

Whether you're a novice home chef or a seasoned expert, finding a knife set for your needs is a game changer. The knives in your set should be evenly balanced and comfortable to hold, making them easy to precisely slice, cut, and chop.

We've done the legwork to research dozens of top-quality knife sets, tested quite a few, and interviewed several chefs to arrive at this list of our favorites. Additionally, we surveyed 100 people to learn what qualities users consider most important in a knife set. Find out why the Wüsthof Gourmet 10-Piece Knife Block Set is our best overall knife set and check out some shopping tips from experts in our guide below.

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### **Best Overall**

# Wüsthof Gourmet 10-Piece Knife Block Set »



- Lightweight
- Limited lifetime warranty
- Comes with honing steel and kitchen shears

#### CONS:

- × Pricey
- More slots in the block than knives

**Buy From Amazon** 

**Buy From Crate & Barrel** 

The Wüsthof Gourmet 10-Piece Knife Block Set is our choice for the best overall knife set. It's the ideal middle ground: Not too big that it creates clutter with pieces you'll never use, yet not too small that it's missing any essentials. The knives come in an acacia block with five additional empty slots, which gives you the flexibility to supplement the set with more knives later on, if desired.

The German cutlery set has high-carbon stainless steel blades that are designed to be razor sharp and resist both corrosion and dullness. The triple-riveted, synthetic polypropylene handles can withstand heat and impact and won't fade or turn colors.

The knife set comes with kitchen shears and a honing steel, as well as a variety of essential knives, including a 2 3/4-inch trimming knife, a 2 3/4-inch paring knife, a 3-inch spear-point paring knife, a 4 1/2-inch utility knife, a 5-inch serrated utility knife, a 5-inch spreader, and a 6-inch chef's knife.

More popular than any other deciding factor, quality and durability stood out as top priorities among 95% of respondents to our survey. Wüsthof certainly delivers on this front, given that this set is backed by a lifetime warranty, a testament to its reputable, long-lasting craftsmanship.

## Specs:

**Price** \$320

Number of 15

Pieces:

Types of Paring, trimming, spear-point paring, utility, serrated

**Knives:** utility, spreader, chef's

Blade High-carbon stainless steel

Material:

**EXPAND LIST** 

Buy From Amazon »

**Best Budget** 

## **Cuisinart 15-Piece Elite Knife Set With Block »**



- ✓ Affordable
- German steel
- Stylish design

### CONS:

- Steak knives are not sharp enough for some
- Too many knives for some

**Buy From Amazon** 

**Buy From Cuisinart** 

The Cuisinart 15-Piece Elite Knife Set With Block is proof that you don't have to spend a lot of money to get great knives. The premium set has German steel blades that are ultrasharp and easy to use. The hollow handles are ergonomic and easy to grip and use. These knives also have a stylish, unique design that makes them look more expensive and adds a modern touch to any kitchen countertop. The set comes in a natural wood block or a glossy white wood block (for \$10 more). Our writer has tested this set and found it to be even more attractive in person. The knives were also lightweight and easy to use.

It's a great value for the money and includes everything you would need in a kitchen knife set to slice, chop, and perform other meal prep functions

requiring a knife. There's even a sharpening steel to help keep the knives sharp and a pair of kitchen shears.

The knives in this set include an 8-inch chef's knife, an 8-inch slicing knife, a 7-inch Santoku knife, a 5 1/2-inch serrated utility knife, a 3 1/2-inch paring knife, a 3 1/2-inch bird's beak paring knife, and six 4 1/2-inch steak knives. Additionally, this knife set has a lifetime warranty.

## Specs:

**Price:** \$119.95

Number of 15

Pieces:

Types of Chef's, slicing, Santoku, serrated utility, paring, bird's

**Knives:** beak paring, steak

Blade High-carbon stainless steel

Material:

**EXPAND LIST** 

Buy From Amazon »

## **Best for Beginners**

# Cangshan V2 Series 6-Piece German Steel Forg...



- German steel
- User-friendly bolster design
- ✓ Vertical storage block

#### CONS:

- × No shears
- X No sharpening steel
- X No steak knife

**Buy From Amazon** 

Though Cangshan is best known for its pro-level cutlery, we think the Cangshan V2 Series Six-Piece German Steel Forged Knife Block Set is a good selection for beginners. With just six knives, it's not so many that it's overwhelming for those just starting out. However, it does give you variety so you can become familiar with the basic types of knives.

