- Prep Time: 5 Minutes
- Cook Time: 12 Minutes
- Total Time: 17 Minutes
- Yield: 2 generous servings
- Intensity Level: Low (Beginner Friendly)

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Ingredients

The Core

- 8 oz (225g) Dried Pasta: We recommend wide egg noodles, fettuccine, or farfalle (bowties). These shapes hold the butter sauce exceptionally well.

- 4 tbsp (56g) Unsalted Butter: High-quality butter is essential here. Since there are so few ingredients, the butter is the star. Use European-style butter if possible for a higher fat content.

- 1/2 cup (120ml) Reserved Pasta Water: This is the secret ingredient. The starch in the water binds with the fat to create a creamy sauce.

The Seasoning

- 1/2 tsp Fine Sea Salt: Plus more for the pasta pot.

- 1/4 tsp Freshly Cracked Black Pepper: Coarsely ground is best.

- Optional: 1/4 tsp Garlic Powder (for a savory kick) or a pinch of crushed red pepper flakes.

The Garnish (Optional but Recommended)

- 1 tbsp Fresh Parsley: Finely chopped.
- 2 tbsp Parmesan Cheese: Freshly grated.

Equipment Needed

- Large Pot (at least 4 quarts)
- Colander
- Large Skillet or Sauté Pan (12-inch)
- Wooden Spoon or Tongs
- Measuring Cups

Step-by-Step Instructions

Phase 1: The Boil (Time: 0–10 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Prepare the Water
Fill your large pot with 4 quarts of water. Place it over high heat and bring it to a rolling boil.
Intensity Note: Keep the heat high until the boil is reached; this should take about 5–7 minutes.

2. Salt the Water
Once boiling, add 1 tablespoon of salt. The water should taste like the sea. Do not skimp on this step; it seasons the noodles from the inside out.

3. Cook the Pasta
Add your pasta to the boiling water. Stir immediately to prevent sticking.

- Time: Cook according to the package instructions, but subtract 1 minute from the recommended time. You want the pasta *al dente* (firm to the bite).

- Intensity Note: Reduce heat to medium-high to maintain a gentle boil without overflowing.

Phase 2: The Emulsification (Time: 10–14 Minutes | Intensity: Medium)

4. Reserve the Liquid (Crucial Step)
Before draining the pasta, scoop out 1/2 cup of the starchy pasta water and set it aside in a small bowl. Do not skip this. This liquid is the magic that makes the sauce creamy.

5. Drain the Pasta

Drain the pasta in a colander. Do not rinse the noodles with cold water. Rinsing removes the starch necessary for the sauce to cling to the pasta.

6. Melt the Butter
Return the empty pot (or place your skillet) over medium heat. Add the 4 tablespoons of butter.

- Intensity Note: Medium heat is vital. You want the butter to melt and foam slightly, but you do not want it to brown or burn.

- Time: 1–2 minutes.

7. The Toss
Add the drained noodles directly into the melted butter. Toss vigorously with tongs or a wooden spoon to coat every strand.

8. Add the Pasta Water
Pour 1/4 cup of the reserved pasta water into the pot. Toss continuously.

- The Science: The heat of the pan and the vigorous tossing motion force the fat (butter) and the water (starch) to bind together, creating a creamy emulsion.

- Intensity Note: Increase heat to medium-high for 30 seconds while tossing to help the sauce thicken.

- Time: Toss for 1–2 minutes until the sauce looks glossy and coats the back of a spoon. If it looks dry, add the remaining 1/4 cup of pasta water.

9. Season

Add the salt and pepper. If using garlic powder or red pepper flakes, add them now. Toss once more to distribute.

Phase 3: The Finish (Time: 15 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

10. Serve
Transfer to warm bowls. Top with grated Parmesan and fresh parsley. Serve immediately.

Time and Intensity Summary Table

Phase	Action	Time	Intensity
Boil	Heating water	5-7 Mins	High (Waiting)
Cook	Boiling pasta	8-10 Mins	Low (Monitoring)
Prep	Reserving water/Draining	1 Min	Medium (Fast action)
Sauce	Melting butter/Tossing	3 Mins	Medium (Constant motion)
Finish	Plating/Garnishing	1 Min	Low

Recipe Variations

1. The “Cheesy” Version

Add 1/2 cup of finely grated Parmesan cheese to the butter and pasta water mixture. Toss vigorously off the heat so the cheese doesn’t clump. This creates a thick, Alfredo-like sauce.

2. Garlic & Herb Noodles

Mince two cloves of fresh garlic. Sauté the garlic in the butter for 30 seconds before adding the pasta. Add a pinch of dried oregano.

3. Spicy Chili Crisp Noodles

Omit the black pepper. Add 1 tablespoon of Chili Crisp (or chili oil) to the melted butter before tossing. This adds a crunchy, spicy texture.

Nutritional Information

Disclaimer: Nutritional information is an estimate based on standard ingredients. Values will vary based on the specific pasta brand and butter used. Serving size assumes 1/2 of the recipe.

Calories: 450 kcal
Total Fat: 24g
Saturated Fat: 15g
Cholesterol: 60mg
Sodium: 300mg (does not include added pasta water salt)
Total Carbohydrates: 52g
Dietary Fiber: 2g
Sugars: 1g
Protein: 9g