



Wine Country 'Mac & Cheese'

Some old stand-bys never go out of favour but can be given new life with a little tweaking. Our Mac & Cheese uses cavatappi – corkscrew shaped pasta – instead of elbow macaroni and a combination of three cheeses: old cheddar, Parmesan and blue cheese. If you are in a hurry, skip the oven baking and serve it up right from the stove top.

1/2 lb (225 g) dry cavatappi (corkscrew) pasta, about 3 cups uncooked
3 slices bacon
1 medium onion
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons flour
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
Pinch nutmeg
2 cups milk
3/4 – 1 cup grated old cheddar cheese
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 cup crumbled blue cheese

Topping:

1-1/2 tablespoons butter (divided)
3/4 cup coarse bread crumbs
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 375F.

In large pot of salted, boiling water, cook pasta until tender but still firm, about 5 minutes (check directions on package for recommended cooking time). Drain, rinse under cold water, drain again and set aside.

While pasta is cooking, cut bacon into 1/2-inch slices; chop onion. Place bacon in saute pan over medium heat; cook 2 to 3 minutes and fat is released. Stir in chopped onion; reduce heat to medium low and, if necessary, add 1 or 2 teaspoons olive oil. Saute onions and bacon about 5 minutes and onions are soft. Remove bacon and onions from pan and set aside.

Add butter to pan. When butter is melted, make a roux by stirring in flour and cooking 3 to 5 minutes, stirring regularly. Scrape up any bits on the bottom of the pan. Add Dijon mustard and nutmeg; stir into mixture.

Gradually add milk to roux, stirring with each addition. Cook over medium heat, stirring, until mixture bubbles and thickens. Stir in grated cheddar and Parmesan cheeses and crumbled blue cheese. Heat just until melted. Add cooked cavatappi pasta and stir to mix. Heat 3 minutes and pasta has warmed through.

Melt butter. In small bowl, combine bread crumbs, grated Parmesan cheese and 1 tablespoon melted butter. Stir to mix well.

Brush 6-cup shallow oven-proof baking dish with remaining melted butter. Transfer pasta to baking dish. Sprinkle bread crumb mixture evenly over top. Place dish on baking tray bake on middle rack on oven for 15 – 20 minutes. Topping should be golden and crisp, sauce should be bubbling at edges of baking dish. Remove from oven and let cool 3 minutes before serving. Makes 4 servings.