

Baked Pumpkin Mac and Cheese

Courtesy of @college_housewife
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Servings: 8

1 stick unsalted butter, divided
1 medium sweet onion, thinly sliced or diced
1/2 cup Sauvignon Blanc
1 pound elbow macaroni
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
2 cups whole milk
1 can pumpkin
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 1/2 cups grated mild cheddar cheese
1 cup panko bread crumbs
1/3 cup finely chopped pecans

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 40 minutes

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Grease a large rectangular casserole dish with butter or non-stick cooking spray. Set aside.

In a heavy-bottom skillet, add two tablespoons of butter on medium-low heat. Once the butter is melted, add the onions. Cook for 35 to 40 minutes or until the onions are caramelized and golden. Stir the onions periodically. About 5 to 10 minutes before they finish cooking, add one-half cup of the wine. Cook until most of the liquid has dissolved.

Bring a large pot of boiling salted water to a rolling boil. Add the macaroni and cook until al dente (this is usually 1 - 2 minutes less than the package instructions). Reserve one to two cups of the pasta water. Drain the noodles with cold water. Set aside.

In a large pot or Dutch oven, add four tablespoons of unsalted butter over medium-high heat until melted. Begin to whisk in the flour (1 - 2 minutes) until creamy and thickened to create a roux for the sauce. Slowly whisk in the milk. Bring the mixture to a low simmer until it is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. Whisk in the pumpkin puree, garlic, nutmeg and black pepper. Season with salt to taste. Stir in the cheeses until melted (if the mixture becomes very thick, add in 1/2 cup of pasta water at a time to loosen). Remove from the heat and stir in the cooked noodles and caramelized onions until well combined.

Transfer the macaroni mixture to the greased casserole dish. In a small bowl, whisk together the bread crumbs, pecans and two tablespoons of melted butter. Top the macaroni mixture with the bread crumbs.

Bake for 5 to 10 minutes or until golden and bubbly.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 374 Calories; 15g Fat (35.0% calories from fat); 10g Protein; 51g Carbohydrate; 2g Dietary Fiber; 39mg Cholesterol; 36mg Sodium. Exchanges: 3 Grain(Starch); 0 Vegetable; 0 Non-Fat Milk; 2 1/2 Fat.