

Care of Your Quality Knives

Carbon steel knives require more care than stainless knives



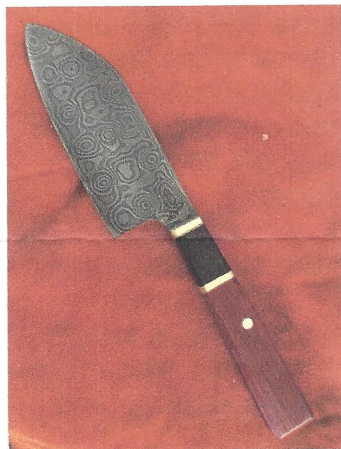
Washing

Quality knives should not be run through the dishwasher. The detergents used are very strong degreasers which can strip wood handles of their natural oils causing them to split or crack. Water sprayed at high pressure can jostle the silverware and dull the edge.

All knives should be washed by hand. The blades can be washed and dried immediately, and then should be stored properly. High carbon (and Damascus) should be lightly coated with olive oil and kept in a dry place. High carbon knives should never be stored in a leather scabbard.

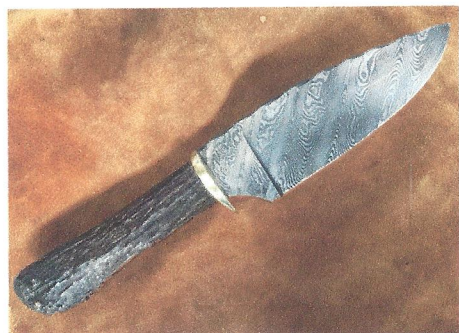
Carbon Steel

Carbon steel has a tendency to react to acidic foods, which cause the steel to turn a dark gray to black if the acids are left on the blade. The best way to avoid this is to rinse and wipe the blade immediately after cutting the highly acid foods, then wipe the blade and go back to cutting. If the acids or water are left on the blade they may cause dark spots or even small rust spots. If this happens, it can be remedied with a green scotch bright pad and *a little* soap. First, place the flat of the blade on a flat surface like a cutting board. Next, apply a small quantity of soap on the scotch brite along with a little water. Now you can scrub the blade with confidence. If you scrub the blade without placing it on a flat surface, you could cut through the sponge and possibly cut yourself. *Damascus knives should not be polished with abrasive products.*



Wood Handles

Wood handles also require more care. Never soak your knives in water, especially if they have wood handles. Soaking your knives in water can make the wood swell and possibly crack. It's best to gently wash the handle with a mild soap, rinse, and dry. If you notice that the wood seems to be drying out, you can apply a small quantity of oil with a paper towel. Let this soak in for 20 minutes and wipe off the excess. This should keep your handles looking good for many, many years.



Antler Handles

Antler can be soaked in water without concern for swelling. They should be washed with mild soap, rinsed, and dried. Bees wax or mineral oil applied to the handle every month or so will ensure that the horn keeps its luster.

Sharpening Notes

- ★ *If you are new to knife sharpening, always practice on one of your other kitchen knives first until you are confident of your work!*



High carbon knives (regular and Damascus) are not stainless. The best knife blades are made of carbon steel, which simply is not stainless. However, it requires only a little care to keep them from having rust. Make sure to dry them after each use and lightly oil. If the knife gets rusty, don't worry. The rust will disappear as soon as you sharpen it. Additionally you can use a rust eraser.

- Keep the knife regularly sharpened. The best way to sharpen high carbon (Damascus) is on a whet or water stone. Dry grinding will cause the high carbon steel to soften, and the performance of the knife will be affected. Knife sharpeners should also be avoided. Most are too hard and coarse, and can cause tiny individual cutting particles to break off. Fine Arkansas stones are always preferable.
- The grain size of the stone should be 800 and 1200. Position the stone so that it is unlikely to slip, and draw the blade over it at an angle of 10 - 15° with lengthways or circular movements under gentle pressure so that the whole length of the blade is treated. Maintain the same angle throughout the process. The more acute the angle, the sharper the cutting edge will be - but also the more thin and delicate!
- Honing is the removal of the fine burr that occurs during sharpening, and the polishing of the blade. Here the choice of stone should be a hone of grain size 4000 to 6000 and given the same preparation as the sharpening stone. The knife is moved over the stone in the same way as described above, but with a slightly more oblique angle (a little more steeply). When honing, change sides often.
- When you have sharpened and honed the knife, oil it.