



User Guide



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1

Introduction

Japanese Sharpness, Western Robustness

We combined the best of both worlds, so you don't have to settle.

KOTAI was born as a bridge between Asian and Western cutlery. Light, precise, and ultra-sharp like a Japanese knife yet stainless, sturdy and very durable like a German knife.

All the pros without the cons, no compromise.

KOTAI knives are all handmade with high-end Japanese steel from Aichi. Some of our models are finished directly in Seki, Japan, the world-famous knife capital. Others are assembled by our expert knife makers in YangJiang, China's knife-making capital for over 1500 years.

We are blessed to be able to rely on a team of knife experts whose families have been in the craft for many generations.

Our knives are made by combining traditional knife-making methods with advanced technological processes, such as vacuum heat treatment and cryogenic cooling, to optimize the mechanical properties of the steel.

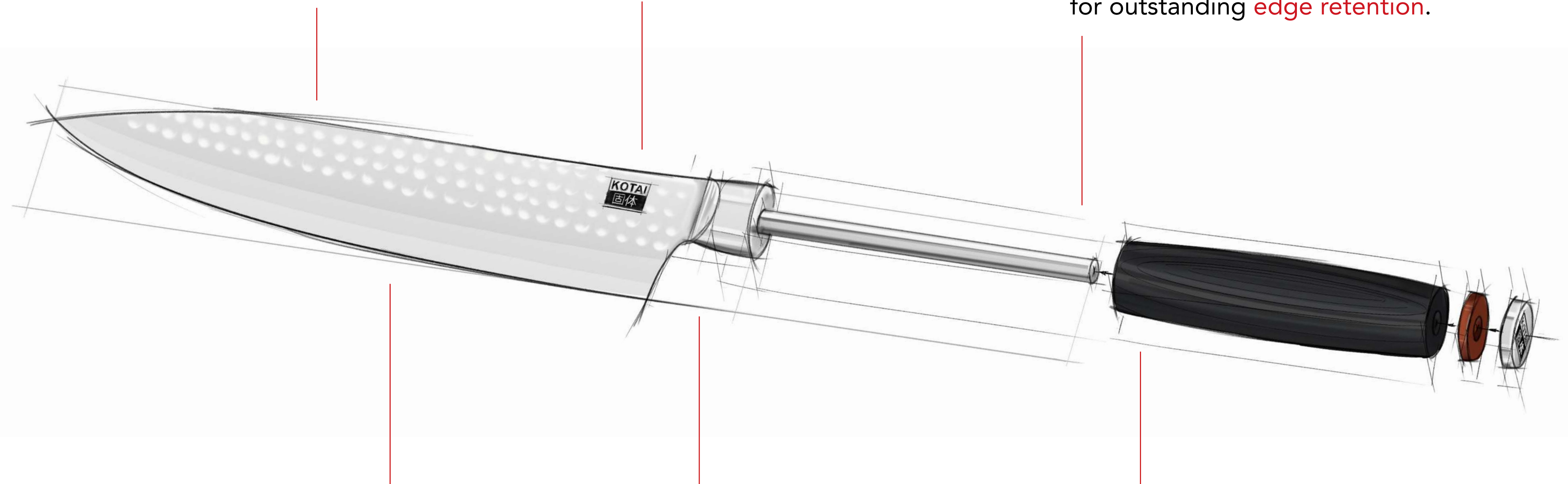


Anatomy of a Kotai Knife

Hybrid between a Japanese and a German blade profile, the slightly curved belly allows a **rocking motion** for effortless chopping and mincing while the lowered tip makes **precision work** easier.

At **1.8 mm**, the blade is thicker than traditional Japanese gyutos for more **heft** and robustness.

The **Japanese 440C high-carbon steel** undergoes a high-tech vacuum heat treatment. This gives the blade the best mechanical properties possible, achieving an exceptional hardness of HRC 60 +/- 1 for outstanding **edge retention**.



Sharpened to a **double bevel** grind giving the edge an optimal angle of **15° per side**, Kotai knives perfectly balance extreme sharpness and blade solidity.

Kotai knives feature a **partial bolster** which, unlike the full bolster found on most Western knives, allows **sharpening of the entire length of the blade**. The knives can be sharpened indefinitely and chefs can keep them for their entire career.

Hidden full tang - Kotai blades extend all the way to the bottom of the handle - for superior durability and **balance**.

1

Every single **KOTAI** knife has been through a rigorous quality control process and will not leave our factory before it is manually checked by 3 different inspectors.

