

Introduction to Knife Skills



Ages 10 - 14

Lesson Overview:

Various terms used in recipes describe how a food should be prepared before cooking, such as dice, slice, and mince. Great knife skills are an essential component of becoming a better cook. In this lesson learners will review knife safety and handling, while completing a variety of cuts using play dough as a medium.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- apply basic knife safety protocols
- practice six different cuts using a butter knife or paring knife and play dough; slice, dice, mince, julienne, chiffonade, and batonnet

Materials:

- 1 butter knife or paring knife per student
- 1 small container of play dough per student
- 1 paper plate per student
- 1 ruler per student (*optional*)
- 'Knife Skill Lab' template (Appendix 1 - one sheet per student)

LESSON

Learning Plan:

Activate

- Has anyone used a knife for cutting in the kitchen before? What were you cutting?
- How do you hold a knife?
- Why is it important to make sure you cut everything approximately the same size? What might happen if you had a variety of sizes when cooking?
- **Think, pair, share:**
 - Each student finds a partner to brainstorm ideas on how to safely handle a knife.
 - Come back together and create a list of ways in which we can be safe using a knife.
 - The list may include:

- Never wave a knife in the air
- Cut on a flat surface
- Don't rush when using a knife
- Don't leave knives lying around
- Use a cutting board
- Use the "bear claw" method
- Never put a knife in a sink full of water
- Never attempt to catch a falling knife
- Do not pass a knife; lay it down on the counter and allow the other person to pick it up
- When walking through the kitchen, hold the knife straight down at your side with the sharp edge facing behind you
- Don't lick a knife or put it in your mouth!

Acquire

1. Watch the video "6 Basic Knife Skills You Should Master In Your 20s | CNBC Make It + Tasty": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3cZCfTy0bA>
2. Have students practice the "bear claw" and the rocking motion of the knife

Apply

1. Guide students through the "Knife Skills Lab" templates (Appendix 1)
 - Start by having students divide their play dough into 6 to ensure there is enough play dough for each cut. You may wish to have students measure, mark, and then cut their play dough using a ruler. When done, have students place their cuts over the shapes on the "Knife Skills Lab" – the shape dimensions specified in the instructions are the same measurements on the worksheet.
2. Specific instructions for each cut are listed below:
 - Slice:
 - i. Roll the play dough out into a long rope, around 2cm thick.
 - ii. Slice into evenly sized discs and place them on the "Knife Skills Lab" sheet.
 - Chiffonade:
 - i. Roll the play dough into a ball, and then flatten, like a tortilla.
 - ii. Roll up the flattened play dough into a spiral tube.
 - iii. Slice 0.5 cm along the tube to create spirals.
 - Batonnet:

- i. Roll the play dough into a ball and slice, 1 cm apart (to create discs, just like before).
 - ii. Lay the slices flat, and make cuts along the length of the slice, 1 cm apart.
- Julienne (just like the batonnet, except thinner cuts):
 - i. Roll the play dough into a ball and slice, 0.5 cm apart.
 - ii. Lay the slices flat, and make cuts along the length of the slice, 0.5 cm apart.
- Dice (just like the julienne, except cut down into cubes):
 - i. Roll the play dough into a ball and slice, 1 cm apart.
 - ii. Lay the slices flat, and make cuts along the length of the slice, 1 cm apart.
 - iii. Cut these julienne sticks into 1 cm cubes.
- Mince (just like the dice, except smaller):
 - i. Roll the play dough into a ball and slice, 0.25 cm apart.
 - ii. Lay the slices flat, and make cuts along the length of the slice, 0.25 cm apart.
 - iii. Cut these julienne sticks into 0.25 cm cubes.

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – 'Kitchen Skill Lab' template