

Perfect Pasta Tips and a Gourmet Product Give Away

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Photo: [Colangelo and Partners](#)

Grocery costs continue to rise, and pasta is no exception. While still affordable, the days of being able to easily absorb an “oops” batch of ruined noodles into the family budget are fewer and further between. So I called up the product rep for Garofalo’s signature pasta line to see if I could score some perfect pasta tips from an industry insider. As it turned out, owner Massimo Menna was happy to oblige. Bonus? The Garofalo folks are also throwing in a selection of their specialty pastas as a contest give away for Wise Bread readers. Read on for details on how to enter, what pasta cuts made the prize list, and of course the pasta tips from Massimo himself. (Contest deadline is Tuesday, July 29th, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. EST)

Having previously test driven this product for an [ethnic cooking blog](#) I write, I was psyched when Garofalo wanted to do this give away. In addition to the more traditional forms of pasta we are all used to seeing at the grocery store, they offer some super sexy shapes for specialty sauces. One in particular I tried was the [schiaffoni](#), a large oval tubular pasta hefty enough to support some seriously heavy sauce. But I digress. On to the details . . .

Massimo’s Perfect Pasta Tips

- **Use enough water.** Four quarts of water per pound of pasta is what he recommends. (Don’t forget to have a big enough pot on hand.)
- **Celebrate the salt.** No need to be unhealthy about it, but be liberal enough to enhance the flavor of the pasta. A good hefty pinch or two should do the trick.

- **Go with the extreme heat until a full boil has been reached.** Then reduce to more of a rolling boil for the duration of the cooking time. (Speaking for myself, I'm for anything that cuts down on the mess and streamlines the cleanup process.)
- **Skip the oil.** Say what? This was news to me, but apparently if you are disciplined about using enough water and keeping the temperature at a rolling boil, there is no need for the use of oil to prevent the sticking of the pasta. Who knew?
- **Do it al dente.** It really should have a bit of a bite, and not be soggy. Different pasta types will have different cooking times, so follow the directions on the package. Something I learned when I tried the schiaffoni meal I mentioned above. It really is quite a thick and hearty pasta, so my eight minute rule for more basic dried pastas definitely did not apply. I had to keep checking every few minutes, as by the time I'd figured out I was "off", the package was underneath a pile of goopy kitchen carnage.
- **Save the boiling liquid.** A cup or so will do you, depending on the size of your sauce batch. Not only is it a good thickening agent for your sauce, but apparently helps it stick to the noodles better. Yeah, baby!
- **Don't rinse.** This again relates to wanting your sauce to adhere to your pasta as much as possible. It's all about flavor distribution, folks.

What Made the Cut

The prize pack cut, that is. Three different types of pasta from their signature line:

- **1 package of traditional spaghetti**
- **1 package of the whole wheat penne rigate**
- **1 package of the calamarata**

How to Enter

Simply **submit either a pasta tip or a sauce recipe** by next Tuesday, July 29th at 9:00 a.m. EST. That's it. You'll be entered to win. Once the winning comment is selected, we'll contact you and put you in touch with the Garofalo product rep to initiate shipping of your prize pack.

For those of you who are interested in trying out some of their other shapes who don't necessarily live next to a Kings, an A & P store or a Costco, these pastas are also available on [Amazon](#). Oh, and P.S? While all pasta sauce entries are welcome, it might be fun to do this in the spirit of Wise Bread and see how many we can get that provide major yum for minimal bucks. I know you won't let me down.