That is why we stand behind our products 100% and are proud to offer a lifetime warranty if your **KOTAI** knife turns out to be defective.



2

Our knives

Things To Do

- Proper way to use your knife

First of all, it is essential to use a cutting board either made of plastic or wood to use your knife. Harder surfaces such as metal, stone or ceramic may dull your blade prematurely.



- Maintain your knife

After use, wash by hand with soap and water. You should immediately wipe your knife.

If you really want to take extra care of your blade, you can apply mineral oil to make sure the blade is well lubricated and protected



2

Things Not To Do

- Put your knives in the dishwasher. It would damage the materials.
- Store your knives unprotected in a drawer. Because the edge of the blade could be damaged by the utensils, or even injure yourself by catching it.

Tips

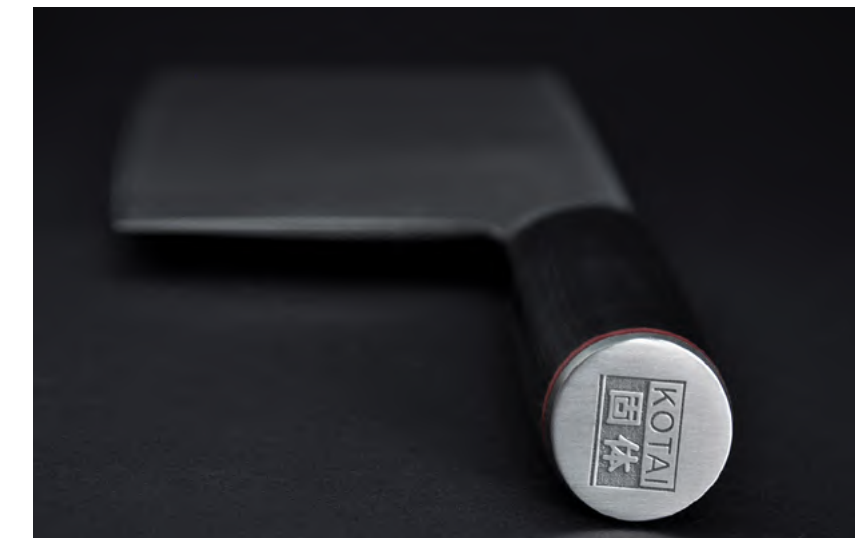
- Store your knife properly

Once clean, carefully store your knives in their protective cases provided by KOTAI.

Here are the different options available to you:

- A magnetic strip to put your knives on. We offer a magnetic bamboo knife holder, ideal for storing your knives without scratching them (which is a risk with a metal magnet strip).
- A knife block, provided it is made of a soft material such as wood or rubber.

- **A saya**, the knives are also sold with a bamboo saya (protective case) so that they can be safely stored in a drawer.

