

URBAN concepts

Spring 2022



With majority of restrictions being lifted and many in person activities, including travel beginning to pick up again, we look forward to what 2022 has in store for us. It's been a rough last couple of years but we are finally progressing back to "normal life" once again.

In this edition we share, a guide to must have home tools, an article on imposter Japanese whisky and how to be able to spot them, a history on (a local staple) the plate lunch, and this issue's produce showcase features Daikon.

We hope you enjoy our Spring 2022 edition of Urban Concepts!

Mahalo,
Brett Hill Construction, Inc.

In this Issue:

~ Page 2 ~
Must Have Home Tools

~ Page 7 ~
Japanese Whisky: Real
vs. Fake

~ Page 9 ~
A History on the Plate Lunch
and origin of the mac
salad

~ Page 11 ~
Produce Showcase -
Daikon

TOOLS EVERY HOMEOWNER SHOULD HAVE

Whether you're a knowledgeable and confident do-it-yourself ("DIY") handyperson or someone who does light weekend maintenance and repair work around the house, there are certain tools that every homeowner should have in their home toolbox. Even if you're the type who tends to call a repairperson to handle most jobs, you'll find that many simple tools are necessary for changing up home decor and accomplishing simple projects that most of us can manage.

When investing in tools, the big part of the decision is the cost and how often you plan to use the particular tool. Whether you're hanging a frame on the wall or installing a new shelf there are tools that you should definitely have on-hand that would make your project go smoothly and be so much easier for you. For those who are investing in a tool kit for the first time, or who might be working on a specific project, the following list of must-have tools will be a good guide.

Screwdriver Set

For any home project (big or small), a screwdriver set is almost always necessary. And it makes sense, considering just how many different products require a screwdriver and its components. Generally, there are two types of screwdriver heads that you'd want to consider owning - a flathead and a Phillips screwdriver. But also with the two types, you will need to have various sizes to fit the multiple sizes of screws.

If you prefer not to have multiple-sized screwdrivers you may consider a set with replaceable bits. Many screwdriver sets come this way, so it's easy to find (and easy to use). In this set, you'll get a screwdriver handle on which you can attach and detach different size bits depending on what you need. Usually, that would include Phillips heads and flatheads - standard but sizes that work with a multitude of screws.

One option for those building their home toolbox is to consider a lithium-ion battery-powered cordless screwdriver. It's a little more expensive investment, but once you start using this device, you'll quickly discover that this investment was well worth it. It has the same replaceable bits and is so much easier and less time-consuming to use. Many of us have stopped using our old manual screwdrivers entirely. The cost range for this device starts at around \$20 and goes up to as much as \$150 depending on the brand and features you're looking for. Most folks who would opt for a simple cordless screwdriver will generally end up investing closer to the \$20 price tag.



Phillips Screwdriver



Cordless Screwdriver



Measuring Tape

Measuring Tape

From preparing your home for new furniture to ensuring the art you just bought will look just right on your wall, measuring tape is absolutely necessary. When it comes to measuring tape, you'll want to make sure the measurements are in the United States customary units - inches and feet and metric units. In addition, having a locking mechanism keeps the tape from recoiling back when you don't have the ability to hold the tape. Another option is the laser tape measure which will give you a very accurate reading and allows you to store your measurements in memory so you won't have to stop to write the information before moving on to the next measurement.

Cordless Drill

A handheld power drill is one of those tools you can't imagine using much until you have one, then it becomes indispensable. From small home repairs to hanging heavy wall decor, this tool is a must-have. And, if you don't mind the heavier weight, at low speed, the drill can operate as a cordless screwdriver as well.

The best part about having a cordless drill is the ability to work on projects without having a power outlet nearby. The challenge is simply the sheer number of cordless drills available. Essentially, like the cordless screwdriver, it comes down to price. How often will you use the cordless drill? What projects are on your to-do list? Are these projects simple or heavy-duty? Once you gauge how much you really want to invest in a handheld drill, you can move on to looking at other, more specific features.

The main features to look out for are the grip, voltage, and speed-range switch. You want the grip to be comfortable enough to hold for a while - so if possible, make sure to test it out before you buy. One thing worth noting, the higher the voltage, the more power your cordless drill has. But more voltage can also mean the drill is heavier. In addition to the grip and voltage, make sure you also check the speed-range switch. The high speed is for drilling, while the lower speed is for guiding (or driving) screws.



Cordless Drill

Hammers for Big and Small Jobs

If you're just starting to build your toolbox, there are two types of hammers you should have. Though many toolkits only include one hammer, every homeowner is best prepared with two different options: a claw hammer and a ball-peen hammer. They each have different uses, but both can prove invaluable when tackling home repair and DIY projects.

