

# MASAMOTO SOHONTEN

## Eel Knives

Unagisaki knives are special traditional Japanese knives used for cutting and filleting eel. What makes the unagisaki knives especially interesting in comparison to other traditional Japanese knives is the number of styles that exist.

If you were to divide unagisaki knives into two categories, they would be Kansai and Kanto style unagi knives. If one were to be more specific it would be Edo-style, Kyoto-style, Nagoya-style, Osaka-style and Kyushuu-style. The reason for the number of styles is not because there are different needs or types of eel depending on region. It is due to the variations in preparing the eel.

Chefs in the Kanto region slice and open eel from the spine, because of the region's samurai background. Although slicing eel from the stomach would make filleting such a long and slippery fish easier, the idea is strongly associated with seppuku, which is a form of suicide by disembowelment used voluntarily by samurai to die with honor. Therefore the image of cutting the stomach is thought to be taboo and brings bad fortune.

However, in the Kansai region where nobility and merchants heavily influenced the culture, there was no disapproval or hesitation to cutting from the stomach.

HRC : 62-63 Bevel : Single Edged Steel Type : Carbon (Moisture and acidity will cause discoloration or rust) Sharpening : Advanced



**Masamoto Shiro-ko Hongasumi Kyo-saki**  
HMA-SHKS-110 4.25" (11cm)

Kyo-saki was originally intended to be able to cut eel from the stomach or the spine. However, because the Kansai region does not steam the eel before grilling, the Kyo-saki knife does not have a pointed tip like the Kanto-style knives. The meuchi spike that is typically used with this style of knife has a large end used to help grip the eel while cutting into it.



**Masamoto Shiro-ko Hongasumi Nagoya-saki**  
HMA-SHNG-120 4.7" (12cm)

The Nagoya-saki is the oldest and classically used knife to prepare eel by cutting from the stomach.



**Masamoto Shiro-ko Hongasumi Osaka-saki**  
HMA-SHOS-180 7.0" (18cm)

Osaka-saki knives have the most unique and distinct look. These knives are rectangular, have a pointed tip like the Edo-saki knives, and do not have a handle. They look similar to a carpenter's tool and are used to filet the eel from the stomach.



**Masamoto Shiro-ko Hongasumi Unagisaki**  
HMA-SHUN-195 7.6" (19.5cm)

The Unagisaki, also known as the Edosaki blades are longer than its counterparts and are triangularly sharpened. Because the knife will get caught in the bone if you cut from the spine, the Kanto-style (edo-style) knives have a sharp triangular blade to easily cut into the eel. Kansai cut from the softer side of the eel, the knives do not need a tapered point. The tip is used to easily slice through the spine, and the rest of the blade is used to cut fillets. This style of knife also has a shortened handle that fits nicely in the user's palm when in use. Edosaki knives are used to cut eel from the spine. The meuchi used for this cutting technique is very simple and does not have a T-shaped handle like the others. Since the spine is cut into first the eel does not struggle as much while being prepared.

•The color of the natural water buffalo horn bolsters varies on all traditional Japanese knives.