

Creamy Mac N Cheese

Ingredients:

16 ounces elbow macaroni or small shell pasta
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/4 teaspoon granulated garlic or garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon mustard seeds, crushed*
20 cranks of black pepper (or 1/8-1/4 teaspoon ground)
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
3 cups milk
1 cup heavy whipping cream
1/2 tablespoon dried parsley
1 teaspoon salt
2 eggs
12 ounces (3 cups) shredded cheddar cheese
8 ounces (2 cups) shredded mozzarella cheese
8 oz (2 cups) gruyere cheese
Additional cheddar, parmesan, or bread crumbs** for topping

Instructions:

1. Cook pasta according to package instructions. Drain and rinse with cool water. Place pasta in a large mixing bowl and set aside.
2. In a large sauce pan, combine cayenne, garlic, crushed mustard, black pepper, and butter over medium heat. When butter starts to sizzle, add the flour and stir until mixed and bubbly.
3. Add 2 cups of the milk and whisk with the butter mixture over medium heat until thick and bubbly. Whisk constantly to avoid lumps or scorching.
4. Turn off heat and whisk in remaining 1 cup of milk and the cup of cream, along with the parsley and salt.

5. Crack eggs into a separate mixing bowl and whisk briskly, until they are no longer very “stringy”. Whisking constantly, pour a half cup of the hot creamy sauce in with the eggs. Continue whisking and adding sauce to the eggs, until you’ve added about 2 cups of the sauce in with the eggs. Then pour the eggs into the saucepan with the rest of the sauce, whisking to incorporate.

6. Pour the sauce over the pasta in the large mixing bowl. Stir to combine. Stir in shredded cheeses. Spread into a lightly greased baking dish.

This recipe makes a very full 9×13-inch dish, so you can also divide it between a couple dishes for a thinner layer (I like to do a 9×13 dish and an 8×8 dish).

7. Sprinkle top with parmesan cheese, shredded cheddar cheese, or bread crumbs. Bake uncovered at 325 degrees for about 45 minutes, until hot and bubbly.

This casserole can be made ahead and stored in the fridge for a couple days before baking. If it’s been in the fridge a couple days, however, you may need to drizzle about 1/2 cup of additional milk over top before baking, as the pasta tends to absorb more liquid as it sits.

Black Beans and Sausage

2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 pound kielbasa or other smoked sausage, cut into 1-inch pieces

3 medium carrots, diced small

2 shallots, diced small

Coarse salt and ground pepper

2 garlic cloves, minced
2 cans (15.5 ounces each) black beans, rinsed and drained
2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley, plus more for serving
1/4 cup plain yogurt, for serving

Directions

In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high. Add sausage and cook until browned on all sides, about 8 minutes. Transfer to a plate. Add carrots and shallots to skillet and cook until beginning to soften, about 4 minutes; season with salt and pepper. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add black beans and broth and bring mixture to a boil. Add sausage, reduce heat to a rapid simmer, and cook until carrots are tender, about 12 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in parsley. Serve with more parsley and a dollop of yogurt.

Chicken a la King

Bake a whole chicken breast with just salt & pepper in the oven and set aside to cool.

If using homemade chicken broth, defrost. If using homemade cream of mushroom soup, also defrost, if frozen...obviously.

Diced one whole onion, 3 stalks of celery, and 3 carrots.

Saute in a large pan with salt and pepper and 1/2 stick of butter until soft.

Add 1 cup of flour to the sauteed vegetables and cook until flour is not visibly white anymore.

Add 4 cups of chicken broth (or 4 cups of boiling water and 4

bullion cubes) to the vegetable/flour mixture. Stir in a can of cream of mushroom soup and 1 cup of milk.

Just stir regularly for a few minutes, put in shredded or diced chicken breast.

Spoon over flaky biscuits and enjoy!

Chicken Barley Soup

Stock:

1 whole chicken breast (skin and bones too!)

1 whole onion (slice root end off, but leave on the onion skins, gives color to the stock)

2 whole celery stalks

salt & pepper

I put these items in a cast iron pot I have, just covered everything with water and let it simmer away with the lid on for about 2 hours. Using tongs I lifted the chicken out, lifted out & squeezed the onion, did the same with the celery. I put the chicken in the refrigerator to cool and left the pot with the stock in it on the stove top to cool as well. After about an hour, I strained the stock through a little mesh strainer and set it aside in the refrigerator.