Let's start with the claw hammer. This head is used for both pounding nails and other hardware and extracting them. Because claw hammers are equipped with a V-shape as part of the head, it makes it easy to remove any nails from a surface. The other part of the claw hammer's head is flat which makes it useful for pounding nails into wood and other materials. The key to purchasing a claw hammer is paying attention to quality. The hammer's handle and grip are where you should focus on the quality, and obviously, hammers that cost more are made with stronger materials.

In addition to the claw hammer, it's useful to keep a ball-peen hammer on hand. The ball-peen hammers are on the smaller side - which makes them ideal for working with metal. This type of hammer is obtainable in different sizes, depending on the actual project on which you might be working. If you are making jewelry, you'd want a small ball-peen hammer. If you're working with larger metal pieces, you'll want a larger size.



Claw Hammer



Ball Peen Hammer

Staple Gun

When it comes to fabrics, carpet, and insulation, having a staple gun on hand is very helpful. This tool makes fastening jobs much easier and can be worth investing in if you own a home. From putting in carpeting to doing light construction work, this tool has a surprising amount of versatility.

If your carpets have started to come up from the floor, you can easily use a staple gun to tack them back down, or using it on furniture that needs fixing. In addition, you can use a staple gun to secure wood in smaller projects, like making wooden frames or make a birdhouse for your backyard.



Staple Gun

Pliers

Pliers are not a one-size-fits-all kind of tool. Each type is designed for specific uses, so you can either invest in a complete set or just add as a new project requires a specific plier. Here are some of the more common ones:

- Slip-joint pliers, which is the most common, is typically used for uncomplicated, lightweight projects such as holding on bending flat or round stock, can crimp sheet metal, loop a wire, cut soft wire nails, remove cotter pins, and, if necessary, loosen or tighten a nut.
- Needle-nose pliers work best when you're in a tight space or working small details that don't require too much force. They are normally used for cutting and holding by artisans, jewelry designers, electricians, IT employees and other tradesmen mostly to bend, re-position and snip wires.
- Tongue-and-groove pliers are commonly used for turning and holding nuts and bolts, gripping irregularly shaped objects, and clamping materials. This is a very common tool for plumbing contractors.
- Lineman's pliers are used by electricians to straighten, cut, grip, twist, push, and pull wire. They are used to cut and bend light gauge metal and pull staples and nails.
- Cutting pliers are used for work involving cutting and skinning wires, cutting and removing pins nails and other fasteners. This is another common tool for an electrician.

Pliers are mainly used to grip, twist, turn and cut metal and wires. Generally, having at least one pair of pliers in your home can be very handy.



Pliers

Wrench and Socket Set

When looking for a wrench and socket set to add to your toolbox, you should always look for a set that contains both the measurements in the United States customary units and metric units.

Although either side can closely fit the other measurement, having the exact size prevents you from rounding the edges of the nut or bolt, and makes it easier to remove or tighten the nut or bolt in the future.

Having a set of various sized crescent or adjustable wrenches is also a valuable addition to your toolbox. If you purchase a complete set of wrenches and sockets, oftentimes the set will include a 3-piece set of crescent wrenches.

One option is a cordless impact wrench. The impact wrench doesn't require your muscles to tighten or loosen a nut or bolt, but you must be careful because it has a strong torque that could strip the threads or break off the head of a bolt if you over-tighten it. Also, the impact wrench is heavy and a little bulky, so it may not fit in tight spaces.

Level and Straight Edge

If you are planning to put up wall shelving, pictures or mirrors, a level and straight edge are tools you should have on hand before you start.

The most common of the two is the bubble level. This level features a bubble encased in liquid. You can move this tool around until the bubble is perfectly centered in the middle of the liquid in the tube. This level can be used vertically or horizontally, depending on what you're installing.

For a more high-tech leveling, you can opt for a laser level. This device comes in various styles like a laser chalk line level or rotating laser level. With this tool, you can easily mark a spot on the wall, or set the laser level on a ladder or tripod to keep the line up while you hang any object.



Laser Level



Level



Wrench & Socket Set

Stud Finder

A tool that's also required when putting up wall shelving, pictures or mirrors is a stud finder. This device can determine precisely where you can anchor your screws or nails without damaging your walls while trying to hang heavy items. Essentially, a stud finder does exactly what its name says: It finds studs in your wall.

When hanging heavier objects on a wall, it's important to have the anchor support of a stud. Using a stud finder gives you the extra security and peace of mind that your shelf with your valuables or your full-size mirror won't suddenly fall off the wall because it wasn't anchored properly.

