

Basic Knife Skills

This playbook provides a guide to basic knife skills essential for any cook. It includes steps for executing fundamental knife cuts—slicing, dicing, and chopping—as well as tips for proper knife maintenance and handling.

Step 1: Knife Selection

Choose the appropriate knife for the task at hand. For most slicing, dicing, and chopping, a chef's knife is preferred due to its versatility.

Step 2: Knife Grip

Hold the knife properly by gripping the handle close to the base of the blade, using your thumb and forefinger to grasp the blade lightly but firmly.

Step 3: Cutting Board

Place a damp cloth underneath your cutting board to prevent slipping. Ensure the surface is stable before you begin cutting.

Step 4: Produce Prep

Wash and dry all produce thoroughly. Trim any excess parts that you do not intend to cut, such as stems and roots.

Step 5: Proper Stance

Position yourself squarely in front of the cutting board. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart to maintain balance and control.

Step 6: **Slicing Technique**

Using a smooth gliding motion, move the knife down and forward, letting the blade do the work. Keep the tip of the knife on the cutting board and the knife angled slightly outward.

Step 7: **Dicing Technique**

Cut the produce into uniform slices before turning it to cut across the slices, forming cubes. Keep the cubes as uniform as possible for even cooking.

Step 8: **Chopping Technique**

For a rough chop, use a less precise motion but still aim for relatively uniform pieces. For finer chops, use a more controlled, repetitive rocking motion with the knife.

Step 9: **Knife Safety**

Keep your free hand's fingers tucked away using a 'claw grip' to hold the produce, minimizing the risk of cutting yourself.

Step 10: **Knife Maintenance**

Regularly hone your knife with a steel to keep it sharp. When needed, sharpen the knife using a whetstone or have it professionally sharpened.

Step 11: **Cleaning Up**

After use, wash knives by hand with warm, soapy water and dry immediately. Store knives properly in a knife block or on a magnetic strip.

General Notes

Knife Care

Avoid cutting on hard surfaces, such as stone or metal, to maintain the knife's edge. Do not use the dishwasher to clean knives as it can dull the blade and damage the handle.

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