

There are a number of things to consider when purchasing a machete.

-Blade Length

-Blade Composition

-Tang

-Blade Style

-Handle Material

-Handle Style

Machete Length: Most machetes range from 10 inches to 28 inches, with 18 inches being average. Smaller blades have less reach, but are more portable. Long blades are harder to transport, but are able to clear larger areas in less time.

Machete Blade Composition: Machetes are differentiated primarily by the type of material with which the blade is made. The most common blade materials are **stainless steel** and **carbon steel**. **High carbon stainless steel** combines the advantages of both stainless and carbon steel.

<p>Carbon Steel Blades</p>	<p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Harder than Stainless Steel -Cheaper than Stainless Steel -Edge retains sharpness longer <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Blade vulnerable to rust when in contact with moisture and must be oiled regularly. -Edge difficult to re-sharpen. 	<p>Uses:</p> <p>Ideal for use as functional agricultural and/or survival tools.</p>
<p>Stainless Steel Blades</p>	<p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Stain resistant and requires less maintenance than Carbon Steel. -Edge easy to re-sharpen <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Softer than Carbon Steel. 	<p>Uses:</p> <p>Ideal for display, ceremonial, or decorative weaponry.</p>

	-Edge dulls more quickly. -More expensive than Carbon Steel.	
High Carbon Stainless Steel Blades	Advantages: -Combines rust resistance of Stainless Steel with the durability of Carbon Steel.	Uses:
	-Disadvantages: -More expensive.	Ideal for use as both a functional tool and a decorative piece.
	-Low tolerance to heat before becoming brittle.	

Carbon steel, an alloy of iron and carbon, is the traditional material used for making machete blades. Carbon is added to iron to give the iron strength and increase the hardness of the alloy, but increasing the carbon content also makes the steel more brittle. Carbon steel has been around for over 4,000 yrs.

Carbon steel, generally speaking, has the advantage of being harder than stainless steel, and will stay sharp for a longer time period. Once re-sharpening is necessary, however, carbon steel is more difficult to re-sharpen due to its strength.

The main drawback to carbon steel is that it rusts readily, and maintenance is really about keeping you're blade away from moisture.

Stainless steel, which is really carbon steel with the addition of nickel and chromium, is generally more expensive than carbon steel. The nickel and chromium additives oxidize to create a protective coating over the carbon steel, inhibiting rust.

The rust resistant properties of stainless steel reduce the amount of maintenance required to keep the blade in good shape.

Stainless steel tends to be softer than carbon steel, and loses its sharpness more rapidly. That said, it can be re-sharpened more easily than high carbon steel.

Stainless is perfect for display and decorative machetes, but is less useful for functional tools needed for daily use.

In recent years, **high carbon stainless steel** has been developed which combines the best attributes of carbon and stainless steels. High carbon stainless steel maintains its edge like carbon steel, with the rust resistant properties of stainless steel.

Damascus Steel blades are combinations of several different laminates of steel ground to expose the grain or texture of the different layers.

Tang: The tang is the part of the machete blade that extends into the grip and connects the blade and the handle together.

For a chopping and slicing implement swung with a great deal of force, it is important to make sure the blade has a **full tang** that extends to the end of the handle and is riveted in place.

Blade Styles: For most people, the distinguishing characteristic of most machetes is the shape of the blade, which varies considerably depending on the use.

A few notes on the various style and naming conventions used at MacheteSpecialists.com.

The machete is used in rural areas all over the world. Names and styles vary, and often overlap.

Preferences for one style over another are often subjective, and like many other things, based in large part on tradition and experience.

Machete styles have never been standardized, and one style melds into another. At what point a bush machete becomes a bolo machete is anyone's guess, so our categories are somewhat fluid.



Bush Machete: All-purpose machete. Blade tends to be evenly weighted and fairly stout. Can be fitted with a sheath easily for carrying around. Good for green vegetation and as a utility tool.

Alternative Names:



Bolo Machete: Workhorse of the machetes. A cross between an ax and a knife, the bolo is heavily weighted toward the tip of the blade for chopping thick and woody vegetation.

Alternative Names: Rawit



Barong Machete: These machetes are known for their unique leaf-shaped blade, which is traditionally only sharpened on one side.

Alternative Names:



Kukri Machete: Kukri machetes have 3 parts to their blade, a pointed tip for stabbing, a wide midsection for chopping, and a narrow area near the handle for whittling and carving.

Alternative Names: Rawit



Colima Machete: These machetes are sharpened on both sides of the blade. Great for mowing or clearing swaths of vegetation by cutting on the fore and backhand strokes, this machete is weighted on the back side for aid in clearing on the backstroke.

Alternative Names: Acapulqueno, Caguayano, Costeno, Panzon



Sable Machete: These machetes generally have a distinctive curved shape in which both the spine and the edge of the blade is curved, much like a scimitar. They tend to be long and fairly evenly weighted along the blade.

Alternative Names: Golok Kembar, Golok Mala, Pedang Batak, Talibon, Gununting, Pinuti, Burmese Dha, Golok Bengkulu



Cane Machete: Cane machetes are heavy, blunt-tipped machetes perfect for hacking corn stalks and sugar cane. Often the blade is hooked to allow the user to pull the chopped cane from the plants still standing.

Alternative Names: Corn knife, Cuta, Machete de suelo, Tunca, Parang Bandol



Short-Handed Sickle:

Alternative Names: Clurit, Malayo, Scythe



Spear Point Machete

Alternative Names:



Hawk bill Machete

Alternative Names: Bill Hook, Billhook, Caluk

Handle Materials: Another consideration when picking your tool is what type of handle material to choose.

Wood Handles	Advantages: <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Good grip-Warm in hand-Lightweight
	Disadvantages: <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Will crack or warp if exposed to water and thus require more maintenance-Can harbor bacteria-More expensive

Molded Plastic Handles	<p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Easy to Maintain -Inexpensive <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Can be slippery -May become discolored and brittle with time
Stainless Steel Knife Handles	<p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Beautiful Appearance -Harbors few bacteria <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Can be slippery -Heavy -Expensive
Rubber or Textured Handles	<p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Soft on hands. -Good Grip <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Can tear or become worn
Leather Handles	<p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Good grip <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Require maintenance -Can become slippery
Micarta Handles-layers of heat-treated linen/canvas/paper/fiberglass and plastic	<p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Good grip

	-Very comfortable
	-Very strong
	Disadvantages:
	-Expensive

Handle Styles:

Quillon Handle	<p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Protects the hand from sliding off the handle and on to the blade <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Does not provide much knuckle or hand protection
D-ring or Knuckle Guard Handle	<p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Protects hands and knuckles from being cut -Protects the hand from sliding off the handle and on to the blade <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Does not fit all hands -Larger and heavier handle to transport and wield
Crossguard Handle	<p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Protects hands and knuckles from being cut -Protects the hand from sliding off the handle and on to the blade <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Does not fit all hands -Larger and heavier handle to transport and wield

Most machete handles have a simple, single quillon that prevents the hand from slipping up the blade. This lightweight construction is ideal for work situations in which little

chance of blade to blade combat is expected. Handle guards are necessary primarily to guard against attack by other blades in combat situations.