

KNIFE DEPOT'S

**ALL-INCLUSIVE,
100% ACCURATE,
SHAMELESSLY MACHO...**



GUIDE TO BUYING A POCKET KNIFE

CHAPTER 1: WHY PICKING OUT A POCKET KNIFE IS SO DAMN HARD

Every man should carry a pocket knife. It's a primal right of manhood, up there with NFL football, beer and buffalo wings. Yet, picking out a pocket knife is harder than all three of these fundamental man-skills.

Why is picking out a [pocket knife](#) so tough?

Because the pocket-knife market is filled with thousands of different models in a dizzying array of shapes, sizes, blades and brands.

There are clip-point blades, tanto blades and drop-point blades, stainless-steel blades and carbon-steel blades, serrated blades and non-serrated blades, not to mention Swiss Army knives with enough tools and attachments to aid your escape from a maximum security prison.

What's a knife lover to do?

Well, aside from buying every knife you see (not a bad idea if you have the dough), the best approach to finding the right pocket knife is to know A TON about them. Since you don't have time to do that research, we did it for you.

CHAPTER 2: WHAT'S YOUR PLEASURE?

Do you spend most of your time playing bridge and drinking virgin daiquiris? That's great; don't buy a pocket knife, buy a lap dog.

But, if you're a hunter, fisherman, hiker, carpenter or jack of all trades, you'll need a pocket knife. The only question is which one. Take a second to look at the following activities and check off the ones you do on a consistent basis. If it's five or more, you're in need of a pocket knife.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fishing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cutting Rope	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eating Tuna Fish	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Giving Tracheotomies
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hunting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Slicing Fruit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Filing Your Nails	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carving Your Initials
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Camping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fighting Bears	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Removing Ticks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sculpting
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Opening Boxes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drinking Beer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gutting Animals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fire-Starting

CHAPTER 3: HOW MANY BLADES?

When it comes to pocket knives, less is more, except for sometimes when more is more and other times when it totally doesn't matter. Now that you're thoroughly confused, let's break down the differences between single-blade and multi-blade options.

SINGLE-BLADE POCKET KNIVES

[Single-blade pocket knives](#) come in many shapes and sizes, but their best quality is their simplicity and their size. Unlike multi-blade pocket knives, single blades usually come with a spring-loaded opening mechanism, allowing them to pop open at a second's notice.

Even those with conventional opening mechanisms are free from the hassle of prying open numerous knives and attachments.

Of course, the disadvantage of a single blade is it lacks variety. These knives are perfect for all-purpose tasks, but if you're in need of, for example, a serrated blade and a non-serrated blade, you're out of luck.



MULTI-BLADE POCKET KNIVES

Variety. It's what gives life spice and what enables you to have one pocket knife that can do the job of two or three.

Multi-blade pocket knives generally have either two, three or four blades. [Two-blade models](#) tend to feature a combination of either a sprey, sheepfoot, pen or drop point blade.

However, [three](#) or [four-blade](#) models not only include a variety of knife blades, but also come with additional features, like a saw, bottle opener, pick, screwdriver and more.



CHAPTER 4: SWISS ARMY KNIVES AND MULTI-TOOLS



Blades, saws, toothpicks, tweezers, can openers, nail files, scissors, corkscrews and magnifying glasses are all common features of Swiss Army knives and other multi-tools, which are the most multi-dimensional pocket knives on the market.

The [Swiss Army knife](#), which was invented by Swiss manufacturer Karl Elsener in the late 19th century, gained much of its popularity after the war, when returning soldiers purchased the knife in high numbers.

Today, these knives come in a huge variety of shapes and sizes, ranging from three attachments on basic models to the 87-tool “Giant,” which was created in 2006.

Other multi-tools—such as Leathermans—pack the same sort of punch, though they’re usually a bit heftier to carry.



CHAPTER 5: MODELS OF POCKET KNIVES

Through the years, different pocket knives have been graced with all sorts of names. If you're in the market for a new pocket knife, it's essential you're up on the lingo. Here's a breakdown of some of the top models out there.

BARLOW KNIFE

The [Barlow knife](#) was especially popular with farmers in the early 20th century; it was also the favorite blade of author Mark Twain. A Barlow knife typically has two blades and a long bolster. The handle is long and slender and can be made with a variety of materials; expensive Barlow knives often have handles made of elaborately carved ivory.



