THE TOKYO KITCHEN · FREE PRINTABLE

The One-Knife Kitchen

Choose one Japanese knife, cut on a board that protects it, and keep it in shape with a three-minute routine.

1 · Pick the shape (santoku or gyuto)

	Santoku (三徳)	Gyuto (牛刀)
Name	"Three virtues": meat, fish and vegetables	"Beef knife": Japan's take on the Western chef's knife
Typical length	165–180 mm	210–240 mm
Motion	Up-down chop, push cut	Push cut plus a gentle rock
Fits	Short boards, narrow counters	Longer boards, more counter depth

Both cut meat and vegetables. Decide by space: measure your board and the counter in front of it. If the blade plus handle is longer than the board is deep, go shorter.

2 · Put it on the right board

- Good: wood, rubber/elastomer, or plain polyethylene. Each is softer than the edge.
- Avoid: glass, stone, ceramic and metal boards. They dull an edge quickly.
- Wash every board with hot water and detergent after raw meat or fish, and let it dry fully.

3 · The three-minute care routine

1. Hand-wash right after use with a soft sponge. No dishwasher, no soaking in the sink.
2. Dry the blade and handle straight away, especially carbon steel.
3. Store it so the edge touches nothing: a blade guard, a magnetic strip or a slotted block.
4. When it starts to slip on a tomato skin, sharpen it on a whetstone, or have it sharpened.

4 · Three nevers

- Never twist the blade in hard food (squash, bones). Japanese edges are thin and hard.
- Never cut frozen food or bones with it.
- Never scrape food off the board with the edge. Turn the knife over and use the spine.

5 · The grip

Pinch the blade just in front of the handle between thumb and the side of your index finger; wrap the other fingers round the handle. Curl the fingertips of your other hand under, knuckles against the flat of the blade.

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