

# mo's Pasta cooking tips

## Salt

Salt the water heavily as soon as the water starts boiling. "Salty like the sea," says Signora Passalacqua, the mother of my Sicilian friend Gioacchino. Salty water gives the pasta a base of flavor you just can't get from salting it afterwards. I use the French grey sea salt we sell. Dollar per pound, it's still the best sea salt I've ever tasted.

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## Stir Soon

As soon as the pasta goes into the water, stir. This is the best way I've found to keep it from clumping and sticking.

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## Stop Short

Cut the cooking short of done, when the pasta is still very *al dente*, i.e. it has a bit of snap to it.

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## There and Back Again

Drain the water, shake the pasta once or twice in a colander, then quickly return it to a warm pot. Mix it with the sauce that you've already added to the pot. (Or, if you've cooked the pasta sauce in a separate pan, add the noodles right to it.) The extra bit of cooking in sauce means, instead of absorbing water, the pasta absorbs sauce, making it even more flavorful.

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## Warm Bowls

Drain the hot pasta water into your serving bowls, then toss it out just before you add the pasta.

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## Tricks That Don't Work

Adding oil to the water to keep noodles from sticking. Throw noodles against the wall to see if they're done. Running water on pasta after it's cooked to keep the strands separate. In my experience, none of these help. Some—like running water on cooked pasta—even worsen the flavor.



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