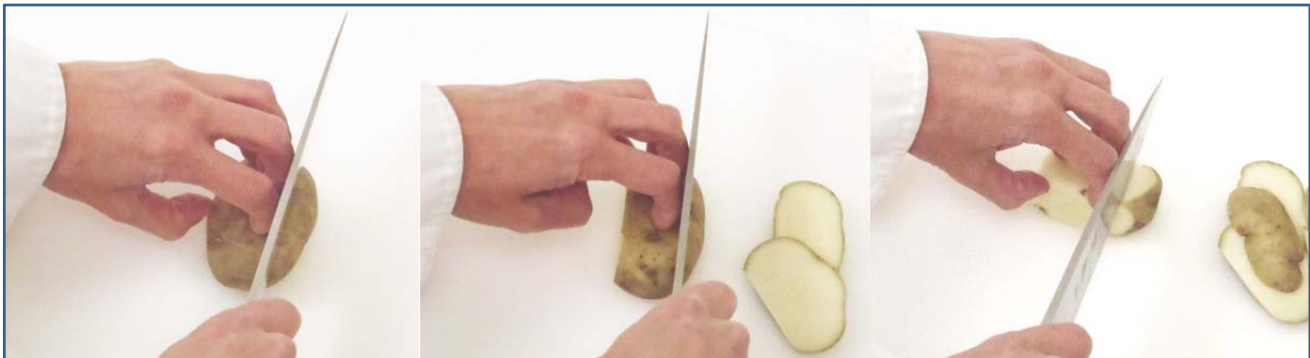


## Practicing Knife Skills

*Food cut to specific sizes and shapes can be very useful. Consistently sized pieces cook evenly and at the same rate, eliminating uneven textures. Decorative cuts are pleasing to the eye and allow the food to garnish itself. Many different utensils and appliances are marketed to make this process easy – but none of this specialty equipment is as versatile, durable, or easy-to-clean as a good quality knife.*

### Cutting Techniques

To practice your knife skills, use potatoes. They are softer, less slippery, and cheaper than many other vegetables! Cut potatoes can be held in the refrigerator in salted water overnight, then boiled and mashed.



*Squaring off* is helpful for most types of food. Holding with your fingers curled back, make straight cuts to create a flat surface on all four sides. This also eliminates the need for peeling vegetables before cutting them.



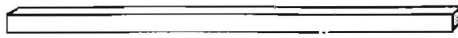
Make a series of slices straight down through the food. These slices can be stacked or cut individually into sticks. Sticks can then be cut into cubes. Cuts should be made by lifting the *heel* end of the knife off of the cutting board, then slicing forward and down in a single smooth motion.



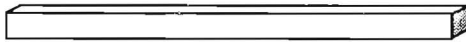
*Onions* can be difficult to cut into evenly sized pieces. The following steps can be used to make this process a little faster, and a lot easier.

1. Start by cutting the *stem* end off, leaving the hairy *roots*.
2. Place the onion on the newly-cut flat side, and slice straight down through the middle of the root end to cut the onion in half.
3. Working close to the edge of the counter or work table, make a series of horizontal slices through each onion half, working from the bottom up (depending on the size of the onion, you should be able to make three or four cuts).
4. Make a series of vertical cuts through the fattest part of the onion. **DO NOT** cut all the way through the root end – this is holding everything together to make the next step easier.
5. To finish dicing the onion, make a second series of vertical cuts starting at the stem end (where you made the first cut), and continuing back toward the root end (that is holding everything together). If the root end becomes too small to hold onto securely, stop cutting. *Only cut back as far as you feel comfortable going!*

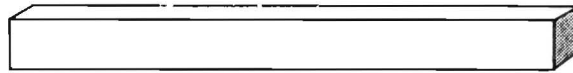
# FIGURE 6-3 Basic Vegetables Cuts and Dimensions



Fine Julienne  
 $\frac{1}{16} \times \frac{1}{16} \times 1$  to 2 inches



Julienne/Allumette\*  
 $\frac{1}{8} \times \frac{1}{8} \times 1$  to 2 inches



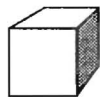
Batonnet  
 $\frac{1}{4} \times \frac{1}{4} \times 2$  to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches



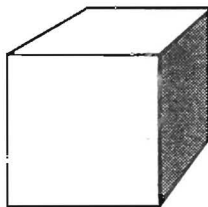
Brunoise  
 $\frac{1}{8} \times \frac{1}{8} \times \frac{1}{8}$  inch



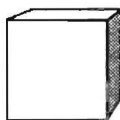
Small Dice  
 $\frac{1}{4} \times \frac{1}{4} \times \frac{1}{4}$  inch



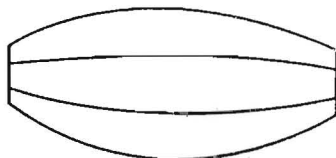
Medium Dice  
 $\frac{1}{3} \times \frac{1}{3} \times \frac{1}{3}$  inch



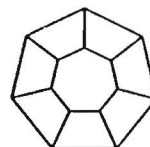
Large Dice  
 $\frac{3}{4} \times \frac{3}{4} \times \frac{3}{4}$  inch



Paysanne  
 $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{8}$  inch



Tourné



Seven 2-inch sides

\*Allumette normally refers only to potatoes.

## Cherry Tomato Flower Garnish

Place tomato stem side up on cutting board.

Slice tomato down the center but do not cut completely through. Resembling a cross, slice the tomato again, careful not to cut completely through. You should now have four sections that resemble the petals of a flower.

With a sharp knife, carefully slice away the membrane and seeds of the tomato. A thin layer of meat should remain on the skin.



Allow the petals to fall open and place a small amount of course mustard on the center point. The tomato flowers can be covered and refrigerated until you are ready to serve.

## Carrot Curls

Garnish your salads or main entrée with a carrot curl.



Before slicing, use a vegetable peeler to cut a strip of the peeled carrot.



The carrot strip must be rolled and secured with a toothpick. Place in a cold glass of water in the refrigerator.



Wait 2 to 3 hours and remove from water. When toothpick is removed, the peel should remain curled, stretch the curl out and place on the plate as a colorful garnish.

## Creating Zest for Seasoning

Zest refers to the outer skin of citrus fruits such as oranges, lemons, and limes. The colored part of the skin contains natural oils that provide aroma and flavor. Small shavings of the skin are added to various dishes to intensify the required citrus flavors. The white portion of the skin, or pith, which lies just below the zest, should not be used because of its bitterness.

Zest can be made using a zester tool, by cutting with a vegetable peeler, or by slicing strips with a sharp utility knife.



### *Zester Tool*

The zest from the citrus fruit is removed in fine threads which can be used in that form or they can be minced to use as an alternative to grated zest.

Pack zest lightly into measuring spoon to measure. Unless specifically stated in the recipe, do not pack the zest tightly.

## Tomato Rose Garnish

Beginning at the top of a tomato, peel the tomato skin with a sharp utility knife. The garnish works best if the peel is  $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 1" wide, is a continuous peel, and the peel is thin with very little flesh attached.



Lie peel flat with flesh side up. Roll up the peel.



Set peel on plate and allow it to open. If needed, shape the peel to resemble an "opening rose". For finishing touch, add mint sprigs.