These knives are stored in a block of acacia wood. Our writer had the opportunity to test this minimalist block set and found that the knives are easy to insert and remove from the block. Often, pulling your knives from the block can be a guessing game because the blade is concealed. However, because this storage block is vertical, you can insert the blades in order of shortest to tallest, making it easier to remove the right knife on the first try

These knives are a pleasure to use, and the full bolster makes it safe and easy to precisely cut various foods. For reference, a bolster is the junction between the blade and the handle. It helps protect your fingers from the blade and gives you better balance and control. Not all knives have this component, and some have half bolsters, which do not extend all the way from the handle to the bottom of the blade like full bolsters do.

The Cangshan set includes an 8-inch chef's knife, an 8-inch bread knife, a 7-inch Santoku knife, a 5-inch serrated utility knife, and a 3 1/2-inch paring knife. The knife set has a lifetime warranty against manufacturer defects.

# Specs:

**Price:** \$149.95

Number of 6

Pieces:

**Types of** Chef's, bread, Santoku, utility, paring

**Knives:** 

Blade German steel

Material:

**EXPAND LIST** ~

Buy From Amazon »

**Best for Pros** 

# Shun Classic 10-Piece Knife Block Set »



- Hand-crafted Japanese blades
- ✓ Super sharp
- Unique hammered finish

#### CONS:

- **X** Expensive
- Shears aren't as high quality as knives according to some

**Buy From Amazon** 

Shun is one of the top names in knives and makes several different series. However, we chose the Shun Classic 10-Piece Knife Block Set because it's the original Shun series and has the most blade shapes. Also, our writer tested this set and found the Classic series to have thinner blades, making the set lighter and more comfortable to use. For example, the full composite tang of the chef's knife is lightweight, balanced, and has a curved blade for rocking back and forth when cutting. (Full tang means the bottom portion of the blade runs from the tip to the base of the handle.)

The hand-sharpened, Japanese, double-bevel blade angles are 16 degrees on each side, and they have 34 layers of stainless Damascus cladding on each side, which create the hammered pattern. This set is super sharp, making it a great choice for professional chefs. The knives also have D-shaped

pakkawood handles with an ebony finish designed to resist corrosion, as well as wear and tear.

The set includes a 3 1/2-inch paring knife, a 4 1/2-inch Honesuki (boning) knife, a 5-inch hollow-edge Nakiri knife, a 6-inch utility knife, a 7-inch Santoku knife, an 8-inch chef's knife, and a 9-inch hollow-edge carving knife.

Additionally, it comes with a 9-inch combination honing steel and multipurpose kitchen shears. Stored in a 13-slot bamboo knife block, there's room for adding more knives to the collection, and the set has a limited lifetime warranty.

Specs:

**Price:** \$999.95

Number of 10

Pieces:

**Types of** Paring, Honesuki, Nakiri, utility, Santoku, chef's, carving

**Knives:** 

Blade Japanese steel

Material:

EXPAND LIST ✓

Buy From Amazon »

**Best Japanese-Style** 

## Shun Premiere 8-Piece Knife Block Set »



- Lightweight and easy-tomaneuver
- Hammered Tsuchime finish to reduce drag
- Durable proprietary steel blades

#### CONS:

- × Pricey
- × No shears

**Buy From Amazon** 

Shun is known for making high-quality Japanese-style knives. We've chosen the Shun Premier Eight-Piece Knife Block Set as the best Japanese-style knife set. The Premier knife set is made with the brand's proprietary VG-MAX steel, which includes additional carbon and chromium to boost strength and durability.

The full tang knives are Damascus-clad and have 34 microlayers of stainless steel on each side as well as hammered Tsuchime blades. (You can actually see the hammer marks on the blades.) This aesthetic is reminiscent of ancient Japanese hand-crafted knives, and the method creates tiny air

pockets on the knife. These hollow cavities help to ensure the knives don't drag so food can quickly be released after cutting.

Our writer has tried this knife set and can attest to the fact that these are lightweight and balanced, which makes the knives super easy to hold and maneuver. The result is a smooth and easy cutting performance.