CONGRESS KNIFE

The [congress knife](#) has a convex front with either a straight or concave back and usually four blades. The blade combinations vary from knife to knife, but one common combination in congress knives is a spear point, coping, sheepfoot and pen blade.



CANOE KNIFE

[Canoe knives](#) get their names, predictably, from the fact that they resemble canoes that were used by Native Americans. A canoe knife is equipped with either two spear-point blades or one spear-point blade and one pen blade.



ELEPHANT'S FOOT KNIFE

An [elephant's foot knife](#) is one of the biggest pocket knives on the market, often measuring between four and five inches. The elephant's foot knife usually contains two exceptionally wide blades, often a spear and pen blade.



STOCKMAN KNIFE

The [stockman knife](#) is a stellar blade for carrying for everyday use, as it is lightweight and has three different blades, typically clip, spey and sheepfoot blades. The body of a stockman's knife is usually straight, although occasionally it may come in either a serpentine or sowbelly shape.



CHAPTER 5: POCKET-KNIFE BLADE SHAPES

All blades are not created equal, especially when it comes to pocket knives. Whether you're purchasing a single-blade pocket knife or a multi-blade model, it's important that you know the [blade types](#) in your knife. Here's a quick and easy cheat sheet.

CLIP POINT



The [clip point](#) is one of the most popular blades in circulation today. The back (unsharpened) edge of a clip point has a concave shape, designed to make the tip sharper. This creates a "cut out" area that can be straight or curved.

Clip-point blades are great for everyday needs, but can also be used for hunting. Their sharp, narrow tip is especially good for cutting narrow spaces.

DROP POINT



[Drop-point blades](#) are usually found on hunting or survival knives, but they can also be found on some larger models of Swiss Army knives.

Though not quite as sharp as the clip point, the drop point is another great all-purpose blade. The dull section of the drop-point blade runs straight from the handle, eventually sloping down gently to meet the sharpened edge and forming the point.

Drop points aren't as sharp as clip-point knives, but they're ideal for skinning, because they have a large belly and a controllable point that makes it easier to avoid nicking internal organs.

SPEAR POINT



On a [spear-point blade](#), both edges rise and fall equally to create a point that lines up perfectly with the center of the blade. Spear-point blades have an extremely sharp point that is good for piercing, though only if both edges are sharpened.

Spear-point blades can be single or double-edged. They do have a small belly, but aren't nearly as well suited for slicing as drop-point or clip-point blades.

SHEEPSFOOT BLADE



If you're clumsy with a knife, do yourself a favor and get a [sheepsfoot blade](#). Though ideal for cutting and slicing because of its flat cutting edge, a sheepsfoot blade has a dull point that makes it difficult—though not impossible—to injure yourself.

Sheepsfoot knives are popular among emergency responders, as they allow them to slice away at seatbelts and other restraints without stabbing the victim by accident.

PEN BLADE

This tiny blade is often found on Swiss Army knives and is best suited for small tasks. The dull and sharp sides of the blade slope at the same degree, making it appear similar to a spear point.

These knives were previously used for sharpening a quill in order to make writing instruments. Though not exceptionally sharp, a pen blade is a great tool to have in your pocket.



CHAPTER 6: POCKET-KNIFE LOCKS

What's a [pocket-knife lock](#)? It's the mechanism that assists your pocket knife during opening and prevents it from snapping down onto your arm accidentally. Pocket knives rely on four primary lock types. Without further ado, here they are:

LINER LOCK

The liner lock is the peanut butter and jelly of the pocket-knife world. There's nothing spectacular about it, but it gets the job done.

The liner lock works with one section of the liner angled toward the inside of knife. From here, the liner is only able to go back to its old position with manual force, thereby locking it into place.

Meanwhile, the tail of the liner lock is cut to engage the bottom of the blade under the pivot. If the user wants to disengage the lock, he has to manually move the liner to the side away from the blade bottom.



FRAME LOCK

A frame lock works by utilizing the handle to assist in folding the knife. The frame lock is positioned with the liner inward and the tip engaging the bottom of the blade. It's released by applying pressure to the frame; when opened, the pressure on the lock forces it to snap open across the blade.



BACK LOCK OR LOCK BACK

The back lock is one of the most basic and earliest used pocket-knife locks. It works when a locking arm, which sits along the handle spine, is molded with a hook that fits into a notch on the back of the blade behind the pivot.

