

Foodie Book Club

Creamy, Crunchy Mac and Cheese



What You Need

500g – (1 packet) pasta

Sauce

1 large onion – finely chopped

4 cups of milk (1 litre) – see Tips

10 tbsp (100g) plain flour

6 tbsp vegetable oil – see Tips

1 tsp salt

1 tsp pepper

2 cups (200g) grated cheese – see Tips

2 tbsp - Dijon mustard – See Tips

½ cup (120g) mayonnaise

Crunchy Topping

3 tbsp vegetable oil

1 tbsp dried parsley

1 cup bread crumbs (120g) – see Tips



I wasn't a big fan of mac and cheese; that was before going to live in Cincinnati Ohio where mac and cheese is the go-to dish at every pot luck lunch, BBQ and every tail-gating get together at the local college 'football' games.

In America, macaroni and cheese is taken very seriously, with most families keeping their recipes close to their chest along with how they vote.

When the lovely Mr G and I moved back to County Durham, my American friends got together and gave me the best goodbye gift I could ever have asked for, although the lovely Mr G would have preferred a truck with giant tyres.

They gave me a book full of treasured family recipes, including all the family secret ingredients, maybe they thought it was ok to share them with me as I was leaving the country?!



This creamy crunchy mac and cheese is one of those recipes and I thought I'd make it the first recipe I share with you.

It's a great recipe to have to hand for those days when tummies are rumbling and time isn't on your side.

Easy to make ahead the day before and put in the oven an hour before you need it, and if you're a planner like me, make it and when it's cold, cover it in tin foil and put it in the freezer for another day.

To use it, take it out of the freezer and into the fridge to defrost completely, and then bake it for an hour in a hot oven heated to 180c until piping hot and bubbling in the middle.

Enjoy!

Lee x

Recipe



Heat the oven to 180c

1) Cook the pasta according to the packet instructions. Once it's cooked, drain the pasta really well and set it aside until needed.



Sauce

2) In a large pot, add 3 tablespoons of the oil and the chopped onion. Cook the onion on a medium heat until the onion is soft and slightly transparent. (Approximately around 5 minutes). Once cooked, place the onion onto a plate and set it aside until needed.



3) Place the remaining 3 tbsp of the oil into the same pan as the onion was cooked and place the pot on to a medium heat. Add the plain flour and stir it until the oil has soaked up all of the flour. Keep the flour mixture on the heat, keep stirring and let it cook for a couple of minutes to cook the flour.



4) Take the mix off the heat and add the milk one cup at a time. After each addition of a cup of milk, whisk it in until the milk has completely been soaked up before adding the next cup.

Did you make this recipe?

Share your creations with us on Facebook and Twitter @KarbonHomes
#FoodieBookClub

Follow Foodie Book Club on Twitter @book_foodie

Find more Foodie Book Club recipes at karbonhomes.co.uk/foodie-book-club



5) After all 4 cups of the milk have been added, return the mixture to a medium heat. Keep whisking until the sauce is thick and creamy.



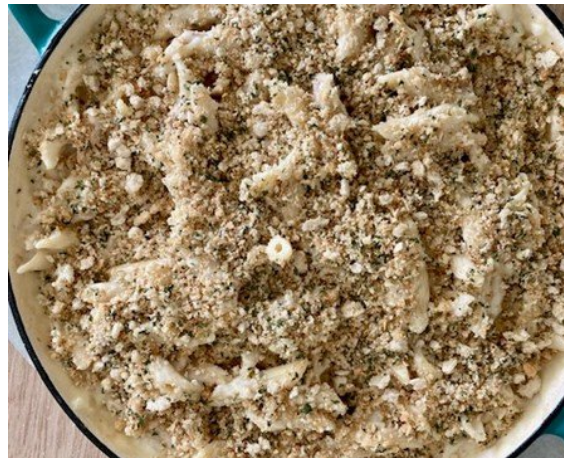
6) Add all of the cooked pasta to the pot with the sauce and mix really well together until the pasta is completely covered. Set aside until needed.



7) Add all of the cooked pasta to the pot with the sauce and mix really well together until the pasta is completely covered. Set aside until needed.



8) Place the breadcrumbs, the dried parsley and 3 tbsp of oil into a small bowl. Give them all a stir until it's all well mixed together



9) Pour the pasta mixture into an oven proof dish and cover the top of the pasta with the breadcrumb mixture.



10) Bake in the hot oven until the top is crispy, golden and the pasta is piping hot in the centre of the pot (Approx 30 – 45 mins – See Tips). If the breadcrumbs are getting too brown before the pasta is hot enough, cover the pot with foil and continue cooking until hot in the middle. Serve straight from the oven proof pot.



Tips

Milk

Any milk is good for this recipe.

Oil for sauce

If you want a richer flavour sauce, use 100g of butter instead of vegetable oil to make the sauce

Cheese

1) If you have more cheese to use, then use it all up. The more cheese the better it tastes.

2) I've used mature cheddar cheese in this recipe, but it's a great dish to use up any leftover bits of cheese. That's what the freezer is for, right?

3) If you've any leftover bits of blue cheese, parmesan in the freezer, this is the time to get them out and use it up. It doesn't matter if you use lots of different flavours of cheese in this cheese sauce, the more the merrier, they just make the sauce more interesting.

Mustard

Dijon Mustard brings out the flavour of cheese and I'm a lover of Dijon mustard in lots of other cooking too, so if you don't have any, it's worth getting yourself a jar. If you don't have any Dijon, then miss out the mustard completely.

Bread Crumbs

1) Bread that's a few days old is the best thing to use to make breadcrumbs, so don't throw away any stale bread, get it in the freezer until there's enough to bring out and use for this dish.

2) To make the bread crumbs, place the stale bread into a food mixer, switch it on and let it run until the bread has turned to crumbs.

If you've not got a food mixture, toast the stale bread and once cooled, put the crispy slices into a freezer bag and crush with a rolling pin or the back of a saucepan.

Oven

All ovens vary so adjust cooking time accordingly.