The set includes a 4-inch paring knife, a 5 1/2-inch Nakiri knife, a 6-inch Gokujo boning/filet knife, a 6 1/2-inch utility/slicing knife, a 7-inch Santoku knife, and an 8-inch chef's knife, along with a 9-inch combination honing steel and an eight-slot beechwood knife block. There is a limited lifetime warranty on this knife set.

## Specs:

**Price:** \$999.95

Number of 8

Pieces:

Types of Paring, Nakiri, Gokujo boning/filet, utility/slicing,

Knives: Santoku, chef's

Blade Japanese steel

Material:

**EXPAND LIST** >

Buy From Amazon »

**Best for Outdoor Cooking** 

Schmidt Bros. Zebra Wood BBQ 6-Piece Knife ...



- Professional-grade
   German stainless
   steel blades
- Ergonomic handles
- Individual sheaths and carrying roll for easy transport

### CONS:

- X No honing steel
- X No shears

**Buy From Amazon** 

**Buy From Crate & Barrel** 

When grilling and preparing food outdoors, you still want to use quality cutlery. Whether you're hosting a cookout in your backyard or participating in a tailgate party at a sporting event or concert, the right knife set makes a difference. The Schmidt Bros. Zebra Wood BBQ Six Piece Knife Set is ideal for barbecues, grilling, and other types of outdoor cooking. The set includes essential knives for cooking outdoors and is both durable and convenient to carry and use.

The knives have German stainless steel blades that have been dualsharpened, and the handles are made of zebra wood. These also have individual sheaths (plastic with microfiber) that serve to protect the knives during storage and transport. The ergonomic bolster design makes the knives easy to handle and maneuver. The knives also come in a waxed canvas carrying roll that makes the set safe and easy to carry and store without taking up much space.

The knife set includes the following: an 11-inch brisket/slicing knife, a 10-inch butcher knife, an 8-inch chef's knife, and a 6-inch boning knife.

Additionally, it comes with a 6-inch carving fork. There's a limited lifetime warranty on this knife set.

Specs:

**Price:** \$149.99

Number of 6

Pieces:

**Types of** Brisket/slicing, butcher, chef's, boning

**Knives:** 

Blade German stainless steel

Material:

**EXPAND LIST** 

Buy From Amazon »

**Best Self-Sharpening** 

Henckels Statement 14-Piece Self-Sharpening ...



- ✓ Built-in sharpening slots
- Curved handle for ergonomic support
- ✓ Dishwasher-safe

### CONS:

- X Bulky for some
- Slightly noisy to selfsharpen

**Buy From Amazon** 

**Buy From Zwilling** 

If you're averse to the idea of having to sharpen your knives with honing steel, the Henckels Statement 14-Piece Self-Sharpening Knife Set With Block eliminates this tedious task. The self-sharpening slots on the wood block make it much easier to keep the knife set sharp.

These knives have other perks, too. They are made of high-quality stainless steel with fine-edge blades and curved, triple-riveted handles to provide an ergonomic experience. The full tang design also makes the knives strong and feel balanced in your hand. This is also one of the few knife sets on this list that is dishwasher-safe. (Although hand-washing is recommended.)

The set includes a 3-inch paring knife, a 5-inch serrated utility knife, a 5-inch fine-edge utility knife, an 8-inch bread knife, a 7-inch Santoku knife, an 8-inch

chef's knife, and six 4 1/2-inch steak knives. Plus, you'll also get kitchen shears, and Henckels provides a limited lifetime warranty.

Specs:

**Price:** \$173.95

Number of 14

Pieces:

Types of Paring, serrated utility, fine-edge utility, bread, Santoku,

**Knives:** chef's, steak

Blade Stainless steel

Material:

**EXPAND LIST** ~

Buy From Amazon »

**Best Compact** 

Mercer Culinary Züm 6-Piece Forged Block Set...



