

Hey there, food fans.

As the holiday season approaches, if there's one thing that I get the most questions about, it's knives. Knives are the most versatile and useful tool in the kitchen, but most people don't know how to keep them sharp, or how to pick the right tool for the right job. With that in mind, this is my

Crash Course on Knife Styles

Every kitchen should have at least three knives to fill the basic roles. An all-purpose knife, a serrated knife, and a small jobs knife.

The most common all-purpose knife is the chef's or cooks knife. They'll tackle roughly 83% of the jobs that need to be done in the kitchen.

Other knives that can fill this role include santoku knives, nakiri knives and all manner of minor variations available from different brands.

Cook's knives come in several sizes, and although some people will say that you need one of each, or should get the largest size, that's not true.

Always be sure to use the size of a knife that's most comfortable for you.

When most people picture a serrated knife, they picture a bread knife, which is the most common serrated knife out there. They'll do about 10% of most jobs in the kitchen.

Serrated knives are useful for anything that has a tough outside and a soft inside, so they're good for not only bread but tomatoes, soft fruits, some cheeses and a whole lot more.

Serrated knives come in different sizes, but they also have a wide variety of options when it comes to teeth and blade shape.

Standard serration, double serration for extra hard crusts, inverted serration for particularly soft, and so on.

The most common small use knife is the 3.5-inch pairing knife, but its role can be filled by any small, easily maneuvered knife.

Most small use knives are used for, surprise surprise, small jobs. Cutting the tops off of strawberries, quartering brussle sprouts, and the like. As a result, they'll end up filling in another 5% of jobs in the kitchen.

Small use knives include parers, small utility knives and a whole host of specialty small knives. It can be tempting to go for some larger options, but pick a knife that's too big!

Canny readers will notice that this only adds up to 98% of tasks in the kitchen. The last 2% is filled in by specialty knives.

Slicers are great for carving a turkey or roast, or any large piece of meat. They allow for on long, smooth slice, rather than requiring a sawing motion. Even better if it has a single bevel.

Boning knives are for just that, separating bones and taking the meat off them. Handy for breaking down a whole chicken, but not necessary if that isn't part of the plan.

There are lots of other options and styles for butcher knives, which are great for cutting down large pieces of meat into smaller bits.

Take the time to research what type of knife is right for the job and tasks will become a lot easier.

Happy Cooking!