This device typically runs on batteries, so you don't have to worry about plugging in the tool. Just hold the stud finder flat against the wall, power it up, and wait for a flash or beeping sound (depending on the specific stud finder you're using). Draw a small mark with pencil whenever you find a stud, and you're ready to properly secure what you are planning to hang on your wall.



Stud Finder

Pocket Multi Tool



Utility Knife

Utility Knife or Pocket Multi-tool

When you need to do any type of cutting around the house, a utility knife is the most appropriate tool for this. From cutting carpet to removing old caulking to opening boxes, a utility knife is the best tool for all these types of projects. Just have to make sure you sharpen or replace the blade after.

When using a utility knife just be careful because it is a razor blade and as easily as it cuts carpet, it can do the same to your finger. A safer alternative to a utility knife, although not as sharp, would be a ceramic blade knife. It's a much safer alternative but the blades aren't as durable.

An alternative to the utility knife is a pocket multi-tool. There are many brands with various combinations of options so it will come down to what options you're looking for in a multi-tool and the price which ranges widely by brand.

Extension Cords or Power Strip Surge Protectors

Whether you're attempting to use an electrical power tool far away from an electrical outlet or simply want to plug in some lights for the lights on your Christmas tree, an extension cord is a must-have tool that every homeowner should have. The important point here is to make sure you're choosing the safest option for your home.

Generally, there are three different options when it comes to extension cords: light-duty, medium-duty, and heavy-duty extension cords are best for smaller electrical items. This includes table lamps, a clock, or a phone charger. For anything that uses more than seven amps of electricity, you'll want something more powerful.

Larger devices (up to 10 amps) like your television, are best when paired with a medium-duty extension cord. These are typically thicker than light-duty cords and include a space for a third prong in the outlet.

A heavy-duty extension cord is used for anything using 10 to 15 amps. Examples are electric tools and some appliances. Depending on how much power you need to complete a project, you're likely safe with heavier duty cords.



Extension Cord

A Supply of Various Nails, Screws and Other

Keeping an assortment of various nails, screws, bolts, washers and nuts in your home is purely for convenience because you'll find that there are many times you will need them and making a special trip to the hardware store every time you do, costs you precious time and money. Plus, nails, screws bolts, washers and nuts are relatively inexpensive, so having an inventory of the more common ones will make your life easier.

Most of us wouldn't be able to anticipate which specific nail or screw or even nut, bolt and washer we will need for our future home projects so it would always be easier to look for a comprehensive assortment and have that in your home inventory. Amazon has a large selection of pre-set assortment kits of the more common nails, screws, nuts, bolts and washers for under \$50.



Nail & Screw Assortment

Ladder and Stepping Stool

Having both a tall extension ladder and a step ladder will come in handy for multiple projects that come up around your home. Of course, if you live in a condominium, a step ladder that's not too tall would likely be the only ladder you will need.

Extension ladders, are normally used for exterior work around your house. Safety is always paramount when using an extension ladder. Make absolutely sure the locking mechanism is in place before you start to climb and never go higher than the last three rungs on your ladder. In addition, keep the ladder propped against a structure that cannot move and face the ladder when climbing up or down.

Step ladders are a bit easier to keep safe - considering they're lower to the ground - but it's still important to follow all precautions. Always confirm the step ladder is fully locked in place before stepping on it. And, as is the case with extension ladders, avoid standing on the top three steps.



Step Ladder



Extension Ladder

Various Safety Equipment

Anytime you are doing any home projects, safety should always be taken seriously and having the proper safety equipment is always a necessary tool when you are doing your home projects. Here are some of the more common safety equipment:

- Safety glasses to protect your eyes from flying debris, especially if you are working with metal objects. Make sure it wraps around the side of your face and meets the ANSI standards.
- Safety gloves that are cut resistant and can protect your hands from high temperature materials or from splinters. Also make sure the gloves come with grip material for your hands.
- Ear plugs or hearing protection when working with loud machinery.
- A back brace if you are planning to do a lot of heavy lifting.
- A harness if you will be working above ground or on a ladder.
- An electric meter if you are working on any electrical work around your home. The meter will test the wires to let you know if it's "Hot" or still has a charge running through it and prevent you from an electric shock.

It's always good to work on projects around your home, because it allows you to get to learn a lot about your residence and the fixtures, equipment and materials that were used to build your home. One word of caution when deciding if the job is a DIY project, know your limitations and the risks of outcome if something did not go as planned.

Once you know that, then it's a decision of whether you can DIY, or hire a professional to do the project.

