

Bacon White Cheddar Pesto Mac and Cheese

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Servings: 10

*1 package (16 ounce)
cavatappi
8 slices bacon
3 tablespoons butter
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 tablespoons flour
2 1/2 cups milk
1/2 cup whipping cream
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
2 cups (8 ounce) shredded
white cheddar cheese
1/2 cup prepared basil
pesto
1/4 cup panko bread
crumbs
1/4 cup grated Parmesan
cheese
fresh basil leaves (optional)*

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Grease a 2-1/2- or 3-quart baking dish.

Cook the cavatappi according to package directions until al dente. Drain.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Meanwhile, in a large skillet over medium-high heat, cook the bacon, turning occasionally, until crisp, about 10 minutes. Drain on paper towels. Finely chop the bacon.

In a saucepan over medium-high heat, melt the butter with the minced garlic. Whisk in the flour. Cook, whisking constantly, until golden, about 1 minute. Add milk, cream, salt and pepper. Whisk until smooth. Bring to a boil, whisking often. Reduce the heat to medium. Add the cheddar cheese. Cook, stirring, until melted.

Stir the pesto and half of the bacon into the cheese sauce. Pour over the cavatappi. Stir to combine. Transfer to the prepared baking dish.

In a small bowl, mix together the panko and Parmesan cheese. Sprinkle evenly over the cavatappi.

Bake until bubbly and just starting to brown, about 10 minutes.

Turn on the broiler. Broil until browned, 1 to 3 minutes.

Top with the remaining bacon. Garnish with basil, if using.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 157 Calories; 13g Fat (74.1% calories from fat); 5g Protein; 5g Carbohydrate; trace Dietary Fiber; 40mg Cholesterol; 294mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain(Starch); 1/2 Lean Meat; 0 Vegetable; 1/2 Non-Fat Milk; 2 1/2 Fat.