

Three Cheese Macaroni

12 servings using a 3-quart baking dish

Ingredients

Bread Crumb Topping:

3 large pieces of sourdough bread – if you don't have sourdough on hand, use some other artisanal white bread – you may need more slices

2 T melted butter

Cheese Topping:

6 oz grated aged cheddar

½ c grated Parmesan (use the dry, ground type – it stops the other cheeses from clumping)

2 oz grated Gruyère

Cheese Sauce:

6 c milk

2 bay leaves

½ c butter

½ c flour

2 t salt

¼ pepper

½ t nutmeg

¼ t cayenne

12 oz grated aged cheddar

6 oz grated Gruyère

500gr macaroni

Directions

Tear the fresh bread slices (crusts removed) into small pieces ½" – 1"

You'll need about 3 cups of lightly packed torn "crumb"

Put into a medium bowl.

Melt the butter, and drizzle over the "crumbs".

Toss gently with your hands, until all the crumbs are lightly buttered.

Set aside.

In another medium bowl, mix 6 oz grated aged cheddar with ½ c Parmesan and 2 oz grated Gruyère.

Toss lightly using your fingers to separate the grated strands. The Parmesan will help keep them separate.

Set aside.

Preheat the oven to 375°

In a deep saucepan, combine the milk with the bay leaves.

Heat until the milk is at a bare simmer. Turn off the heat and let the bay leaves infuse the milk.

In a large pot, heat 4 litres of water to a boil.

In a deep skillet, over medium heat, melt the ½ c of butter.

Add in the ½ c of flour, and stir until the flour cooks and thickens and forms a roux.

Remove the bay leaves from the milk.

Slowly add the heated bay-infused milk into the roux, about a cup at a time, while stirring and the mixture starts to thicken.

Once all of the milk has been added, continue cooking until the mixture is uniform and has thickened somewhat.

Add in the salt, pepper, nutmeg, and cayenne. Stir to combine.

Add in the grated cheddar & Gruyère.

Leave to cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, while you cook the macaroni.

Add the macaroni to the boiling water.

Let cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally to keep the macaroni pieces separate.

The macaroni will be a little undercooked, as it will finish cooking in the cheese sauce.

Drain the macaroni. Put back into its cooking pot.

Pour the cheese sauce over the macaroni, stirring thoroughly.

Lightly grease a 3 quart baking dish – with at least 2½ " deep sides.

Spoon the macaroni and cheese into the baking dish, smoothing the top.

Sprinkle on the 3-cheese topping, evenly over the top.

Sprinkle the buttered crumbs over the cheese topping.

Bake until the breadcrumbs are golden, for at least 30 minutes.

Let rest for about 15 minutes once out of the oven.

Tips:

1. Once made but not baked, the macaroni & cheese can sit for up to an hour before baking.

2. Divide between two 2-quart dishes (be sure that one you're using to freeze is freezer to oven proof – foil always works). Bake one and freeze the other. Simply cover with tin foil & freeze. To cook from frozen, bake covered in the center of a 350° degree oven for 1½ hours, remove the foil, and continue cooking for another 15 minutes until the crumbs are golden brown and the cheese sauce is bubbling throughout. Do a quick temperature check in the center, it should be 80°C / 176°F.

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