Ingredients for the actual soup:

1 whole onion, peeled and chopped into small pieces

5"-6" sliced right off the top of a whole bunch of celery, leaves and all. Then chopped into small pieces

2 large carrots, peeled and cut into small pieces

Salt & Pepper

Canola Oil

3/4 cup uncooked barley

1 whole chicken breast, de-boned and diced (from stock preparation above)

Stock from above preparation

I sauteed the onions, carrots and celery in a small amount of canola oil for about 5 minutes, then added the chicken, the stock and barley. Salt & pepper to taste. I let this simmer for 1.5 hours. Serve hot. Refrigerate any leftovers.

Spicy Maple Glazed Chicken

1 LB chicken breast tenderloins (or boneless, skinless chicken breasts)

2 tsp of Montreal steak seasoning (spicy or regular)

1/4 cup maple syrup, plus 2 TB for finishing

1/2 cup sliced green onions

In a large zip top bag, combine maple syrup and seasoning. Drop in chicken tenders and coat. Marinate for 1-4 hrs before cooking. Heat a little canola oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add the chicken and cook until no longer pink and internal temp is 170 degrees. Remove chicken from skillet. Heat finishing syrup and green onions until just warm and serve over chicken.

Au Gratin Potatoes, Ham & Broccoli Casserole

For this recipe I use two boxes of store bought au gratin potatoes, a bag of frozen broccoli and a ham steak that I've diced. I mix everything together in a casserole pan and bake for 45 minutes at 450 degrees. The boxes of au gratin potatoes call for a lot of water, milk and butter. I only use what is called for using one box plus a 1/2 cup of milk because the ham and broccoli give off some much of their own water while cooking. The first time I made this I used the amounts called for and we ended up with a very soupy casserole.

Tamale Pie Casserole

1 1/2 lb hamburger

1 med. onion sliced

2 cups canned stewed tomatoes

1 sm. can of tomato sauce

2 cups corn

1 cups sliced black olives

1 t salt

1/4 t pepper

1 T chili powder

1 garlic clove

1/4 cup green pepper chopped

Topping:

1 1/2 cup milk

1/2 cup cornmeal

2 T butter

1 t salt

2 beaten eggs

1 cup shredded cheese

Brown hamburger and onion. Add tomatoes, sauce, corn, olives, green pepper and seasonings and cook for about 20 minutes. Pour into well greased x12 inch baking dish. Topping: Mix the milk, cornmeal, butter and salt, cook until thick. Add the eggs and cheese. Mix well and pour over meat mixture. Bake until top is browned. 350 degrees for 45 to 1 hour.

Easy Paella

1 box of yellow rice (or yellow saffron rice)

1 can diced tomatoes

1 can black beans (drained & rinsed)

2 tsp garlic powder

2-3 links of cooked breakfast sausage, cut into rounds (other sausage will work just fine too)

10-12 shrimp (shelled & cooked)

Any leftover veggies sitting in the fridge (roasted onion, broccoli, red peppers etc.)

Cook the rice, add the rest of the ingredients and warm until everything is heated through.

Korean Teriyaki Chicken w/ Maple Syrup

- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1 cup water
- 1/3 cup maple syrup
- 3 tablespoons dark sesame oil
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger root
- 2 teaspoons ground black pepper
- 5 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
- 1 cup brown rice
- 2 cups water
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch

Directions

1. Mix the soy sauce, 1 cup water, maple syrup, sesame oil, garlic, ginger, and pepper in a large resealable plastic bag. Set aside 1/3 cup of the mixture. Place the chicken in the bag, seal, and marinate at least 2 hours in the

refrigerator.

2. Place the rice in a saucepan with 2 cups water, and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat to low, and simmer 45 minutes.
3. Preheat the oven broiler. Lightly grease a baking dish.
4. Pour marinade from the bag into a saucepan, and bring to a boil. Mix in the cornstarch, and cook and stir until thickened.
5. Place chicken in the prepared baking dish. Basting frequently with the reserved 1/3 cup marinade, broil 8 minutes per side, until juices run clear. Place chicken over the cooked rice, and top with boiled marinade to serve.

Kielbasa & Roasted Vegetables w/ Mustard Sauce

Using 2 rimmed sheet pans, roast 2 chopped leeks, 1 large onion, 4 carrots and 5 Yukon Gold potatoes that have been tossed with olive oil, salt & pepper at 500 degrees for 30 minutes (or until browned). Add sliced kielbasa to the roasting vegetables 15 minutes into the cooking time.

Mustard Sauce:

1/2 cup sour cream

2 Tbsp Dijon mustard or Dijon country-style mustard

1 tbsp water

Serve roasted kielbasa, vegetables with the mustard sauce.