

# What is a Marlinespike Knife? 4 Examples

By **Pat Covert** - May 18, 2020



*Down to the sea with marlinespikes, from left: the Fox Sailing Knife, Boker Magnum Catamaran, Colonial Marlin Spike and Camillus Marlin Spike.*

## Marlinespike Knife: A Definition

One of the more unusual patterns in the long history of folding knives is the marlinespike. It is a blend of the early rope knife—not the sunfish, but the [wharnccliffe](#) version—and the singular, knitting-needle-like marlinespike.

These were combined into a single folder and have served many a sailor and [diver](#) well. The blade is a sure-handed rope cutter, and the spike is made for working with knots and splicing rope. In fact, there is a knot dubbed the marlinespike hitch that serves as a temporary knot for various needs.

Also known as rigging knives, marlinespike knives live today in the form of reproductions of the original folders and thoroughly modern send-ups. Climbers, who use a lot of different knots in their endeavors, also find marlinespike knives useful.

## Example 1: Colonial Knife's Marlin Spike



*The press-lock is a common blade release for marlinespike folders that dates back to the knife's early days. However, there's more here than meets the eye: The Colonial Marlin Spike's lock also serves as a bail and a shackle opener.*

Colonial Knife's Marlin Spike is a reproduction of the original marlinespike knife issued by the U.S. Navy in World War I—with some modern touches.

The locking, 440C stainless steel spike and partially serrated—a plain-edge version is also available—sheepsfoot slip-joint blade are both 3 inches long. The scales are a simulated brown jugged-bone Zytel and the bolsters are stainless. The spike locks via a press-lock on the base, which also serves as a shackle opener and bail for a lanyard.

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## Example 2: Boker Magnum Catamaran



*The marlinespike hitch is a simple, temporary knot that can be easily removed once it has served its purpose. The knot is attached to the Boker Magnum Catamaran's spike in a scenario for which it can serve as a handle.*

The **Boker** Magnum Catamaran has the traditional profile of the old marlinespike folders, replete with a press-lock bail/shackle opener for the spike tool and a 4.375-inch stainless steel frame.

The 3.3-inch spike and 2.75-inch partially serrated sheepfoot slip-joint blade are 440A stainless steel. You'll find a nifty shackle opener on the handle, also stainless steel, pinned to the frame.

### Example 3: Camillus Marlin Spike



*While the plain edge of the Camillus Marlin Spike's sheepfoot blade might not quite match the speed of a serrated edge, when it comes to wood it vastly out-carves the rest of the pack. This is a big consideration if you need a knife that will step outside The Rope Zone.*

The **Camillus** Marlin Spike is a modern take on the original. The stylized, 4-inch frame is black G-10 with stainless steel liners. The 2.75-inch sheepfoot blade—the only one of the test group without serrations—is VG-10 stainless steel with a black, carbonitride titanium coating.

It secures via a linerlock. The folder's 2.25-inch spike locks via the press-lock/bail and is black coated as well. It is the lightest (3.2 ounces) of the test knives.

### Example 4: Fox Sailing Knife



The Fox Sailing Knife has a cutout in the blade that serves as a shackle release. A shackle's screw tab is caught in the jaws of the blade's open maw.

The Fox Sailing Knife delivers with a cool, 4-inch handle of textured blue G-10. Stainless liners house linerlock mechanisms for both the 3-inch modified wharncliffe blade of 420 stainless steel and 2.25-inch spike.

The partially serrated blade has a cutout that serves as a shackle opener, along with a hole in the base of the frame that can accept a lanyard.

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