



Land to Hand
M O N T A N A

Knife Skills

Utilizing fresh fruits and vegetables for tasty consumption will include some basic knife skills. This guide will give you some basic techniques in chopping up your market bounty.

Types of Knives

Chef's knife: by far the most valuable tool in the kitchen. When you know how to use one, it is the knife you will use most of the time. This knife can be used for general purpose chopping, slicing, and dicing.



Paring knife: mostly used to trim vegetables and fruits, and usually has a blade that is 2 to 4 inches long.



Serrated knife: can be used for bread, tomatoes, and even meat. The serrated knife is most useful on foods that have one texture on the outside and another inside, like a tomato.



Holding Your Chef's Knife

Grip #1: Grip the handle with all four fingers and hold thumb gently but firmly against the handle on the opposite side. This may be more comfortable for beginning cooks, but does not offer as much control as the following grip.



Grip #2: Grip the knife so that your thumb and forefinger rest directly on either side of the blade, right in front of the 'bolster' - where the metal flares out to meet the handle. The rest of your fingers should grip the handle.



Safety Techniques

The Claw:

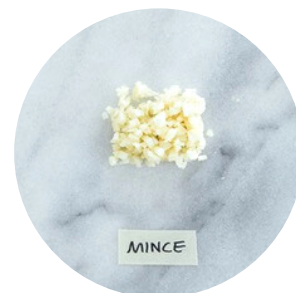
- This is what your non-dominant hand should be doing, as it holds the item being cut and not the knife itself.
- Curl the hand into a claw with the thumb and pinky tucked behind the other three fingers. The thumb and pinky can grip the item from the sides while the other three fingers hold it down on the cutting board.
- This grip protects the fingers from being cut.

Maintenance:

- Keeping your knives clean and sharp will make it less likely that the knife will slip while cutting.
- Use a clean, stable cutting board when using any knife.

Common Terms

You will see many different terms in recipes that refer to how you should cut/chop/slice an ingredient. Typically the term just means how big of pieces you end up cutting. The images below are largest on the left to smallest on the right.



Cutting Techniques

The Draw:

- Especially good for cutting strips
- Only uses the tip of the blade
- Put index finger on top of the blade to help guide and control your movements
- Put tip of knife on cutting board away from you, then draw tip of knife through the food back towards you
- *Suggested foods to cut - onion, bell pepper, cucumber*



The Slice:

- Uses the middle portion of the blade
- Controlled but loose grip on the handle
- Place tip of knife on the cutting board and push tip away from you as you push the knife down and away. The heel of the knife comes down to make the cut.
- *Suggested foods to cut - zucchini, carrots, celery, mushrooms*



The Chop:

- This cut is for rough chopping and mincing
- Uses the entire blade
- Place tip of knife on cutting board
- With other hand, place 4 fingers flat on top of knife
- Gently push knife down and away but keep tip on cutting board entire time
- Cut in many semi-circular motions, keeping tip of knife on board and rotating handle
- Flip knife over and scrape ingredients back to center (with the dull side of the blade) then continue chopping
- *Suggested foods to cut - garlic, second cuts on onion, etc.*