- High-carbon German stainless steel blades
- Elegant design
- Easy to choose the right knife with glass knife block

### **CONS:**

- Shortened bolster may not fit all hands
- Glass knife block not a good fit for all

**Buy From Amazon** 

**Buy From Culinary Depot** 

Terri Williams, author of this piece, has had the Mercer Culinary Züm Six-Piece Knife Set for more than two years, and it's one of her favorites (and also gets a lot of compliments). It doesn't take up much space on the countertop, and it can also be stored either vertically or horizontally. Also, aside from the stainless steel frame, the block is made of glass, and the transparency creates the illusion of more space and tricks the eye into thinking the knife set takes up even less space than it does, according to Williams.

The forged, high-carbon German steel blades are strong and designed to resist corroding and discoloring. Also, the forged full-tang design creates a

sturdy, durable handle that Williams says feels ergonomic and balanced in her hands. The Züm series is also distinguished by a shortened bolster, taper-ground edge, and rounded spine that has been contoured for comfort. The knives have an elegant appearance and perform well.

The set includes an 8-inch chef's knife, a 6-inch utility knife, a 6-inch stiff boning knife, an 8-inch wavy-edge bread knife, and a 3 1/2-inch paring knife. The knife set has a limited lifetime warranty as well.

# Specs:

**Price:** \$193.99

Number of 6

Pieces:

**Types of** Chef's, utility, boning, bread, paring

**Knives:** 

Blade German steel

Material:

**EXPAND LIST** ~

Buy From Amazon »

**Best Ceramic** 

# **Cuisinart 12-Piece Ceramic Coated Color Knife...**



- Ceramic coating prevents food sticking
- Blade guards included for safety
- Color-coded for easy use and organization
- ✓ Affordable

#### CONS:

- Doesn't come with a block
- × Prone to chipping

**Buy From Amazon** 

**Buy From Cuisinart** 

This Cuisinart knife set is a favorite of 360 Review senior editor of Home Goods, Megan Wood, who praises its sharp, stainless steel blades and lightweight feel that prevents hand fatigue when she does lots of chopping. "I have more expensive knives, but I reach for my Cuisinart ceramic knife set again and again," Wood says.

In this set, you'll find an 8-inch chef knife, 8-inch slicing knife, 8-inch bread knife, 7-inch Santoku knife, 6.5-inch utility knife, and 3.5-inch paring knife. Each knife also comes with its own blade guard for storage, keeping hands protected as you root around your kitchen drawer.

Each knife is a different color, which adds some flair to your kitchen and serves a practical purpose – helping you decide which one you'll need to grab for the task at hand. "The color coding makes it easy to remember I slice tomatoes with the red handle," Wood says.

She notes that this set isn't exactly the type that's made to last for decades. They can chip easily, so you may find yourself needing to replace them after a few years. At less than \$40, though, we think they make an appealing option as a starter pack or something to supplement your primary knife set.

Specs:

**Price:** \$39.95

Number of 12

Pieces:

**Types of** Chef's, slicing, bread, Santoku, utility, paring

**Knives:** 

Blade Stainless steel with ceramic coating

Material:

EXPAND LIST >

Buy From Amazon »

## The Bottom Line

A high-quality knife set is evenly balanced and comfortable to hold. It's sharp and slices, dices, and chops easily and precisely. And the importance of sharp knives can't be underestimated. "Sharp knives are imperative when cutting food because they can cut into a surface with greater ease, thus decreasing the risk of slipping and causing injuries," says chef Serge Krikorian of Vibrant Occasions. "Sharp knives also

go through delicate food items using less pressure than dull knives with far less bruising of the product," he adds.

We chose the Wüsthof Gourmet 10-Piece Knife Block Set as the best overall knife set that will fit most users' needs. The high-carbon stainless steel blades are sharp enough to easily cut through food items, and the knives are balanced for comfort. It also includes many of the core pieces you'd want in a knife set.

# **Things To Consider When Buying Knife Sets**

**Budget:** We imagine that budget preferences will guide the decisions of many shoppers, considering 82% of respondents to our survey named price and value important factors to consider. We found knife sets ranging from less than \$100 to more than \$2,000.

With such a broad price range, you're sure to find something that meets your needs. Pete Smit, executive chef at Underdog Inn in Singapore, tells us that what's good for one person isn't always the best for another individual. "Sometimes it's better to spend that little bit extra to get something you know will last," he says, noting that a good knife almost lasts forever. On the other hand, you don't have to spend a fortune on a knife set. As we've shown with our selections, it's possible to get a good knife set without breaking the bank.

