



## Misconceptions About Food - mental\_floss on YouTube (Ep. 2)

### Misconceptions

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=rN557NHXnI0>

<https://nerdfighteria.info/v/rN557NHXnI0>

Hi, I'm Elliott, and this is mental\_floss on YouTube, and today I'm going to talk to you about some misconceptions about what you're eating.

[intro music plays]

Misconception #1: MSG causes headaches. I know, MSG? This is, like, so early-2000s of me. Anyway, MSG is a less fancy way of saying monosodium glutamate, which is found in soy sauce, fast food, frozen dinners, and elsewhere. The US Food and Drug Administration has tested MSG three times, in 1958, 1991 and 1998. Each time, they found MSG to be safe for consumption, as long as it was in normal amounts. The Mayo Clinic confirms that researchers haven't found a link between MSG and symptoms like headaches, sweating, and nausea. I personally have found a link between MSG and sweet and salty deliciousness.

Misconception #2: Chimichangas are from Mexico. Though it's not clear exactly who invented the chimichanga, it was invented in Arizona. One story goes that they were invented on accident by a woman in Tucson who dropped a burrito into a deep fryer. Another story says that they were invented in Phoenix by a restaurant owner, who thought frying burritos might preserve them for longer. That's gross. Either way, chimichangas are American.

Misconception #3: Twinkies never expire. I'm assuming you have the common sense to know this, but it's so funny, we're just going to talk about it anyway. Some believe that Hostess stopped producing Twinkies a long time ago, because the snack has a shelf life of decades. In fact, the shelf life is forty-five days, in the store. In my home, the shelf life is years, because even I have my limits on what I will eat.

Misconception #4: A tomato is a fruit. Alternatively: a tomato is a vegetable. You can stop arguing about this, because it's actually kind of both. It really depends on who you ask. A botanist will tell you that tomatoes fall into the category of fruit, but most still consider it a vegetable. In the late nineteenth century, this issue actually came before the US Supreme Court, because an importer wanted tomatoes to be considered fruits rather than vegetables. At the time, fruits weren't taxed, but vegetables were. The Supreme Court decided that, yes, tomatoes were fruits, sort of, but they would still be considered vegetables, as vegetables were usually served at dinner; in, with, or after the soup, fish or meat, and not like fruits, generally as dessert.

Misconception #5: You should wash your chicken before cooking it. Most sources, like the US Department of Agriculture, advise against this for one major reason: food safety. Washing a chicken in the sink can cause all that gross, raw chicken bacteria just to spread around your kitchen. This bacteria includes Salmonella and Campylobacter, which are responsible for a combined 1.9 million cases of food-borne illnesses in the US annually. Plus, washing chicken isn't really necessary, because once you cook it at 165 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, that bacteria will be killed anyway. Take that, bacteria, ffffft, ffffft ffffft.

Misconception #6: White chocolate is chocolate. White chocolate contains no chocolate. Its ingredients are sugar, cocoa butter, milk, vanilla and lecithin. This tends to confuse people, because cocoa butter sounds like what we might put in chocolate, and cocoa butter does come from the cocoa bean. Basically, when the bean is cracked, the contents are turned into chocolate liquor. This liquor can be separated into cocoa solids and cocoa butter. To be considered chocolate, a product must contain cocoa solids. Sorry white chocolate, but I don't know who you are.

Misconception #7: Adding salt to boiling water will cook food faster. The idea behind this misconception actually makes a lot of sense. If

you took chemistry, you'll know that salt water has a different boiling point, so it should make your pasta cook faster. But in reality, if you add 29.2 grams of salt, the boiling point increases by a mere half-degree Celsius. Not only is that not a noticeable difference, you also likely wouldn't ever add that much, considering that is full five teaspoons of salt. To noticeably change the water's boiling point, your food would be disgustingly salty.

Misconception #8: The stuff coming out of your meat is blood. Your red meat actually has a lot of water in it. When that water combines with the protein myoglobin, what results is a liquid that resembles blood. Animals like chickens and fish don't have a lot of myoglobin, so that's why we consider them white meat. Red meat is animals who have more myoglobin. The more you know. About meat blood.

Misconception #9: Foods cooked with alcohol are non-alcoholic. Many believe that when they cook with alcohol, like wine, the alcohol gets burned off in the process. But according to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, how much alcohol that evaporates depends on how you're cooking. For instance, if the alcohol is added to boiling water towards the end of the cooking process, 85% of the alcohol might stay in your food. But if you braise food with alcohol for two and a half hours, around five percent of the alcohol is left. My method involves putting the wine in a glass while I cook, and then when I'm done cooking, zero percent of the wine is left. It's incredible. It's like magic.

Misconception #10: Microwaves cook food from the inside out. Microwaves actually heat food from the outside. A lot of people believe this misconception because their microwave-heated food is hotter in certain layers than others. But this has to do with the content of those layers. Layers that contain more water are easier for the microwave to heat, because they are more absorbent. Sometimes the more absorbent layer lies just beneath the surface of food, hence the confusion.

Thank you for watching Misconceptions on mental\_floss on YouTube, made with the help of all of these wonderful people. If you have a topic you would like to see in an upcoming episode of Misconceptions, please let me know what it is in the comments section down below, and I will see you next week. Bye!

[outro music plays]