

# WHAT'S 4 DINNER?

#RECIPESTHATDISH



## Pumpkin Cheesy Mac (Vegan)

October 27, 2022

*If you grew up in the “Late 1900s” as the kids are calling it these days (!!), you’ll recognize the nostalgic flavor of this recipe. One bite, and you’ll be transported to watching a cartoon glove help a nice white lady in mom jeans get dinner on the table for her TV family. Though this dish does have a vegan “cheese” sauce made with pumpkin, the pumpkin flavor doesn’t shine here. If you’d like it to, I suggest mixing in 2 cups of diced, roasted butternut squash in step 5 (see note below for other veggie options). You can serve this straight from the pot, or transfer it to a casserole dish, add breadcrumbs, and put it under the broiler for a crispy topping.*

**Serves 6-8**

### Ingredients:

- 1 (15oz) can of Pumpkin or Butternut Squash Puree
  - 1 small yellow onion, chopped
  - 3 cloves garlic, minced
  - 3 tablespoons chopped sage
  - 1 pound Plant-Based meat or sausage (or use pork)
  - 1 ¼ cups unsweetened oat or almond milk
  - ½ cup nutritional yeast
  - ½ cup toasted cashews
  - 1 tablespoon cornstarch or arrowroot powder
  - ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
  - 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
  - 1 tablespoon white miso (or white chickpea miso, if avoiding soy)
  - 1 pound elbow, cavatappi, or rotini pasta
  - ½ cup panko breadcrumbs (optional)
- Kosher Salt and Freshly Ground Black Pepper  
Olive oil

### Method:

1. If using breadcrumbs, preheat broiler and grease a 9’x13” casserole dish with olive oil or cooking spray. Set aside.
2. Heat three tablespoons of olive oil in a dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add onion and saute until it becomes translucent and begins to brown at the edges, 10-12 minutes. Add minced garlic and sage. Cook until it becomes fragrant–30 seconds. Add plant-based meat and cook, breaking up with a wooden spoon, until it is fully cooked through (if it is sticking to the bottom of the pan, deglaze with ¼ cup of water, vegetable stock, or white wine and scrape vigorously with a wooden spoon/spatula). Taste and season with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, as needed.

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3. Meanwhile, in a high-speed blender, combine the pumpkin, oat or almond milk, nutritional yeast, cashews, cornstarch or arrowroot, smoked paprika, lemon juice, and miso. Add 1 teaspoon of kosher salt and ½ teaspoon of black pepper. Process until totally smooth and creamy.
4. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add pasta and cook to al dente (according to package directions). Before draining pasta, reserve 1 cup of pasta cooking water to loosen pumpkin-cheese sauce if it becomes too thick. Drain pasta and let cool briefly.
5. Combine cooked pasta and plant-based meat mixture in the dutch oven. Gently stir to evenly distribute everything. If adding additional cooked vegetables (see note), do so now. Add pumpkin-cheese sauce and mix until thoroughly combined. If mixture seems too thick, add some pasta water—a few tablespoons at a time—to thin it out. If not baking, serve immediately.
6. If baking, transfer mixture to the prepared casserole dish and spread evenly in the pan. Scatter breadcrumbs over the top and drizzle with a bit more olive oil to crisp them up. Put under broiler until the top is golden brown, about 5 minutes. Serve immediately.

## **\*Note:**

Bulk this recipe up even further by adding 2 cups of cooked vegetables, such as lightly steamed cauliflower or broccoli florets, cubed & roasted butternut squash, steamed chopped spinach, or blanched peas.