The hook is dragged by tension from the back spring into the notch, locking the knife with a snap.



MID LOCKS

In exhibitions by the knife company Cold Steel, mid locks have refused to buckle under hundreds of pounds of pressure, impressing many knife owners. Mid locks resemble back locks, except for the fact that the release mechanism is in the middle of the handle spine as opposed to near the butt end of the knife.



RING LOCKS, TWIST LOCKS

Ring locks are cheap, long lasting and easy to use. These locks work when the owner turns a ring wrapped around the pivot of the knife to a position where a break in the ring allows the blade to open. After the blade is open, the ring must be turned again, so that the space through which the blade was opened is blocked.



LEVER LOCK

A lever lock is locked by a pin near the pivot bolster, which is inserted into a hole drilled in the base of the blade. When the pin is through the hole, the blade is locked either open or closed. Lever locks are often used on automatic knives, such as switchblades.



CHAPTER 8: BLADE MATERIALS

Pocket knives are primarily made of two blade materials: stainless steel and carbon steel. Knives with 12.5% chromium or more are generally considered stainless steel, while those with lower chromium levels are considered carbon steel.

The advantages and disadvantages of each steel could be debated for hours, but here are a few of their distinctive traits.

ADVANTAGES OF CARBON STEEL

- well suited for hunting
- harder than stainless steel
- stays sharper longer
- more durable in abusive conditions

ADVANTAGES OF STAINLES STEEL

- ideal for survival situations
- easier to sharpen
- more resistant to rust
- better in wet conditions (especially saltwater)

ADDITIONAL BLADE MATERIALS

High Carbon Stainless Steel - A fusion of stainless steel and carbon steel, this combination metal has the best attributes of both steels, making it a durable and stain-resistant metal.

Damascus - Named after the city of Damascus in Syria, damascus steel is known for its exotic beauty. Damascus steel likely originated in India or Sri Lanka. The Japanese used damascus steel for their Samurai swords and the Germans used it during World War II.

Damascus steel was introduced into the knife-making community in the early 70s and since then has steadily grown in popularity. Damascus steel's cutting strength is on par with stainless steel, but its fascinating beauty has made it a favorite of knife collectors.

CHAPTER 8: BLADE HANDLES

A high-quality blade handle is important to ensure that your grip stays tight on your pocket knife. Here are a few popular blade handles.

ALUMINUM - Lightweight and often coated with a protective film, aluminum is frequently used in newer knives. It provides excellent grip and is especially suitable for knives that will be used in harsh weather conditions.

CELLULOID - This synthetic plastic is made from cellulose nitrate and is known for its ability to morph into any color of rainbow. Celluloid can also be fabricated to resemble most natural materials, such as: ivory, horn, stag, pearl, amber, agate, tortoise shell and wood.

BONE - Another popular type of pocket knife handle, bone comes in a number of varieties, such as: giraffe bone, jugged bone (often called stag), scored bone and smooth white bone.

WOOD - Wood handles come in numerous forms. Stabilized woods are soft woods, like buckeye and burl, which must go through a stabilization process to make them hard enough to function as knife handles. Other woods that are commonly used for knife handles are: blackwood, box, elder, bubinga, curly maple, koa, rosewood, snakewood and thuyas.

G10 - An extremely durable material, G10 is made of fiberglass, which is soaked in resin and compressed before being baked. G10 is strong, but also lightweight. It is water-resistant and handles well in inclement weather. For this reason, G10 is often used for tactical and survival knives. It is most commonly black, but can have other shades as well.

MICARTA - Micarta is also known for its toughness, though it is not quite as hard as G10. A composite constructed from cloth or paper and phenolic resin, Micarta is especially popular in the plastic industry. Canvas micarta is frequently used in knife handles. It comes in either yellow or tan, though after it ages it will turn to a red/brown.

CHAPTER 9: You're Now Officially Ready to Buy a Pocket Knife

If you've made it this far, you've learned virtually everything—if not more—that you need to know to purchase a top-quality pocket knife.

So, what are you waiting for?

Get out there and find your perfect pocket knife, whether it's a 147-attachment multi-tool or a drop-point burly enough to skin a bear.

Not sure where to look?

Start by browsing our massive [pocket knife selection](#).