Japanese Whisky: Real vs. Fake

By: David Tsujimoto ~ owner of Aloha Whisky, Tokyo

Buyer Beware: Fake Japanese Whisky

Yes, you heard right. Fake Japanese whisky has infiltrated the global market and are flooding liquor shops, especially in the USA. So, how and why is this happening? Let's start from the beginning.

Though it started much sooner for enthusiasts, an international buzz in Japanese whisky began in 2003 with the release of Sofia Coppola's *Lost in Translation* and the quote, "For relaxing times, make it Suntory time." Then in 2015, Suntory's Yamazaki sherry cask was named single malt whisky of the year in Jim Murray's annual *Whisky Bible*, at the time the highest accolade a whisky could receive. This set the Japanese whisky world on fire, literally.



Since whisky production requires aging, large Japanese whisky companies couldn't just ramp up production to meet demand. They were stuck with stock they had prepared for, pre-*Lost in Translation* and the store shelves were now an empty void; or a huge opportunity for savvy/sneaky shochu companies.

In comes Matsui Shuzo and the Kurayoshi distillery. Although they have been producing spirits since 1910, they only started distilling whisky in 2017. So how can you explain them immediately releasing an 18 year old "Japanese" whisky? The answer is, you can't.

Unlike single malt Scotch whisky, Japanese whisky of old was never popular and didn't require many laws or regulations. Thus, companies like Matsui Shuzo imported bulk Scotch whisky in giant plastic containers, bottled them in Japan, put kanji on the label and wrote "Product of Japan" all over the packaging.

Riding on hype of the fact that foreign consumers don't walk around with Japanese whisky history books and calculators, the Kurayoshi brand became highly successful. They were so successful that others soon followed until the amount of fake Japanese whisky outnumbered the genuine.

Not only do these tactics hurt the consumers, they also hurts the reputation of real Japanese whisky. Thus, the Japan Whisky Research Center along with legitimate Japanese whisky distilleries and the government drew up a set of rules to regulate these practices. They go as follows:

- The spirit must be fermented, distilled and aged at a distillery in Japan.
- It must contain malted grain (eg barley, wheat, rye), but other non-malted cereal grains can also be included.
- Water used to make the spirit, must be extracted in Japan.
- The spirit must be aged for at least three years.
- Must be bottled in Japan.

Although these rules are good in principle, it'll still be hard for the non-whisky enthusiasts to differentiate between the real and fake when confronted with a mammoth wall of kanji and Japanese artwork labels.

To make things even more complicated, bigger whisky makers like Suntory, Nikka, Ichiro's Malt, Mars etc. have world blended whiskies. But luckily they're labeled as such and aren't deliberately trying to deceive.



Real vs. Fake



Akashi Kurayoshi Tottori

Some "Japanese" whiskies found in Hawaii to be weary of. This also includes rice whisky, aged shochu and aged Awamori:

- Kurayoshi
- Tottori
- Matsui (some are real nowadays)
- Akashi (white label)
- Fukano (rice whisky)
- Kikori (rice whisky)
- Ohishi (rice whisky)
- Kamiki
- Iwai
- Kaiyo
- Shinobi
- Shibui
- Mikuni
- Meiyo
- Kura (aged shochu)
- Kujira (aged Awamori)
- Sensei
- Yamato
- Tenjaku

Furthermore, real Japanese distilleries are popping up every month in Japan, some of which used to be fake Japanese whisky distributors. And at this point over 90 licenses to distill whisky in Japan have been granted. Thus, the confusion will continue and your head will spin even before you take a sip of whisky.

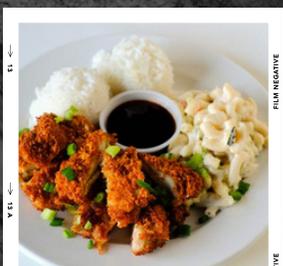
If you're ever shopping and in doubt, please send me a direct message on Instagram @alohawhisky with a picture of the "Japanese" whisky in question. I am quite busy nowadays, but I'll always have time to address this issue.

A HISTORY ON THE PLATE LUNCH & MAC SALAD

Consumed by everyone, from businessmen to beach goers, the plate lunch is still as simple as it was back in the plantation days. Usually with two scoops rice, one scoop mac salad, but it's the protein section that reflects the mix of cultures and ethnicities of the islands (Hawaiian - kalua pork, Korean - kalbi, Japanese - chicken katsu or salmon teriyaki, Filipino - pork adobo).

Dating back to the 1800s, the plate lunch became popular through hungry laborers on the pineapple and sugar plantations. Workers who immigrated from across the world, would bring their lunches to work with them in bento boxes or "kau kau tins" (traditional old Hawaiian lunch boxes) and leftover rice was used as an inexpensive filler to go alongside whatever meats were left over from dinner the night before. The plate lunch served as a universal language for these workers, who often spoke different languages than each other as they congregated over their midday meal.

