

HEALTH

EATING @home

Mac & Cheese Recipe

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Ingredients:

For the Breadcrumbs

- 8 slices white sandwich bread (torn into pieces)
- 6 cloves garlic (minced)
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 5 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

For the Mac and Cheese

- 1-pound pasta shells (I used medium size shells)
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- ½ cup unsalted butter
- 5 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 5 cups whole milk
- 12 ounces cheddar cheese (shredded - 3 cups)
- 12 ounces Swiss or Gruyere cheese (shredded - 3 cups)
- 12 ounces American cheese (diced small)
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper

Directions:

- Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish with butter.
- Make the Breadcrumbs: In a food processor, process the bread until it forms fine crumbs (you should have about 4 cups crumbs). In a large skillet, heat the butter over medium-low heat. When it foams, add the garlic and cook, stirring, until the garlic is fragrant but not browned, 1 to 2 minutes.

Add the breadcrumbs, increase the heat to medium, and cook, stirring frequently, until toasty and browned, 7 to 9 minutes. Stir in the salt and pepper, remove from the heat, and transfer to a large plate to cool for 5 minutes. Stir in the Parmesan cheese.

- Make the Mac and Cheese: In a large pot of salted boiling water, cook the pasta according to the al dente directions on the package (if not included, cook for one minute less than called for). Drain, rinse, and toss with the vegetable oil to prevent sticking.
- In a large saucepan or Dutch oven, heat the butter over medium-high heat until melted. Add the flour and cook, constantly whisking, until it turns a light and toasty brown color, 3 to 6 minutes. Gradually add the milk while whisking, then increase the heat to high and bring it to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium and cook, whisking, until it thickens, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the cheeses, a few handfuls at a time, and whisk the sauce until smooth. Whisk in the salt, black pepper, and cayenne. Stir in the cooked pasta, and season to taste with more salt and pepper.
- Pour the mixture into the buttered baking dish and spread the breadcrumbs evenly over the top. Bake until the topping is browned and crisp and the cheese is bubbling, about 8 minutes to 10 minutes. Leftovers can be stored, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.

Recipe Notes:

If you cannot get American cheese, a good substitute would be Colby cheese. The original recipe calls for 3/4 teaspoon or more cayenne pepper, but since I would be serving this to the boys, I just used a small amount. If you like spicy, ramp it up!

Enjoy!