In cooking, a **chef's knife**, also known as a **cook's knife**, is a [cutting tool](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knife) used in [food preparation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_preparation). The chef's knife was originally designed primarily to slice and disjoint large cuts of [beef](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beef). Today it is the primary general utility knife for most Western cooks.

A European chef's knife generally has a blade 20 centimetres (8 inches) in length and a broad 4 cm (1½ in.) width, although individual models range from 15 to 36 centimetres (6 to 14 inches) in length and may be as slender as 2 cm (¾ inch). Longer and wider knives are more frequently called chef's knives, whereas shorter & more slender knives have a tendency to be called cook's knives. The shortest and narrowest knives overlap into the general [utility kitchen knife](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kitchen_knife#utility) category that are too narrow to have a heel to the blade, like the smaller [paring knife](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kitchen_knife#paring).

[A knife with a black handle

Description automatically generated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Chef%27s_knife.jpg)Chef's knife

There are two common types of blade shape in Western chef's knives: French and German.

* French-style knives are not symmetrical and have an edge that is straighter, until the end and then curves strongly up to the tip. This asymmetric style of blade form is synonymous with the renowned [Occitan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occitans) French [Laguiole knives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laguiole_knife) and [Opinel knives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinel" \o "Opinel); the Laguiole is the template for the modern [steak knife](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steak_knife).
* German-style knives are more deeply and continuously, but gently curved equally along the whole cutting edge and the spine — a symmetric elongated arrowhead. (This blade form can be seen in the first two images).