**Number and Types of Knives:** How many knives do you really need in your knife set? It may depend on personal preference. "If you're looking for an ultimate experience, you should consider investing in a 3 or 4 piece kitchen knife set; including The Gyuto (The Chef's Knife), The Petty (Paring/Utility Knife), The Nakiri (Veggie/Fruit Knife), and a Serrated Knife," says Kyle Barham, chef de cuisine at The Carillon in Austin, Texas.

Dan Gonzalez, executive chef at Thief in New York's Lower East Side, has strong feelings about not buying a huge, unnecessary knife set: "Even in professional kitchens, you only need a chef knife, a bread knife, and a petty/paring knife."

Gonzales admits that a set of matching steak knives can look great, so, while you might want to consider that as well, "don't be fooled by some fancy 'cheese knife' or

'tomato slicer,' — if you do want to splurge on a big set, that's fine, but don't waste your money on silly specialty knives." Survey-takers may feel similarly, given that only 35% highlighted the included variety of knives as a feature they believe is important.

**Blade Material:** More than half (58%) of the respondents to our survey indicated that they consider blade material an important aspect that might weigh on their purchase decision. According to Gonzalez, the two big houses of kitchen knives are Germanor Western-style and Japanese-style knives. "Typically, western knives use a softer stainless steel, which sharpens easily and doesn't chip, but doesn't keep an edge as long," he explains, while "Japanese knives are made with a harder steel, which can be much sharper and keep an edge longer, but are prone to chipping and difficult to sharpen once dull." He says high-carbon steel will rust if not properly cared for.

However, Gonzalez advises consumers to look at the steel type and consider what's most important to them. "If you really take care of your knives, I would go for Japanese style, but if you're worried about your knife getting knocked around and chopping bones, you're safer getting a German Wüsthof." (Note: The safety component, probability of chipping, and realization that the average consumer might not sharpen knives as often as necessary factored into our decision to select the German Wüsthof as the best overall knife set over one of the Japanese sets on our list.)

So, which does Gonzalez prefer? "I like Japanese knives because they're more lightweight, thinner, and sharper with a lower profile - it is like you're cutting any helpless vegetable with an ancient weapon, which is the type of energy I like to bring to my cooking," he says.

Barham at The Carillon in Austin, Texas, tells us his preference is a stainless-steelclad carbon knife. "I prefer a lighter Japanese knife over a heavier German steel," he says, as "the blade will sharpen easier, however the edge won't last as long compared to a heavier solid stainless steel."

Krikorian of Vibrant Occasions tells us that he personally owns Henckels, Wüsthof, and Shun knives and uses all of them on a regular basis. "Shun Premier Knives have been my favorite and my workhorse knives, so to speak, for six years," he says. "They are lighter than their German counterparts...yet they are well balanced."

**Storage Style:** There are several types of storage options for knife sets. Wood blocks are perhaps the most popular choice, followed by glass blocks. Storage blocks come in square, oblong, and round shapes and in various colors. You can choose blocks from the company that makes your knife set or purchase universal knife blocks to fit your preference and style. Other types of storage options include wall-mounted magnetic knife strips, which can help save countertop space, and magnetic knife stands in which the knives are uncovered.

If you prefer to keep your knife set out of view, you can use in-drawer knife organizers as long as you have enough storage space in your kitchen drawer. Also, individual sheaths can slip over the knife blades to provide protection and are available in a variety of materials ranging from plastic with a felt lining to leather. Sheaths allow you to store the knives in drawers. When transporting knives, you can use chef knife bags or rolls, which can be made of canvas or leather.

**Care and Maintenance:** Regardless of which knife set you select, some of the care and maintenance will be universal. For example, most quality knife sets should not be placed in the dishwasher, so you'll need to hand-wash and then thoroughly dry the knives to avoid rust.

Knives also need to be sharpened to avoid getting dull. A self-sharpening knife set with a built-in sharpener makes it a lot easier to keep your knives sharp. Many of the knife sets on our list include a honing steel. However, honing is used to help straighten the blade to its original position, which is not the same as sharpening the blade. If you don't want to get a knife set with a self-sharpening feature, you can purchase a separate knife sharpener.

