

Manager's Corner

Knife Skills: Types of Knives

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Improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

VISION

Lead the nation in providing research, education, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

MISSION

Provide relevant research-based information and services that advance the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

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Professional Standards

FOOD PRODUCTION – 2100

Employee will be able to effectively utilize food preparation principles, production records, kitchen equipment, and food crediting to prepare foods from standardized recipes, including those for special diets.

2130 – Culinary Skills

Develop culinary skills necessary for school meal preparation.

Introduction

Manager's Corner: Knife Skills: Types of Knives is designed to empower managers to use in training their staff. Each lesson is roughly 15 minutes. This lesson plan contains:

- Learning objective
- Statement explaining the importance of the topic
- List of materials
- Instructions on how to present the information
- Questions to ask staff
- An activity to strengthen or refresh the knowledge of the staff

Lesson Overview

Instructions for lesson:

- Review the lesson objective and background information.
- Review why it is important.
- Ask staff the questions.
- Facilitate the activity outlined.
- Provide time for staff to ask questions.

Objective: Discuss the types of knives most commonly used in school kitchens.

Background information: Knives are designed to do very specific jobs and are uniquely important to the preparation of a variety of items in the school kitchen.

Why it is important: Knowing the purpose of a knife and using it correctly will speed up prep time and help ensure foods are cut into similar shapes and sizes. Consequently, food will cook more evenly throughout the dish.

Questions for Staff

- **What is the knife that can be used when cutting vegetables or meat?**
Answer: A chef's knife can be used when cutting vegetables or meat.
- **What knife can be used for small tasks like peeling fruits or vegetables?**
Answer: A paring knife is used for small tasks like peeling fruits or vegetables.
- **What foods can be cut using a bread/serrated knife?**
Answer: Bread/serrated knives can be used for cutting soft fleshed fruits, vegetables, and bread.

Please note: The answers provided are only examples and are not an inclusive list of possible responses.

Activity: Knife Types

Activity materials included in this document:

No supplemental materials are required for this activity.

Materials provided by the school nutrition operation:

- Copies of handouts
- Chef's knife
- Paring knife
- Bread/serrated knife
- Cutting board
- Seven self-adhesive notes
- Pens/Pencils
- **Optional** Meat cleaver
- **Optional** Utility knife

Activity Instructions:

- Print the handouts.
- Discuss the types of knives used in your kitchen.
- Gather supplies.
- Arrange the types of knives (chef's knife, paring knife, bread/serrated knife, meat cleaver, and utility knife) used in the kitchen on cutting board.
- Place a self-adhesive note with the knife's name on the cutting board under each knife.
- Ask participants to gather around for the lesson.

Knife Types



Chef's knife: The chef's knife is the most common knife used in the kitchen. The chef's knife has a large blade and helps to slice, dice, and chop easily.



Paring knife: The paring knife is best used to peel fruits and vegetables or other small tasks.



Bread/serrated knife: The bread/serrated knife is best used on breads, soft fleshed fruits or vegetables because of the serrated edge. The tooth like edge helps to easily slice without damaging the food item that is being cut. When using this knife, a sawing motion will help to cut the product without damaging the food.

Knife Types, continued



Meat cleaver: The meat cleaver is sharp and great for slicing through ribs, bones, and thick cuts of meat.



Utility knife: The utility knife is great for coring fruits and vegetables and trimming excess fat.

References

The Culinary Institute of America. (2011). *The professional chef (9th Ed.)*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

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