

# Knife Basics

Follow these tips to buy, use, and care for your knives.



## Shopping Tips

- Hold a few in your hand before buying if you can. Handles have different shapes. Some may feel more comfortable than others.
- You don't need to purchase a 10-knife block set. Most kitchen tasks can be done with just one or two knives. Here are a few tips:
  - Chef's knife (8–10-inch blade). Almost all kitchen jobs can be done with just this knife. If you can only buy one, go with this one.
  - Paring knife (3–4-inch blade). Good for tasks where you may need to be more precise, like peeling and coring.
  - Serrated knife (8–10-inch blade, small “teeth”). This knife is long like a chef's knife but the blade edge is jagged, rather than smooth. Good for slicing bread and cutting soft-skinned produce like tomatoes.

## Safety Tips

- Never put a knife in a sink full of water. You or someone else may forget it's there. This can lead to cuts when you grab things to clean.
- Don't try to catch a falling knife. If you drop it, take a quick step back so it doesn't nick your toes or bounce back on you.
- To pass a knife, hand it off by the handle. Or, set it down on the counter and let the other person pick it up.
- Always walk with the blade of your knife pointed towards the floor. This helps avoid knocking someone who comes into your path.
- When you are not using your knife, place it at the top of your cutting board. Keep the blade facing away from you.
- Keep knives sharp. A dull knife requires more force, which can lead to slipping. To sharpen knives, check the cost at a local hardware or kitchenware store, or price out sharpeners at discount stores. Do not try to sharpen serrated knives — it could ruin the teeth.



### Using Knives Safely

Our recipes call for a lot of slicing, dicing, chopping, and mincing. Use these tips to cut like a pro:

- **Watch your fingers.** Tuck your fingers toward your palm on the hand that is holding the food.
- **Lead down with the tip.** Angle the tip of the knife toward the cutting board.
- **Slice.** Cut through the food with a slicing or sawing motion. Don't just push down.
- **Create a flat surface.** When working with round foods like onions or potatoes, cut them in half first. Lay the flat side down, then keep cutting.