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## Dajo Survivor Knife Review

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*Reviews - Knives*

Survival knives have taken all forms over the years from monstrous sawbacked fixed blades to small folding razor knives designed to fit in an Altoids tin. Probably the most important thing about a survival knife though is having one on you when you actually need it.



I've always thought that a good compromise was a decent small to medium sized belt knife that was easy to carry, and that you wouldn't mind carrying and using while you're in the woods. It looks like the folks at Dajo Adventure Gear may have had similar thoughts because their Survivor knife fits that niche precisely. The Dajo Survivor is more than just a knife; it's a compact survival kit in its own right. It's also a model that just about any backpacker, hiker, or outdoorsman can afford too, something that can't always be said of some of the survival knives on the market.

Dajo takes a minimalist approach with their Survivor. It isn't designed to chop down trees, saw through logs, or fight off wild boar. It is designed to be easy to pack and give you a sturdy fixed blade for all of your basic camp and survival chores. At a compact 7 ½ inches overall, the Survivor carries easily on the belt in its provided Cordura nylon sheath. The sheath is well suited to the knife in that its also sturdy, but lightweight, and features a pouch for some of the included gear. A bit more on that later though. The



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Survivor's sheath allows for both horizontal and vertical carry on the belt or on a pack strap. The knife itself is a full tang design constructed of 7Cr17MoV stainless heat treated to 57 HRC. It has a skeletonized handle, as well as a slot cut into the blade, to help reduce weight. The handle is fitted with textured black G-10 scales for grip. Various holes are present for attaching a lanyard or for lashing the knife to a pole for use as a spear, if that's your sort of thing. The Dajo Survivor features a plain edge, clip point blade 3 5/8 inches long. The factory edge was very good and was capable of shaving hair from my arm with minimal effort. The spine of the features a notch just above the handle scales designed for use with a ferro rod.

The Dajo Survivor features thoroughly modern and somewhat angular lines. I found it fairly attractive but had wondered if the relatively square handle would actually be comfortable in use. Once I had a chance to work with the Dajo I was pleased to find that those concerns were unfounded. The Survivor is nimble in the hand at only 3.3 ounces and the G-10 handle slabs are well rounded and actually proved to be very comfortable. The handle is only 3/8 inches thick but, at 1 1/8 wide and with the large finger notch, it proved to provide an ample gripping surface to keep the hand from cramping up under use. The combination of textured G-10 and relief holes on the handle make for a secure grip. I found the Survivor worked fine in a traditional saber grip, as well as with an inverted grip with the edge towards the body. I tend to use the later technique a fair bit when whittling and stripping bark off of walking sticks. For basic camp chores the Dajo's stainless, plain edge blade works just fine. It'll do impromptu camp kitchen chores, cut cordage, sharpen up marshmallow sticks, and cut and notch tent stakes just fine. It's really a pretty good all around tool.



Now, what makes the Dajo Survivor more of a kit, rather than just a knife, is the sheath. As mentioned, the Dajo's sheath has a pocket on the front. Whereas many knives have a basic pocket on the sheath, which often holds a sharpening stone or similar sized object, the Dajo has a Velcro secured flap with a compact two pocket pouch that folds out for easy access to its contents. The two pockets are designed to hold a safety whistle and a fire starter. The whistle appears to be one of the cylindrical Bison Designs aluminum models and is coating with a glossy black anodizing. It has a split ring on it so that you can remove it from the pouch and secure it on your person if you so desire, or so that you can connect it to the sheath with a lanyard for additional security. I've used the Bison whistles in a number of kits I've put together my self. They aren't the loudest signaling whistles on the market, but they're easy to blow for both kids and adults and they are still very good. The cylindrical form makes them more compact than some of the louder whistles too, so it's a good compromise.



The fire starter is a Swedish Light My Fire Firesteel. Dajo uses the compact Mini Firesteel, which is good for 1500 strikes. That ought to be more than enough to get you through most emergencies. The notch on the spine of the Survivor is sized to work perfectly with the diameter of the Mini Firesteel. I found in my testing that it worked as advertised. It provided a positive contact with the steel and threw a good quantity of sparks. When you have the knife reversed to use the notch as a striker, your thumb rest naturally in the groove in the blade and makes for a positive and comfortable hold. The last bit of kit included with the Survivors sheath is 5 feet of cordage attached to the bottom of the sheath. You can use this to help build shelter, traps, or other things, or use it to lash the Survivor to a stick.



Now, I'm not generally a fan of taking you're only tool and lashing it to a stick. If you throw it, you risk damaging it, or possibly losing it. If you need to use it as a knife, which you'll probably need much more often than a spear, you either have

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