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The Home Chopping Network

A chef's knife is the most essential tool in the kitchen, so choose wisely—and remember, bigger is not better

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CUT THROUGH THE CONFUSION

While all you really need is one good chef's knife, the modern version—combining Japanese, German, and American design—comes in a dizzying array of options. Here are three rules for chop shopping.

Size It Up: While professional chefs wield 12-inch blades with abandon, home cooks should get a knife with a blade around 8 inches in length. Residential-kitchen counters, nonindustrial cutting boards, and civilian muscles can't handle anything much bigger than that.

Weigh In: Before you buy, consider how you tend to use a knife in the kitchen. If your idea of a good time is spending 20 minutes chopping vegetables into a fine *brunoise* or breaking down a brace of hens, then go with a heavy knife that can take the action. If you slice and dice only when you need to, a light knife can be just right.

Get a Grip: Heft a few knives for comparison. You want a handle that's secure in your fingers, neither too big nor too small. You'll know when you find the right one—it'll feel like a natural extension of your arm.

Stick To It: If you're going to buy a beautiful knife, why not show it off on a magnetic knife bar, like the one above? It's more space-efficient than a block, and it's easier to keep clean. *Grundtal magnetic knife rack by Ikea*, \$9, [ikea.com](#)



Knife-Geek Chic: Gyutou

Unlike traditional Western knives, which are sharpened on both sides of the blade, Japanese-inspired Gyutous are sharpened on just one side for right- or left-handed cooks. Perhaps the most fetishized style among knife geeks (including Del Posto's Mark Ladner, who chopped Mario Batali's team to victory with a Glestain Gyutou on Iron Chef America), the Gyutou's blade is insanely sharp, but fragile. Use it only on softer cutting boards like those made from wood or cork. *Glestain indented blade 8.2-inch Gyutou*, \$158, [korin.com](#)

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