



# In the Kitchen

with Barb Agee ~ March 2014

## Macaroni & Cheese Goes Gourmet

The richness, creaminess and comfort of mac and cheese make it a favorite for a side dish or main course. From classics using various cheeses to more exotic fare with additions such as crab, pancetta or leeks plus many more combinations make this a timeless dish.



### Mac and Cheese with Gouda and Ham

3 tablespoons olive oil, divided	1 ounce Parmesan, freshly grated
6 pearl onions, peeled	1 ounce aged Gouda, grated
3 cloves garlic, unpeeled	1½ teaspoons fresh parsley, chopped
½ pound farfalline (small farfalle)	1½ cups Swiss Chard, thinly sliced
2 cups chicken stock, divided	1 cup ham, cubed
½ cup heavy cream	Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
1½ teaspoons fresh oregano, shredded (substitute ¼ teaspoon dried)	
1½ teaspoons fresh basil, chopped (substitute ½ teaspoon dried)	

Preheat oven to 375°F. Rub the onions and garlic cloves with 1 tablespoon of the oil. Wrap the onions and garlic in a square of heavy-duty aluminum foil; bake for 20 minutes. When cool enough to handle remove skins from garlic cloves and mash. Finely chop the onions. Set aside.

In a small saucepan, warm chicken stock. Heat remaining oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add half of the dry pasta, and sauté for 3 to 4 minutes. Add the remaining pasta and 1 cup of the stock. Cook for 5 minutes, or until most of the liquid is absorbed. Add remaining stock and cook, stirring frequently for an additional 5 minutes or until liquid is mostly absorbed and the pasta is al dente.

Remove saucepan from heat, stir in the cream, Parmesan, Gouda, garlic and onions. Cook over low heat for 3 minutes. Stir in oregano, basil and parsley. Gently add in Swiss Chard and ham. Season to taste with salt and pepper. *Makes 4 to 6 servings*

### Triple Sec Mascarpone Pudding

½ cup granulated sugar	¾ cup heavy cream
1 teaspoon salt	¼ cup Triple Sec or other orange liqueur
3 to 4-inch strips of orange zest	6 ounces mascarpone
1 cup orzo	1 tablespoon grated orange zest
1 cup freshly squeezed orange juice	Whipped cream or whipped topping ( <i>optional</i> )
2 tablespoons unsalted butter	

Bring 1 quart of water to a boil in a saucepan with the sugar, salt and orange zest strips. Add the orzo, and boil for 12 to 15 minutes, or until orzo is al dente. Save ¼ cup of the water; then drain the orzo and discard the orange zest. Return orzo to saucepan.

While the orzo boils, place the orange juice in a small saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Cook until reduced by half, about 5 minutes. Add the butter and cream to the juice; cook over low heat until the butter melts. Stir in the orange juice mixture, Triple Sec, mascarpone, grated orange zest and resulted pasta liquid into the orzo. Cook over low heat until the mixture comes to a boil. Turn off heat and let the pudding sit, covered for 30 minutes. May serve warm, room temperature or chilled. Serve with whipped cream and an orange twist. *Makes 6 servings*

## Mac and Cheese with Creamy Leeks

½ cup unsalted butter, divided  
3 large leeks, white parts only, halved and thinly sliced  
1 cup heavy cream, divided  
Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste  
½ pound gremelli  
2 tablespoons + 1 teaspoon flour  
1½ cups whole milk, warmed

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard  
Pinch freshly ground nutmeg  
4 ounces Gruyere, grated  
4 ounces Emmental, grated  
¾ cups panko breadcrumbs  
½ cup freshly grated Parmesan

Preheat oven to 375°F. Grease a 9x13-inch baking pan.

Heat 3 tablespoons of the butter in a skillet over medium heat. Add the leeks, and stir well to coat. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover the pan, and cook the leeks for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Uncover the leeks, stir in ½ cup cream, season with salt and pepper. Cook the leeks over low heat, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes, or until leeks are very soft.

Bring a pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Cook the pasta until it is just beginning to soften to the al dente stage. Drain the pasta, run it under cold water, and return it to the pot.

Heat 3 tablespoons of the remaining butter in a saucepan over medium-low heat. Stir in the flour and cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute or until the mixture bubbles. Slowly whisk in the warm milk and remaining cream. Bring to a boil, whisking frequently. Whisk in the mustard and nutmeg; reduce the heat to low and simmer for 2 minutes. Add the cheese to the sauce by ½ cup measures, stirring until cheese melts before making another addition. Pour the sauce over the pasta, add the leeks, and stir well. Season to taste and transfer to baking pan.

Melt the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter in a skillet. Add breadcrumbs and sauce for a minute. Add Parmesan and toss with breadcrumbs. Sprinkle breadcrumbs over the top of pasta. Bake the casserole for 20 to 30 minutes or until cheese sauce is bubbly and the crumbs are a deep brown. Allow to set for 5 minutes, then serve.

Chef's note: may substitute 6 ounces grated Cheddar and 2 ounces crumbled goat cheese for the Gruyere and Emmental.

## South of the Border Mac and Cheese

½ pound macaroni  
¼ cup butter  
¼ cup flour  
2½ cups whole milk, warmed  
4 ounces Cheddar cheese, grated  
2 ounces pepper jack cheese, grated  
4 ounces Fontina cheese, grated  
2 ounces mascarpone  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 medium onion, diced, divided  
3 garlic cloves, diced

1 jalapeno pepper, finely chopped  
½ teaspoon chili powder  
½ teaspoon smoked paprika  
¼ cup freshly squeezed orange juice  
½ pound shredded cooked chicken  
3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro  
1 teaspoon dried oregano  
2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice  
Salt and pepper to taste  
4 ounces Chihuahua cheese, grated  
4 scallions—white and green, thinly sliced

Preheat oven to 375°F. Grease a 9x13-inch baking pan. Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Stir in pasta; cook until al dente. Drain pasta, run under cold water and return to pot.

Heat butter in a saucepan over medium-low heat. Stir in flour and cook, stirring constantly for 1 minute. Increase to medium heat and slowly whisk in the warm milk. Bring to a boil, whisking frequently. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 2 minutes. Add the Cheddar, fontina, pepper jack and mascarpone cheeses into the sauce by ½ cup measures, stirring after each addition until cheese is melted.

Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add half of the onions, garlic and jalapeno, cook stirring frequently for 5 minutes. Add the chili powder and paprika and cook for 1 minute. Add the orange juice, chicken, remaining onion and oregano. Cook chicken mixture for 5 minutes, or until thickened. Stir in cilantro. Pour sauce and the chicken mixtures over the pasta and stir well. Stir in the lime juice and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Transfer pasta to baking pan. Sprinkle Chihuahua cheese over the top of the pasta. Bake the casserole for 20 to 30 minutes or until cheese sauce is bubbly. Allow to set for 5 minutes before serving. Garnish each serving with some sliced scallions. *Serves 6 to 8*