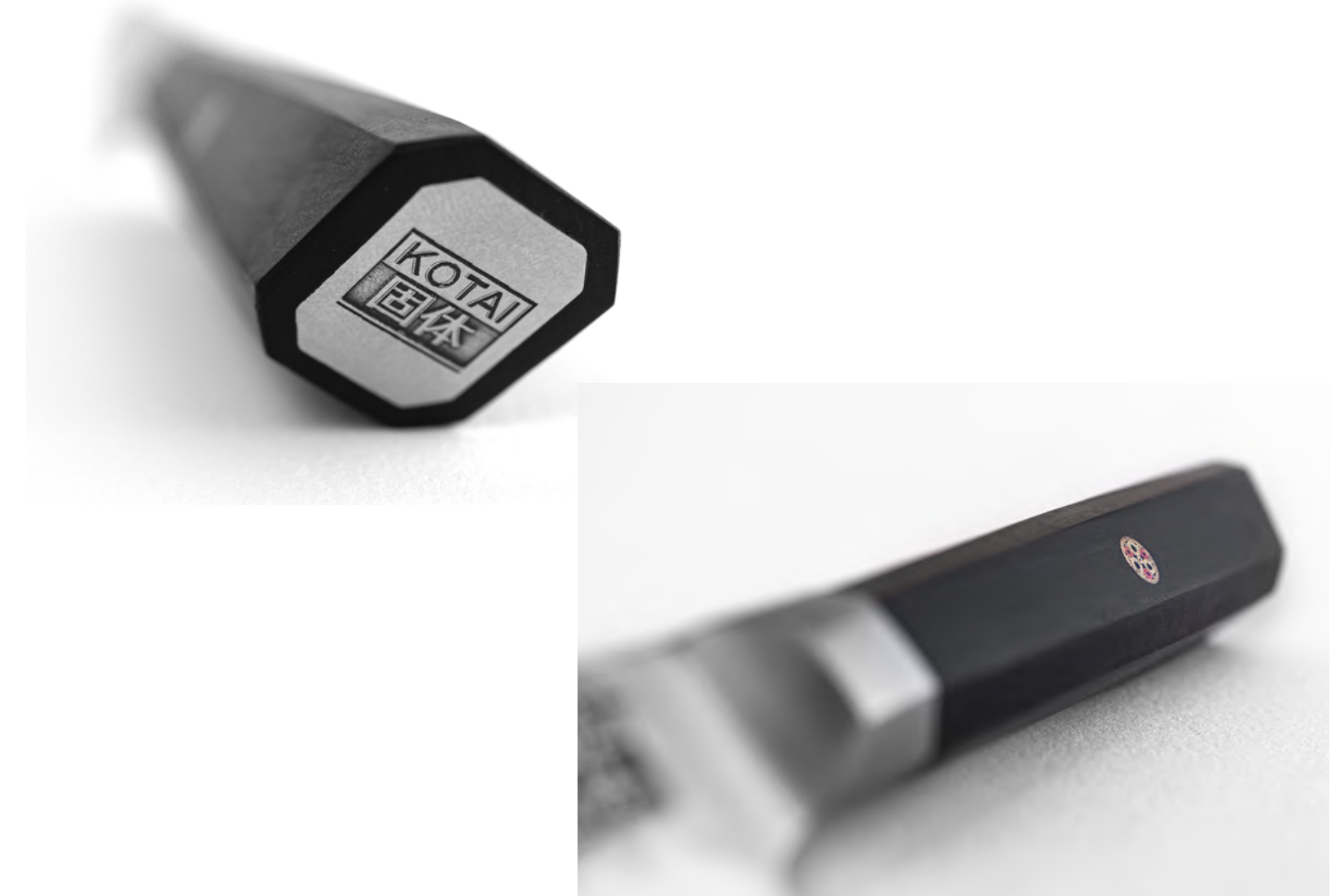


2

- The maintenance of your knife handle

The handle of your knife is made of Pakka or Ebony wood, naturally resistant materials which develop a coat over the months and years.

However, you can maintain it by oiling it with flaxseed oil once or twice a year



Sharpening

- Sharpen and hone your knife regularly

Sharpening involves forming a new edge on your blade when it is dull or damaged.

The ideal method is with a whetstone (water stone or oilstone).

Fixed-angle sharpeners (made up of 2 crossed metal parts or 2 metal/ceramic wheels) are not recommended, as they do not allow you to control the sharpening angle and are very abrasive, so they risk damaging your wire.

[Our sharpening set](#) will be perfect for taking care of your knives.



2

Sharpening

There are several steps to follow to sharpen your blade correctly: :

Step 1:

Place your sharpening stone in a container filled with water and soak it for at least 10 minutes.

Step 2:

Place the stone back on its bamboo base, on a flat surface. Pour water regularly over the stone throughout the sharpening session so that it stays wet. Kotai whetstones require no oil

Step 3:

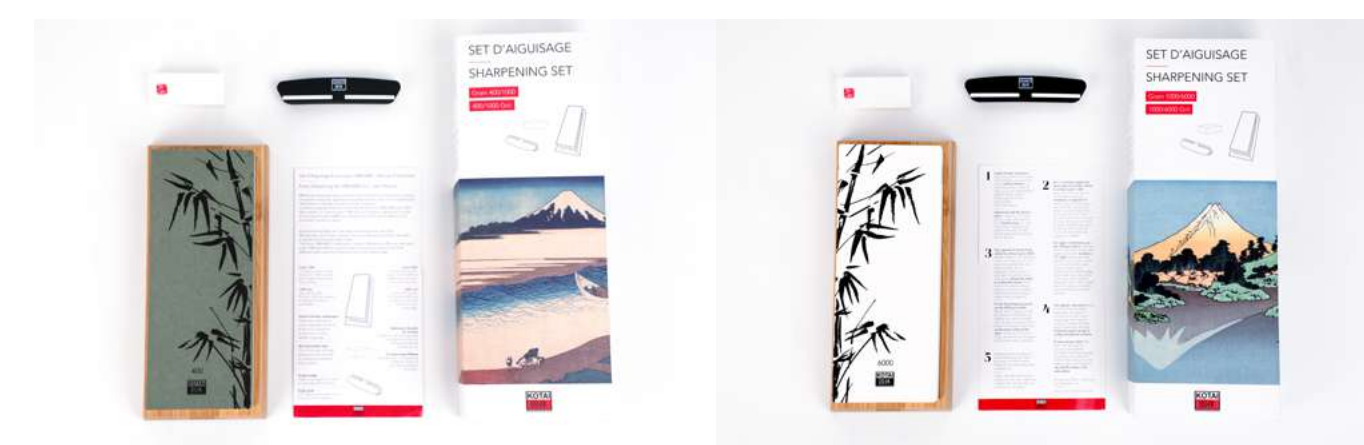
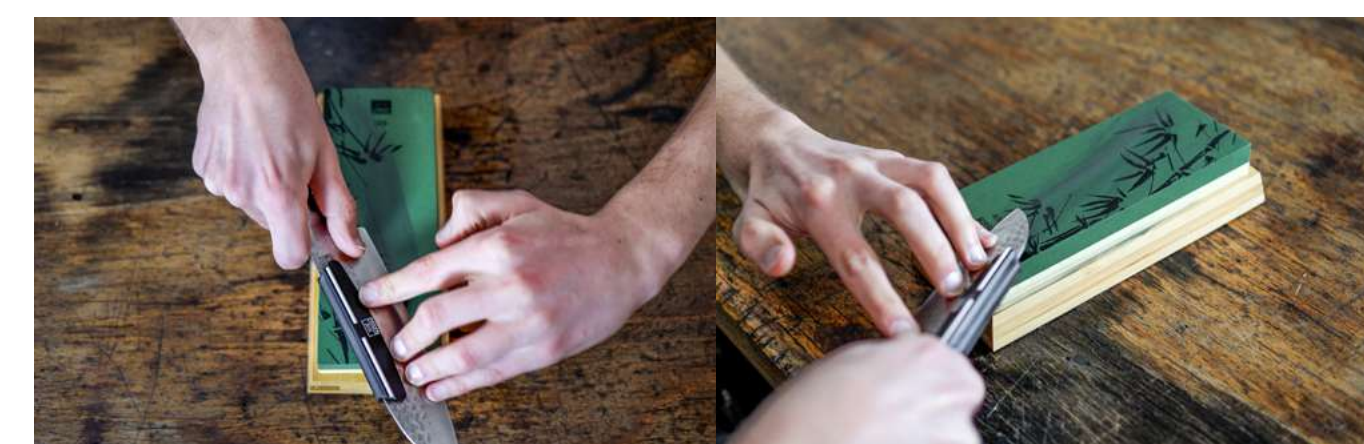
With one hand on the blade and the other holding the handle, maintain an angle of 15° between the blade and the stone (for ease, you can use the Kotai angle guide provided in your kit). Slide the edge of the blade across the entire surface of the stone, back and forth. Repeat this action the same number of times on the other side of the blade to maintain symmetry.

Step 4:

To find out if your knife is sharp, we recommend the sheet of paper test : fast and unambiguous!

Step 5:

After sharpening, clean the knife and sharpening stone with clean water to remove all steel and stone particles. Then let the stone dry vertically, then once dry, put it back on its bamboo base.



2

Sharpening

Be careful, make sure that the stone is completely dry before putting it back on its base, to avoid any trace of moisture or mould. For consistent sharpening and to prolong the life of your stone, use the whole surface of the stone wall.

For regular maintenance, use the **softest grain of the stone** (highest number). Repeat the previous sharpening step, applying a bit less pressure. A stone takes several days to dry, as moisture may remain in the centre of the stone.

For your most damaged knives, use the **coarsest grit side of your stone** (lowest number). The number shown on each side of your stone represents the “grain”.

The lower the number, **the coarser the grit and the more abrasive the stone is**, and therefore suitable for roughing up dull or damaged thread. The higher the grain, **the finer the grain, the smoother the stone** and therefore suitable for finishing.

- For example, a 400 grit indicates that there are 400 particles per square centimeter, so these are large abrasive particles.
- A 6000 grit indicates that there are 6000 particles per square centimeter, so they are much smaller particles, and therefore less abrasive.

Caring for your sharpening stone:

To level your stone, (every 3-4 uses) use the corundum stone leveler provided in the sharpening set. With one hand on the stone and the other holding the flattener against the stone, scrub until the surface is flat and even.

Find our sharpening tutorial [here](#) !



2

Honing

Honing involves “straightening” the edge of your blade, without creating a new edge.



How often you need to sharpen your knife will depend on what you use it for

In general, it is advisable to sharpen it once a week (for 10 seconds only). Honing is done with a **honing steel**.

