



CARE OF CARBON STEEL BLADES

Your high-carbon steel knife require a bit more care than the average stainless steel knife, but it will repay that care tenfold in terms of cutting performance and edge retention. It is also much easier and faster to re-sharpen.

HERE ARE A FEW DO'S AND DON'TS...

- Never cut on any surface other than a wood, bamboo or plastic cutting board. Marble and stainless steel countertops and ceramic plates will blunt your knife faster than anything you actually cut with it.
 - Never put your knife (including stainless) in a dishwasher. Rattling against other cutlery is very bad for the edge, and the wood handles will not like it much, either.
 - Never put your knife in the sink: it's very dangerous, as the knife can easily be covered by dishes and water, and reaching in can result in a bad cut. On top of that, when the knife edge hits other dishes and the sink, it gets blunted faster than it should.
 - Never use any mechanical or electrical gizmo to sharpen you knife. These devices are often designed for standard stainless reel knives with thicker blades and softer steel; they never produce a true razor edge, and are very likely to damage the much harder edge of a Japanese-style knife.
 - Always wash your knife right after use in hot water. Dry it carefully with a kitchen towel. The knife steel will remain hot for a minute or so, which will help any residual moisture evaporate and thus keep the blade rust-free. A knife should be stored in a rack. I recommend a magnetic rack, as it prevents the accumulation of dirt and moisture, and help avoid dragging the edge over hard wood every time it's taken out. Also, your knife will also be nicely displayed.
 - Acidic foods like tomatoes can hasten discoloration. Rinsing the knife after cutting will help avoid it. If you forget to clean your knife and it develops red flash rust or dark stains, don't worry! It's very easily taken care of.
- Simply dip a wet wine cork in a bit of Bon Ami counter power, and rub the stains away. They will come right off, and the blade won't be scratched. This powder cleanser has been around forever, and it's non-toxic, non-scratching and non-corrosive.
- With time, your knife will develop a grayish patina. There is no need to try and polish it out, as it serves as a protective, rust-preventing layer.
 - Always keep your knife sharp. A sharp knife is safer than a blunt one, as it will not glance off while cutting. I recommend using a Japanese artificial water stone. They are reasonably priced, very fast-cutting, last for decades, create very little mess, and will keep your knives razor-sharp with little effort. I recommend a double-sided stone, with a rougher 1000-grit side and a finer 4000-grit side for the final honing. This type of stone removes very little steel but keeps your knife in great shape.
 - I don't recommend using a sharpening rod, be it steel or ceramic. A rod is very tricky to hold at a steady angle against the edge, so the edge became rounded and much less efficient with repeated sharpening. A rod also causes uneven wear on the blade, which might be costly to fix later on. Moreover, a rod will usually not create a long-lasting razor edge — rather, it creates a sharp but jagged saw-like edge, which cuts well but gets blunt very quickly, necessitating frequent sharpening, and thus much more rapid wearing away of the blade steel. With proper sharpening techniques, a good carbon steel knife will last many, many years. I still use my grandmother's carbon steel knives, purchased decades ago.

If you have any questions about care and maintenance of your knife, please feel free to contact me at arnon@bridgetownforge.com



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