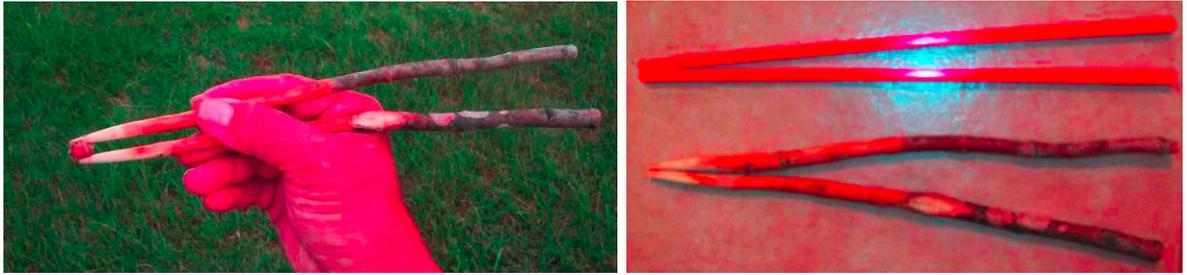


## Chopsticks for Survival: DIY!



I've seen beautiful wooden spoons and a wooden fork, all whittled by a talented whittler. Don't think you can do that? Take a Chinese DisasterGuy Tip: whittle your own chopsticks.

In China, forks, spoons, and knives are not provided with your food. Instead, you get two long, thin sticks. Typical Chinese chopsticks are about 10-1/2" long and just under  $\frac{1}{4}$ " in diameter. The back half is square, and the front half is a  $\frac{3}{16}$ " round cylinder with a flat end.

It shouldn't be too hard to find some straight branches about that size. Dry wood works better than green wood. Measure a 10-1/2" length. Cut both ends off square. A sharp pocketknife with a locking blade works best. Always cut AWAY from you. Cut the branches off. Scrape off the first 5-1/2" of bark and whittle this into a  $\frac{3}{16}$ " cylindrical section or a point. You can leave bark on the last half for a better grip, or you can remove the bark and shape the other 5-1/2" into a square  $\frac{1}{4}$ " section. Try it with bark first and see if you like the grip. Make two chopsticks, please!

And there are your chopsticks! One way to hold the chopsticks is shown above. So is a comparison between plastic chopsticks and our whittled ones.

Chopsticks can be used to pick up small pieces of food, like a fork. They can be used to sweep food into your mouth from a bowl, like a spoon. The one thing they're absolutely useless for is a knife. But you used a pocketknife to make them, so that problem is solved. Don't let someone else eat with your chopsticks.

To clean chopsticks, wipe them first, and run clean, hot, almost boiling water or a few drops of bleach over them. If you have the option, use the hot water trick before eating with them, too. You can also scrape the wood off the first inch to get a clean eating surface. Does "Survival Chopsticks" sound funny? Try it and see!