



Reduced-Fat Macaroni and Cheese

From Cook's Country

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WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: Most recipes for reduced-fat macaroni and cheese fall short on taste and texture. We found a recipe that tastes delicious, but isn't nearly as rich. Instead of using whole milk and heavy cream in this recipe, we used skim milk thickened with a roux. Low-fat cheddar cheese and Parmesan added a complex flavor to the macaroni and cheese without the added fat. We added part-skim ricotta cheese to add a creamy texture to this reduced-fat version. By making these substitutions in our recipe for reduced-fat macaroni and cheese we cut the calories and fat by more than half.

Traditional macaroni and cheese has 1,118 calories, 41 grams of fat, and 25 grams of saturated fat per main-course serving. Our Reduced-Fat Macaroni and Cheese has 493 calories, 15 grams of fat, and 10 grams of saturated fat per main-course serving.

Serves 4 as a main course or 6 to 8 as a side dish

Total time:

INGREDIENTS

Bread Crumb Topping

- 1/3 cup plain bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted

Macaroni and Cheese

- 1/2 cup shredded reduced-fat sharp cheddar cheese (3 ounces)
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup part-skim ricotta cheese
- 1 tablespoon table salt plus an additional 1/2 teaspoon
- 1/2 pound elbow macaroni
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon powdered mustard
- 2 1/2 cups skim milk
- 1/2 teaspoon Tabasco sauce (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

For the Topping:

1. Toss bread crumbs with butter in small bowl until combined. Set aside.

For the Macaroni and Cheese:

2. In food processor or blender, process cheddar, Parmesan, and ricotta until no large pieces of cheese remain, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer to bowl and set aside.
3. Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat broiler. Bring 4 quarts water to boil in Dutch oven over high heat. Add 1 tablespoon salt and macaroni and cook until tender, 7 to 9 minutes. Drain macaroni and leave in colander.
4. In now-empty Dutch oven, heat butter over medium-high heat until foaming. Add flour and mustard and cook, whisking to combine ingredients, until mixture is smooth, about 1 minute. Whisking constantly, slowly add milk and Tabasco, if using, and bring to full boil. Reduce heat to medium and simmer, whisking frequently, until mixture becomes slightly thicker than heavy cream, 2 to 4 minutes. Remove pan from heat. Whisk in cheese mixture and 1/2 teaspoon salt until cheese is melted. Add pasta and cook, stirring constantly, over medium-low heat, until mixture is steaming, 2 to 3 minutes.
5. Transfer mixture to broilersafe 8-inch-square baking dish and sprinkle with bread crumbs. Broil until crumbs are deep golden brown, 2 to 4 minutes, rotating pan if necessary for even browning. Cool 2 minutes. Serve.



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