Just like sharpening, position the Knife blade at **15°** to the honing steel, then make the same number of passes on each side of the blade. Our honing steel has an integrated guide in the finger guard to help you find a **15° angle**.

The end of the honing steel rod has a point to stabilize the rod upright on your work surface for ease.

Once sharpened, clean your knife and honing steel with soap and water and then dry with a clean cloth.

Find our honing tutorial [here](#) !



3

Our accessories

Cutting board

Things To Do

Here are some tips on how to properly clean your bamboo cutting board and keep it in good condition: First, clean all food particles using your hands.

Then wash it by hand with warm water and soap (it is important to clean your board directly after use).

Leave the cutting board to dry on a rack, making sure it is tilted. **Bamboo** has **anti-bacterial** properties.

Things Not To Do

- Lay the cutting board flat to dry. The moisture remains on the board and damages the material.
- Put it in the dishwasher.

Tips

To clean the board thoroughly and eliminate stains or odours, you can use a mixture of **salt and lemon juice** (natural antiseptic). Sprinkle a teaspoon of salt on the plank. Cover with lemon juice afterwards. Leave to act for a few moments and rub vigorously with the lemon skin.

Rinse and allow to dry.



3

Leather knife roll-up bag

Things To Do

If you want to clean your leather knife bag, you just need to use a sponge soaked in soapy water.

Things Not To Do

- Use another chemical that can damage the material and canvas of your kit.
- Wash in the machine.

Tips

On the other hand, if you wish to remove any stains, you can use 90% alcohol, white vinegar, or even turpentine if the stain persists with a clean cloth.



3

Cotton knife roll-up bag

Things To Do

To clean your cotton knife bag, just machine wash it at 30° or 40° with other cotton fabrics of the same colour.

Things Not To Do

Machine washing your cotton knife case at over 40° could cause the fabric to move and damage the quality of the material.

Tips

Despite its great qualities, cotton has the drawback of being very sensitive to moisture. Cotton fabrics get mildewed easily.

They must therefore be kept in a dry place. It is even advisable to place a container of coarse salt nearby so that it absorbs the surrounding humidity.



3

Whetstone

Things To Do

If you want to clean your stone, all you have to do is wash it by hand.

Things Not To Do

The stones are fragile. If they drop they break.

Tips

Do not put the wet stone back in the base, let it dry naturally. Once dry, put it back on its base.



3

Honing steel

Things To Do

If you wish to clean your sharpening steel, wash it by hand with water and dry it after washing.

Things Not To Do

- Drop the rod.
- Put it in the dishwasher.

Tips

We don't recommend forcing your Honing Steel with your knife. It will not improve your blade sharpness. On the contrary, it could have an effect of premature wear of your rod or even generate an irregular edge.



3

Carving fork

Things To Do

After use, wash by hand with soap and water, then dry with a clean cloth.

Things Not To Do

Put the fork in the dishwasher.

Tips

The hand-polished black pakkawood handle can be cleaned with flaxseed oil once or twice a year just like the knives.



3

Magnetic natural bamboo knife holder

Things To Do

After use, wash by hand with soap and water, then dry with a clean cloth.

Things Not To Do

Put the knife holder in the dishwasher.

Tips

To clean the board thoroughly and eliminate stains or odours, you can use a mixture of salt and lemon juice (natural antiseptic). Sprinkle a teaspoon of salt on the plank.

Cover with lemon juice afterwards. Leave to act for a few moments and rub vigorously with the lemon skin.

Rinse and allow to dry.



4

FAQ

For **KOTAI** knives, we add 17% chromium in our alloy steel (440C) to increase its corrosion resistance, but the discolouration of steel is a natural occurrence that cannot be 100% avoided even if the knife is properly cared for (no dishwasher, not keeping them longer in the sink, drying directly after cleaning).

Steel discolouration is not dangerous and you can still use your knife safely. Find our cleaning tutorial [here](#) !

How do you remove oxidation stains ?

If one day you notice a stain of oxidation on your blade, you can easily clean it using two methods explained below :

- **White vinegar:**

Soak your knife in white vinegar (or just coat the area you want to treat with white vinegar) for at least 30 minutes to let the vinegar work.