**Warranty:** Warranties for knife sets can range from a few years to a limited lifetime warranty. Usually, the warranty states that the knife set is free of defects in material and workmanship. Warranties don't cover normal wear and tear and won't cover abusing or misusing a knife either. So, for example, if you try to use one of your knives to pry open a jammed door, that's not the intended use, so the warranty won't cover it. Also, always read the warranty carefully since it may only apply to a knife set that was purchased from the manufacturer or an authorized seller.

# The Best Overall vs. The Best Budget Knife Set

Our recommendation for the best overall knife set is the Wüsthof Gourmet 10-Piece Knife Block Set. It costs roughly \$300 for a set that includes a chef's knife, paring knife, spear-point paring knife, trimming knife, utility knife, serrated utility knife, spreader, kitchen shears, and a honing steel. The knives also store in an acacia wood block with five additional slots, giving you the flexibility to add more to your set if desired.

Wüsthof is a heritage knife brand, and the knives in this set are made from high-carbon, stainless steel that's designed to be not only super-sharp, but also resistant to wearing out over time. This knife set is built to last, as evidenced by the lifetime warranty behind it.

At a fraction of the Wüsthof price – about \$120 – our recommendation for the best budget set is Cuisinart's 15-Piece Elite Knife Set With Block. These knives are also crafted from German steel that stands out for its sharpness and excels at smooth slicing and chopping. Additionally, the hollow handles of these knives give them a lightweight feel, which some may find easier to hold.

Cuisinart's set includes a chef's knife, slicing knife, Santoku knife, serrated utility knife, paring knife, bird's beak paring knife, kitchen shears, sharpening steel, and block to hold everything. It also comes with six steak knives – which may be a draw for some, though it also leaves you less room to customize your set. Plus, users who don't eat meat may find them unnecessary or excessive.

## **Our Survey Results**

While we relied heavily on input from culinary professionals to build this guide, we also wanted everyday users to weigh in. We surveyed 100 people about the qualities they consider most important in a knife set and learned that the overwhelming majority (95%) prioritize quality and durability. Other popular features among survey-takers were price and value (82%), functionality and performance (62%), blade material (58%), and ease of sharpening/maintenance (47%).

## **How We Chose the Best Knife Sets**

At U.S. News 360 Reviews, we consulted with numerous professional chefs for recommendations about what to look for in a knife set. We gathered insights from chefs Serge Krikorian of Vibrant Occasions; Pete Smit of Underdog Inn; Kyle Barham of The Carillon; and Dan Gonzales of Thief.

With their input in mind, we then narrowed our selection down with more thorough research considering quality, comfort, price, material, types and number of knives, and testing. Our list includes a variety of knife sets at various prices and for users ranging from beginners to pros.

### WHY SHOULD YOU TRUST US?

Our contributors and editors have years of experience researching, testing, and reviewing products. Terri Williams, the author of this piece, has years of experience writing product reviews on home goods and tech products. Terri has bylines at Forbes, Architectural Digest, CNN, NBC News, Real Simple, Tom's Guide, USA Today, Better Homes & Gardens, Tech Radar, Daily Beast, and Popular Science. She's also on Popular Science's Best of What's New team.

This piece was reviewed by Marlo Jappen Porto, an editor at U.S. News 360 Reviews since 2022, specializing in the home and health categories; and Victoria Sheridan, a home goods editor for 360 Reviews who has worked in the product review space since 2019.

## **FAQ**

How long do knife sets last?

+

How should you take care of a knife set?

+

## Is it better to buy a knife set or to buy knives separately?



### **About Our Team**



Terri Williams

Contributor





Terri Williams is a freelance journalist with extensive experience writing product reviews. She has tested hundreds of products, including vacuum cleaners, TVs, audio equipment, computer monitors, air purifiers, bedding, and more. Williams has bylines in Forbes, Architectural Digest, Popular Science, CNN Underscored, NBC News, and USA Today Reviewed.

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Marlo Jappen Porto is an editor for U.S. News 360 Reviews, focusing on home goods. Prior to joining the team, she was a researcher at NBCUniversal, where she gathered compelling and relevant archival content for live broadcasts. In addition, she has spent years working as an editor and community journalist.

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