such as Henckels, Wusthof and Sabatier, there is a fascinating array of Japanese and oriental brands, such as Global, I.O. Shen, Tojiro and Kai. These Japanese brands tend to be made of harder steel and have thinner blades. They hold their edge for longer and are sharper, making them ideal for precision and accuracy. However they do take longer to sharpen and maintain than their European counterparts, which are generally considered to be easier to look after, more sturdy and great for chopping for example.

But how do you choose which is right for you? First and foremost, you should consider the tasks that you perform most regularly and choose accordingly. Here are a couple of things that you may like to bear in mind:

Material: High carbon steel is generally considered the best performer, but can discolor with use, although this is purely cosmetic. High carbon stainless steel is a popular choice, will look great and will take and maintain a sharp edge. Stainless steel is generally less expensive, will retain its good looks but is not hard enough to maintain the best possible edge. Ceramic blades are so hard that they will maintain a sharp edge for months or years with little maintenance. However, they are more expensive to buy and may require diamond-

sharpening.

Handles: The next material choice to consider is for the handle. Handles generally fall into three categories; wood, stainless steel or composition. Some chefs prefer the feel of wood although wood is not allowed in many commercial kitchens. Composition handles help ensure a safe grip on the knife when handling wet items, and are generally preferred over more slippery stainless steel. However, both are sanitary and virtually maintenance-free.

Types of knives: There are some tasks in the kitchen which, if performed regularly, warrant having a special knife for the job. However, there are three knives that will probably see the most wear and tear; a chef's knife, a paring knife and a serrated knife.

A good chef's knife will typically have a blade 6" - 12" long. It will be used for slicing, dicing, chopping and mincing. I can even be used for boning large cuts of meat if you do not have a cleaver. The side of the blade is great for crushing garlic etc.

A paring knife will have a 3-4" long blade and will be used for peeling and paring fruit and vegetables and for trimming where a larger blade would be cumbersome.

A serrated blade is used for cutting through bread, bagels, baguettes etc and should have a blade long enough to cut through a large loaf or a sandwich cake.

These three kitchen work-horses will serve you well and, if you're on a tight budget, will serve most purposes.

If chosen wisely, a quality set of cooks knives will increase your cooking enjoyment and be a valuable investment for a long time to come.