



Outdoors-Magazine.com

<http://outdoors-magazine.com>

# Tramontina Machete

**OldJimbo**

- Gear reviews and tests - Edged tools - Long blades -



Publication: Saturday 7 September 2002

---

Copyright (c) Outdoors-Magazine.com under a Creative Commons

Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike License

---

After trying a cheap Coglins machete to compare with the old heavy Barteaux, I wasn't in any great hurry to try more cheap machetes! Eventually though I was buying some axe handles and saw some Tramontinas. I'd heard good things about them so I parted with the \$11.00 (CAN) and grabbed one...

I had to sand the top of the wooden handle to make it comfortable enough to use - and I even took a few minutes to hone the edge to try to remove the worst of the coarse factory grinding - and folded over edge. Finally today I took it trail clearing and was very impressed. It does a wonderful job of cutting devils club and is far less tiring to use than the heavy Barteaux. It only got about half an hour's use today but it sure did a lot of cutting! The edge held up just fine, and I was one happy trail clearer. The thin light blade with just a minimal sharpening job cut right through the devil's club without causing them to snap back and needle me.

Naturally I had gone without thinking to bring a larger axe or saw, so when it came time to remove some dry snags I had to work with the Gransfors hatchet. Naturally I had to try the Tramontina to see the edge fold, chip and destruct! Well it didn't - and then I was really impressed! It's not much of a chopper due to the lack of weight but it did a reasonable job of splitting out enough chunks to start a fire. Cutting thin green poles of shelter building size was also handled very well.

You need a lot more than a half day's use to really get to know a tool, but the first impressions are very favorable. I was immediately able to see a vast difference between this machete and one that cost a little more but was total junk in use. The edge held up and while I don't expect much through honing back - I'd expect to see some improvement. The handle was very comfortable if a little less than totally secure. I have some more sanding and shaping to do on it - and then I'm sure I'll be very happy with it. It does impart far less of a vibration back to the wrist than the aluminium handled Barteaux - partly due to the handle and partly due to the lighter weight of the blade.

You don't get much of a sheath with a \$10 machete but it did come with a vinyl sheath which can be "improved" to hold a sharp edge. I'll probably use some thin wood panelling strips to make a box inside for the blade.

I'll be getting some pictures up in the next few days to compare the two machetes and the modifications I'll be making to the handle, to make it more secure in the hand. I'm not too sure where to drill a thong hole - but I'll get that figured out.

### **And After A Few Days..**

I'm sure happy with the way the machete is working out. So far it hasn't bent in light splitting - and the edge has only one significant ding - probably from a rock since it's on the tip and I don't worry about the tip. I'm just doing the polishing of the bevel today so all the machete has had is some rough sharpening with a coarse stone. I've been chopping quite a bit of green alder in the 1-2" range and the edge has held very well.

I have a buddy picking up another Tram so that I can see if there is any major difference. That's probably not going to tell very much if they're from the same lot - but maybe.. The thing is that the original Tram is holding up so well that I'd figure that it's one of the better ones. Quality control of \$10 tools is pretty well going to be non existent so it's hard to tell if what I've been using is representative of the rest of the Tramontinas out there. Maybe I have the best of these and got the worst of the Coglins - who knows? The bottom line is that if a person could have some hope of getting a machete that's pretty reasonable for \$10, then they have an awesome clearing implement. While a brusher will do a lot more work, a machete is light to carry and fun to use.

## Tramontina Machete

---

I'm also in the process of making the edge on the Barteaux far more acute so that it chops better in hard wood without glancing. Maybe it'll chop devils club better now too. We'll have to see!

I guess I am seeing some good stuff concerning machetes. In trail clearing I wander along with an axe and saw. I sure don't need a full sized brusher to add to the load. I'm still concerned with safety though. You sure have to be careful unless you are wearing chainsaw pants or chaps. You don't get very far unless the machete is really sharp with the plant life around here. A slip with a machete and you're going to need a lot more than a few band-aids!

*Post-scriptum :Original article at [OldJimbo's site](#).*