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Sample Technical Instructions

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/michael_stanley/7/

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CUTTING ONIONS FOR COOKING

Introduction

You need to use the proper techniques to keep yourself safe and to prepare onions in different ways. You do not need much experience in the kitchen to follow these instructions.

These instructions will show you how to handle a kitchen knife, and how to safely and quickly mince onions for any recipe. You will use a kitchen knife and cutting board to peel an onion and make successively smaller cuts to produce what is called 'minced onion'.

Using sharp knives to prepare food can be dangerous, but if you are careful and follow these instructions closely, you will learn the basic technique, and quickly be able to repeat the steps in the future for all your meals that include onions.

To mince onions, you will need the following items:

- An Onion (any type or size will work)
- A sharp knife (any knife that is wider and longer than the onion will work)
- A cutting surface (any surface that will not be damaged by the knife will work)

The major steps for cutting an onion are (1) cutting the onion in half, (2) peeling the onion, (3) making slices into the onion to make mincing easier, and (4) mincing the onion.

REQUIRED STEPS

1. Find an onion to use for cooking

Select any type (Spanish, Yellow, White, Vidalia, Red, etc.) and any size onion

NOTE: *Some people will tear-up or cry when cutting onions due to the sulfurous mist released when preparing onions. Placing your onions in a freezer for a few minutes before cutting will decrease the amount of misting that causes some people discomfort.*

- a. Place the onion in a freezer for 10-20 minutes. This will reduce the misting that causes people to 'tear-up' when cutting onions; breathing through your mouth may also help.

CAUTION: Do not allow the onion to freeze, this will make the onion difficult to cut properly and it is dangerous to use sharp kitchen tools to cut hard objects.

NOTE: *Do not use onions that appear rotten or slimy, and make sure your knife and cutting surface are clean before using them.*

2. Grip the knife comfortably with your dominant hand.

Place your index finger on one side of the blade near the top, with your thumb on the opposite side, and hold the handle of the knife with the rest of your hand as shown in figure 1.

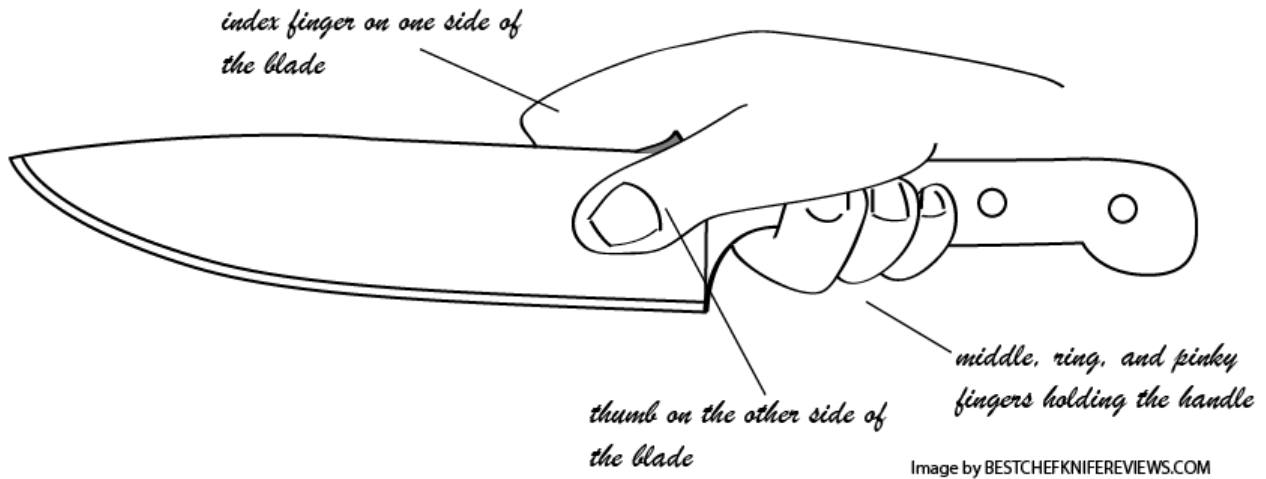


Figure 1 How to hold a kitchen knife

3. Cut off the ends of the onion

- a. Place the onion on the cutting surface, holding the onion firmly in place with your non-dominant hand.
- b. Cut off the root end of the onion, then rotate the onion to cut off the top end on the opposite side as shown in figure 2.



Figure 2 How to hold an onion

4. Cut the onion in half through the middle

- a. Stand the onion on its side so that it sits on one of the flat ends you just made.
- b. Firmly press the knife down through the middle of the top of the onion in one motion as shown in figure 3.



Figure 3 How to cut an onion in half

5. Peel off the outer layer of skin from the onion

- a. The outermost layer of the onion is darker in color, and not suitable for cooking.
- b. Using your fingers, peel away the outer layer of skin as shown in figure 4 and discard.



Figure 4 How to peel an onion

6. Make slices into the top of each half of the onion.

a. Turn each half of the onion on its side to rest on the large flat surface.

CAUTION: Keep your fingers out of the way of the knife.

b. Position the knife perpendicular to the flat part of the onion. (see figure 5)

c. Hold the onion firmly to the cutting surface and make several slices from the top of the onion to the cutting surface.

NOTE: Do not slice through the entire onion, leave a small portion uncut, at the back of the onion near your fingers, (see figure 5) this holds the onion together for later steps.



Figure 5 How to make top slices

7. Make slices in the side of each half of the onion.

a. Hold the blade of the knife parallel to the cutting surface with the sharp side of the blade facing the hand that is holding the onion. (see figure 6)

b. Lightly press down on the top of the onion.

CAUTION: Do not make slices too close to your fingers, stop your slices at least $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the top of the onion to prevent injury.

c. Very carefully, make several slices into the onion, again without cutting entirely through. This time, make slices from the side on the onion inward towards the back.



Figure 6 How to make side slices

8. Slice the onion from the top to mince the onion.

a. Slice the onion from the top down, this time completely through the onion.

NOTE: Position your onion and knife blade so that your slices will be perpendicular to the top slices you made in step 6.

b. Stop making slices when you get to the end of the onion that was not sliced all the way through. (see figure 7)



Figure 7 Mincing the Onion

c. carefully cut the end pieces into smaller minced pieces being careful not to get your fingers near the blade. Keep your non-dominant hand on top of the blade to stabilize the knife using the overhand cutting technique. (see figure 8)



Figure 7 Overhand Cutting Technique

CONCLUSION

Many recipes use onions as an ingredient. Following these instructions will allow you to learn to use onions for cooking quickly and safely. If you can remember the 3 major steps of halving the onion, peeling the onion, and making slices to mince the onion, you will be able to prepare onions for any meal easily. Cutting an onion using these steps in this order will produce very fine pieces commonly called 'minced onion' without the need for much use of 'overhand cutting', and will produce pieces of the same size. Practice these steps often to become more proficient at the procedure and you will become better at cutting onions for future meals.