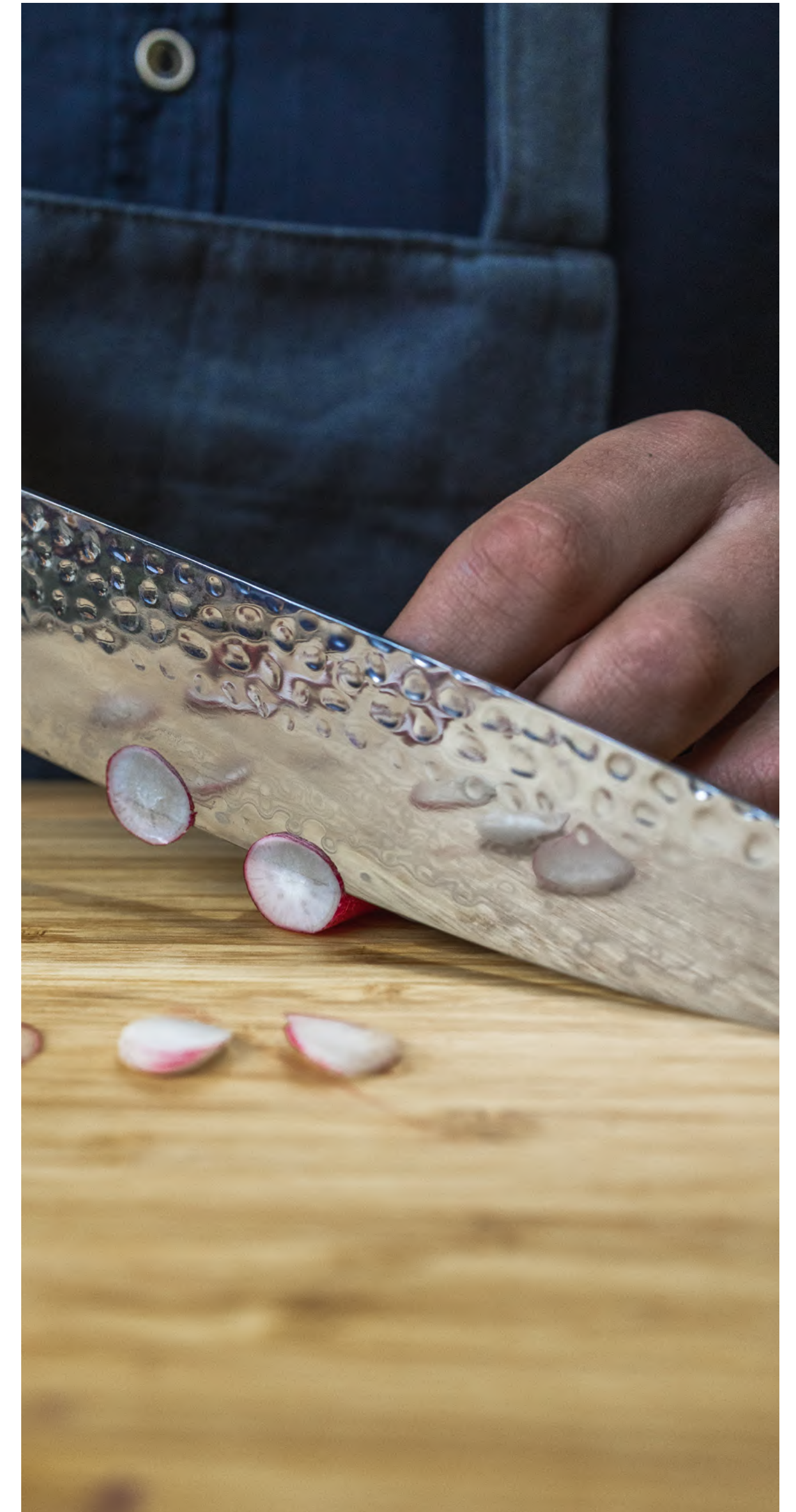
Then, use a sponge and scrub lightly to remove the stain. If necessary, use the green side that is more abrasive than the sponge, delicately to avoid scratching your blade.

- **Baking soda:**

Make a paste with baking soda by pouring the powder into a bowl and adding some water to it. Stir until you get a thick paste.

Apply the thick paste to a toothbrush and apply generously to the area to be treated on the blade. Scrub lightly with the toothbrush.

Finally, clean the blade with a cloth to remove the excess baking soda



4

Why are there black spots on my blade ?

Imperfections can appear on all types of steel, and steels like 440C are more susceptible to them due to their high carbon content. Carbon is also the element that makes the blade very hard and allows it to keep its edge.

The more premium Japanese steels called «carbon steels» contain a very high percentage of carbon and are extremely prone to rust, making them too difficult for most chefs to work with. Only titanium and ceramic knives are 100% protected from stains since they do not contain iron.

Keep in mind that a high carbon steel blade is more sensitive than a classic stainless steel blade, so be careful to clean and dry it quickly after use, especially after cutting acidic foods such as lemons, onions, etc.

