



Five-Cheese Mac and Cheese

June 2, 2022

This creamy cheesy version of Mac & Cheese is a one of Elizabeth's signature dishes and embraces the high and the low traditions of American Mac and Cheese. The secret to the sauce is add a little bit of Velveeta at the end to make it super creamy. If you are looking for a twist to the classic, make this with roasted or blanched cauliflower instead of pasta—you won't believe how good it is.

Serves 10

Ingredients:

- 1 pound Penne Rigate (or 6-8 cups cauliflower)
- 4 cups half and half
- 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter
- 6 tablespoons unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika, plus more for garnishing
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 4 ounces *best-quality* gruyere cheese, grated
- 16 ounces *best-quality* extra-sharp white cheddar cheese, grated
- 6 ounces *best-quality* Fontina cheese
- 2 ounces grated *real* Parmesan-Reggiano cheese
- 4 ounces Velveeta cheese—processed cheese product

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add the pasta and cook at a rolling boil until just tender. Drain, rinse under cold water, drain again and set aside in a large bowl. (Alternatively, blanch or roast cauliflower if making with cauliflower instead of pasta)
3. Mix all the cheeses except the Velveeta together and set aside.
4. Bring the half and half just to a boil in a heavy saucepan and set aside. Meanwhile, melt the butter in another heavy saucepan. Add the flour, and whisk over low heat for 5 minutes. Do not brown. Remove from the heat.
5. Add the hot liquid to the flour mixture, and whisk well. Add the paprika, season with the salt and pepper, and return the pan to a low heat.
6. Add half the cheese mixture, and stir until combined. Cook over medium-low heat, whisking constantly, until the mixture thickens; about 5 minutes.
7. Add the Velveeta and whisk really well until it all incorporated and very creamy. Add sauce to the pasta (or cauliflower). Toss well to coat completely.

WHAT'S 4 DINNER?

#RECIPESTHATDISH

8. Coat a 13 x 9 x 2-inch flameproof baking dish/casserole with butter, and fill it with half of the sauced-pasta. Distribute half of the remaining cheese evenly over the pasta. Repeat layering.
9. Place the dish on a baking sheet, and bake until hot, lightly browned and bubbly, about 20 to 25 minutes.
10. If a darker crust is desired, place casserole under the broiler, 4 inches from the heat, until the top is golden and bubbling, 1 to 2 minutes.
11. Let sit 5-10 minutes and serve hot.