

Tex Mex Chili Mac

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*1 pound bulk sausage
3 to 4 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1/2 package Trader Joe's
taco seasoning mix (spicier
than most other brands)
1 onion, medium diced
1 green bell pepper,
medium diced
1 small can diced chili
peppers, undrained
2 tablespoons minced garlic
2 cans (10 ounce) Mexican
diced tomatoes, undrained
1 can (15 ounce) tomato
sauce
8 ounces small elbow
macaroni
12 ounces shredded
Mexican blend cheese
sliced jalapeno peppers
(optional)*

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Grease a 13x9-inch baking dish.

Cook the elbow macaroni according to package directions. Set aside.

In a skillet, brown the Italian sausage for about 6 to 8 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to remove to a paper towel-lined plate. Set aside.

Add three to four tablespoons of olive oil to the frying pan on medium heat. Add the oregano and taco seasoning. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes until the spices have bloomed and you can smell the spices. Add the onions. Cook for approximately 3 minutes. Add the bell pepper. Cook for another 5 minutes. Add the garlic. Cook for another 2 to 3 minutes.

Add the diced green chilies, tomato sauce and diced tomatoes. Stir together until blended. Return the browned sausage to the pan. Stir. Lower the temperature to low heat. Simmer for 15 to 20 minutes until the flavors have blended.

Stir in one-third of the shredded cheese. Stir until melted and blended.

Place the cooked macaroni in a large bowl. Add the sauce. Blend thoroughly. Pour into the prepared baking dish. Smooth the top. Top with the remaining cheese. Scatter some jalapenos over the top, if desired.

Bake for 38 to 40 minutes until the cheese has thoroughly melted.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 7799 Calories; 832g Fat (94.7% calories from fat); 60g Protein; 46g Carbohydrate; 8g Dietary Fiber; 309mg Cholesterol; 4519mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain(Starch); 7 1/2 Lean Meat; 7 Vegetable; 161 1/2 Fat.