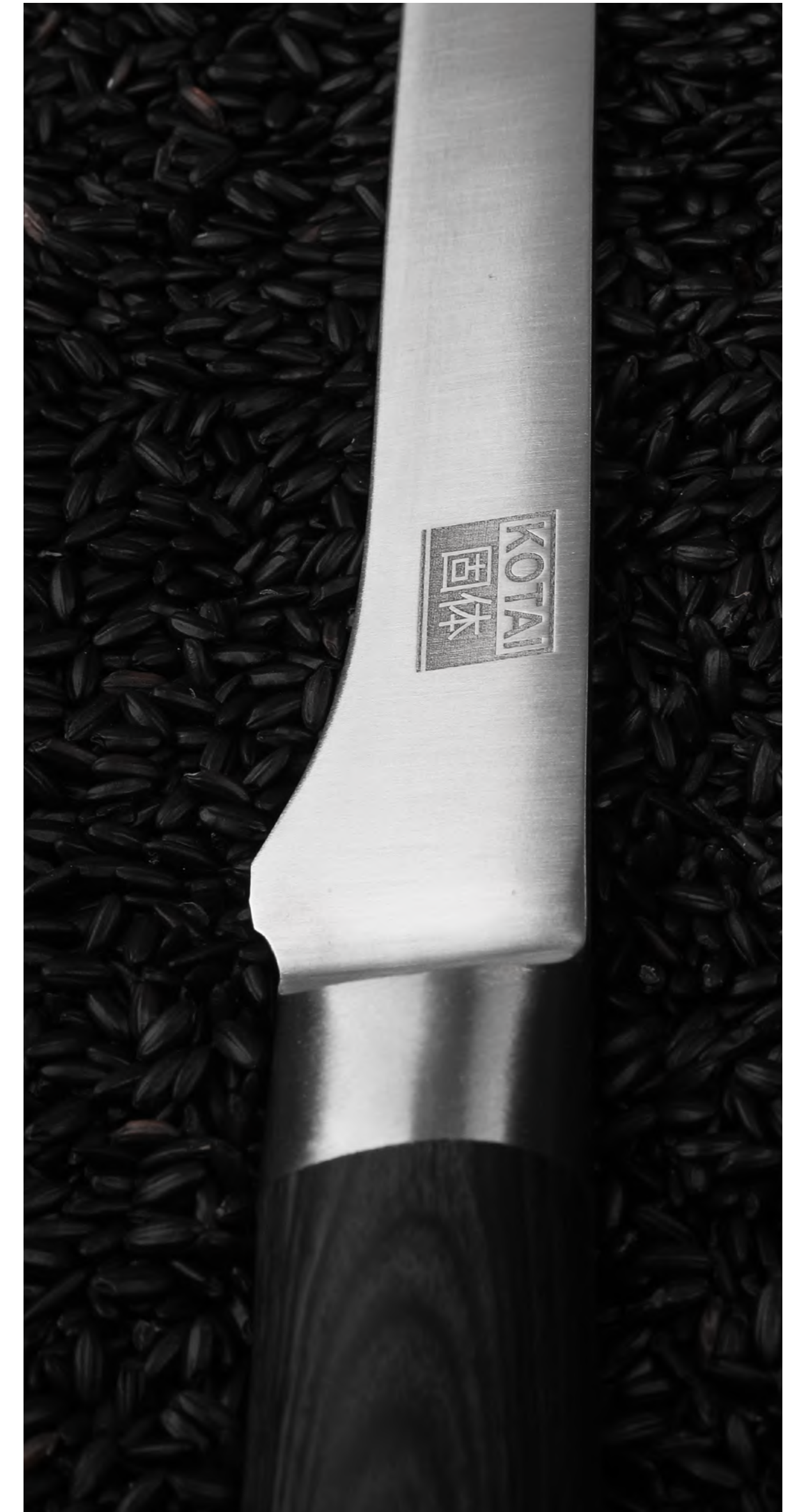
Steel is a material which reacts, develops a patina and whose appearance evolves over time; this is normal and does not cause a problem.

My knife has defects on the blade/handle, what should I do?

If your product has any defects, report it directly to help@kotaikitchen.com indicating :

- Your personal information (surname, first name, email, telephone number and address).
- Your invoice or proof of purchase.
- Photos of the item showing the defect.

This will allow our team to resolve the issue accordingly.