In the 1930s, lunch wagons were created. Lunch wagons were devised to cater to laborers and drive-ins and instead of being served in bento boxes, they were served on compartmentalized paper plates, therefore originating the name "plate lunch".





By the 1950s, the plantation era had ended but the plate lunch carried on and continued to be a primary item on the menu at drive-ins and popular eateries statewide. Some of these eateries that are still popular today include Rainbow Drive-In, St. Louis Drive-in, L&L Drive-In or now known as L&L Hawaiian BBQ.

No matter how much time has passed the plate lunch has never failed when it comes to serving anyone and everyone. From bringing lunchtime unity between immigrants from around the world during the plantation era to present day, feeding all people from businessmen to surfers to vacationers.

Mac Salad ~ A dish that was thought to be adapted due to its cheap, easy and imperishable ingredients, consisting of boiling dried elbow macaroni noodles (versus potatoes which are perishable) and whipping together mayonnaise using ingredients most already had around the house. Although never definitively placed, due to its European influenced ingredients (pasta and mayonnaise), the origins of the mac salad was thought to have been influenced through European or Western plantation managers who had local housekeepers, chefs and gardeners. These plantation managers were thought to consume potato salad, exposing it to the workers who substituted the more expensive and perishable potato for the cheaper, non-perishable and pantry friendly macaroni noodles. To cut costs, the mayonnaise was always homemade, never store bought, to the point where Wesson Oil Company would send out jars with markings on them to show the proper measurements for how much oil, salt and eggs were needed and people often had "mayonnaise-making jars".





PRODUCE
SHOWCASE:

Daikon

What is it:

Daikon, translating into "big root" in Japanese or also known as white radish, is a root vegetable that resembles the shape of a large carrot. Originating from Japan, Japanese daikon is grown locally and can be found at almost all local grocery stores and farmers markets. This vegetable can be eaten either raw or cooked. Raw daikon has a crunchy, juicy texture and consists of a sweet and lightly spicy flavor, where cooked daikon resembles a soft, potato-like texture with a milder flavor than when served raw. When cut and pickled, daikon has a very distinct sulfurous or "rotten egg" smell, similar to kimchi.

Nutritional Facts:

Not only is daikon very low in calories, but it is also fat and cholesterol free. It is also a great source of various nutrients such as calcium, magnesium, potassium and copper but it is highest in vitamin C and folate. Folate is a B vitamin that is part of cellular growth and red blood cell production, folate abundant foods are also important during pregnancy.

How to Select & Store:

When shopping for daikon, look for ones that are firm with smooth skin, heavy for its size and free of cuts and soft spots. Remove any attached leaves and store separately, these should keep for as long as three days. Stow the unwashed, daikon in a wrapped plastic bag or cellophane for up to two weeks in the refrigerator; if cut, the the raw daikon can most likely keep for longer but beware that the strong smell could disperse throughout your refrigerator and may be absorbed by other ingredients being stored.

Cooked daikon will keep for up to a few days in an airtight container and pickled daikon will keep for a month or more.

How to Prepare & Serve:

Daikon is often served as a side dish and can be eaten raw, cooked or pickled. Raw daikon can be used in salads and slaws or turned into tsukemono (Japanese for "pickled things") or put into sandwiches, commonly used in a classic Vietnamese banh mi.

Although the skin is edible, daikon is often scrubbed and peeled before cooking. Often boiled in broths and soups, daikon can also be roasted, steamed or baked and some use it in stir-fries or as a substitute starch in stews and other dishes.



Above: An irregular shaped daikon grown locally in a neighbors garden.



Spicy Roasted Daikon French Fries

(a unique, untraditional recipe using this versatile vegetable, sourced from Valentina Wein - Cooking on the Weekends blog)

*Disclaimers:

- Don't expect the same texture that you'd find in a potato French fry (the roasting process leaves these daikon fries with a caramelized crust but they will be considerably softer than crisp).
- Try them before you decide to dip them in a sauce.

Ingredients:

- daikon
- fresh ginger
- chili paste
- soy sauce
- grapeseed oil (olive oil also works)
- sugar
- salt

Directions:

1. Cut the daikon into sticks.
2. Combine the oil, chili paste, soy sauce, ginger, sugar and salt. Drizzle this over the daikon and mix.
3. Spread the coated daikon fries on a sheet pan and roast until they are golden brown on all sides.
4. Drain them a bit on paper towels and serve.

