

# Knife Skills and Safety

A good quality knife is the most important tool in the kitchen. Good knives will make your work easier and more efficient. When properly cared for, a knife will last a lifetime.



## Safety

- Use the correct knife for the task.
- Keep your knife blades sharp.
- Only cut on a cutting board properly secured with a mat or wet towel.
- Always cut away from yourself.
- Keep fingers on guiding hand curved into a “claw.”
- Pass a knife by the handle.
- When walking with a knife, hold it close to your side with the tip end down and the blade facing behind you.
- Never try to catch a falling knife.
- Do not put your knives in a sink full of soapy water.
- Hand wash knives and dry with a clean cloth. Do not put knives in the dishwasher.
- Store knives in a knife block or on a magnetic rack.

## Knives every kitchen should have

**Chef’s knife:** Typically 8–14 inches long, this is an all-purpose knife used for chopping, slicing, and mincing.

**Paring knife:** Typically 3–4 inches long, a paring knife is used for paring and trimming small ingredients such as cutting strawberries or slicing cherry tomatoes or grapes.

**Serrated knife:** Typically 8–12 inches long, also known as a bread knife. Use this knife for cutting bread, tomatoes, or other soft foods.

## Proper hand position for using a chef’s knife

- Grip the knife by the handle using your pinkie, ring, and middle fingers.
- Place index finger on the blade near the handle and thumb on the opposite side of the blade.
- Use “the claw” position on your non-dominant hand, curl fingertips to protect your fingers and hold your ingredients.

## Common cutting terms

**Rough chop:** This is a chunky, uneven cut.

**Dice:** Cut into even-sided cubes. Medium dice is  $\frac{1}{2}$ ” cubes. Small dice is  $\frac{1}{4}$ ” cubes.

**Mince:** As small as you can cut. Garlic and ginger are often minced.

**Julienne:** A long thin cut; your pieces should look like long matchsticks. This cut is often used on vegetables you can eat raw, such as carrots and celery.

**Chiffonade:** This cut is used to efficiently cut leafy vegetables and herbs into finely sliced strips or ribbons.



Medium Dice



Mince



Small Dice



Julienne

Sources: [www.vikingrange.com](http://www.vikingrange.com) and [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)