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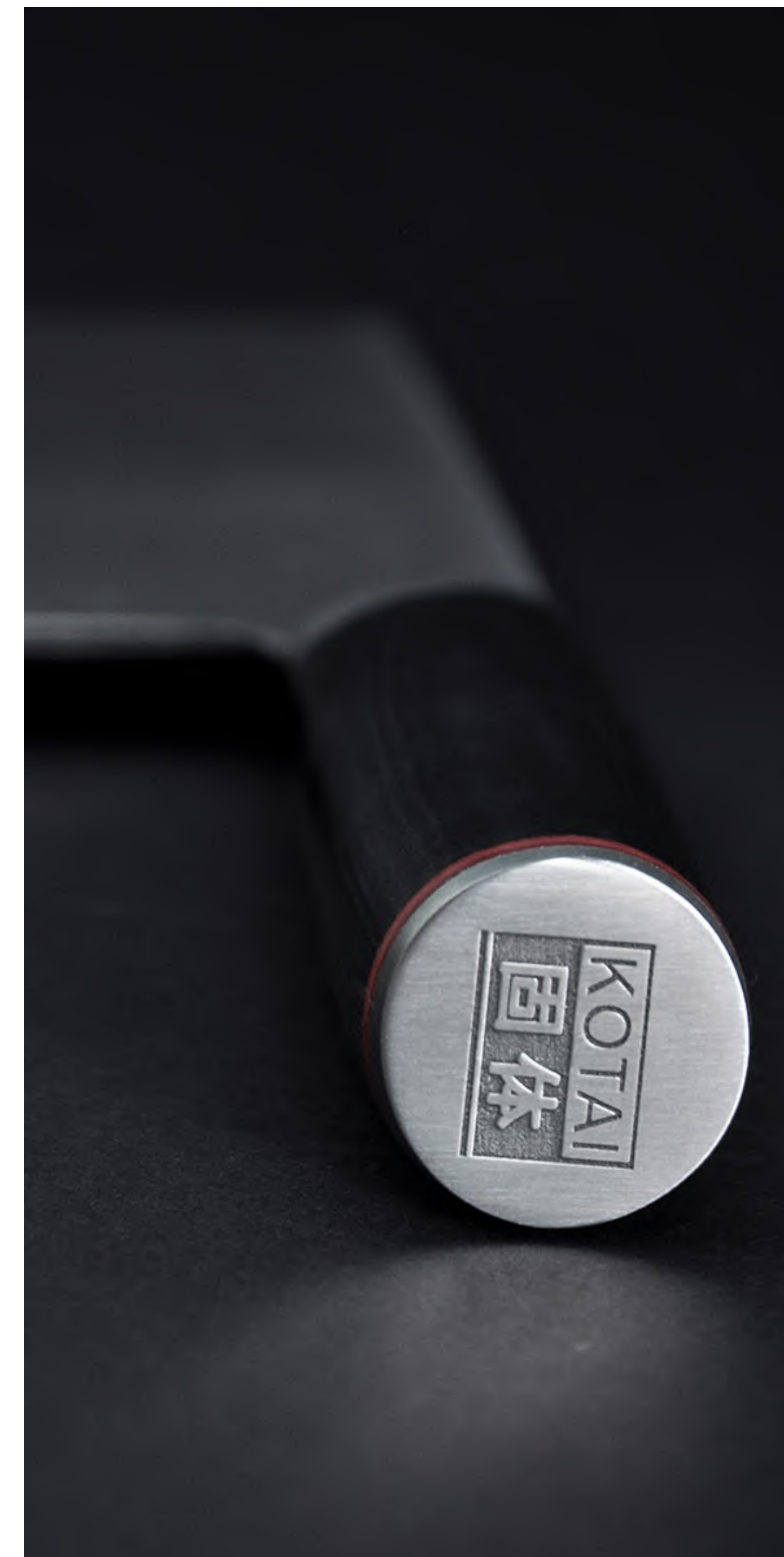
I ordered a knife with an engraving, it is not present on my product, what should I do?

If your product does not have an engraving, report it to the email address help@kotaikitchen.com. Our team will tell you the steps to follow in order to return the non-compliant product to our warehouse in France and proceed with the exchange.

Please note, that if you wish to order a set of knives, engravings are not available. To do this, you must notify us immediately before placing your order by email to help@kotaikitchen.com indicating:

- Your personal information (surname, first name, email, telephone number, address as well as the engraving on the knife(s)).
- It is also possible to compose your set by adding the components of the set one by one in your shopping cart, to have access to the engraving.

Please note that engraved knives cannot be returned or refunded. Except in the case of a manufacturing defect.





kotaikitchen.com
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