

Classic Baked Macaroni and Cheese (Version 1)

Serves 4-6

Macaroni and Cheese

- 450 g elbow or other short, tube-shaped pasta
- Salt
- 56 g unsalted butter
- 32 g all-purpose flour
- 950 ml whole milk
- 1 clove garlic, finely grated
- 1 tsp smoked or hot paprika
- Freshly ground pepper
- 340 g sharp Cheddar cheese, grated
- 340 g Gruyère, grated

Topping

- 1 C panko
- 56 g melted butter or olive oil
- 25 g finely grated parmesan cheese
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

1. Cook **pasta** in a large pot of salted boiling water until it's barely al dente. (It should be more al dente than average pasta: It's going to continue to cook in the oven.) Drain and set aside.
2. Meanwhile, heat **butter** in a medium pot over medium heat. (The pot should be large enough to hold all the pasta when cooked.)
3. Whisk in **flour** and cook, whisking constantly, until the flour is foamy and just starting to turn a light golden brown, about 4 minutes.
4. Slowly whisk in **milk** to avoid clumping.
5. Add **garlic**, **paprika** and season with **salt** and **pepper**. Bring to a simmer, whisking constantly and paying special attention to the edges of the pot to make sure the flour mixture is totally incorporated.
6. Add grated **cheese** and whisk to blend until the cheese is completely melted. (The sauce will seem thick at first and thin out as the cheese melts; it will thicken while it bakes.)
7. Season with salt and pepper and add cooked pasta, stirring to coat well.
8. Heat oven to **220°C**. Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil (to catch any cheese drips).

Topping:

1. Combine **panko**, melted **butter** and **Parmesan** in a medium bowl.
2. Season with **salt** and **pepper** and, using your hands, mix well to ensure the bread crumbs are evenly coated.
3. Transfer the macaroni and cheese mixture to a 9 x 13 baking dish and scatter bread crumbs evenly over the top.
4. Place on prepared baking sheet and bake until macaroni and cheese is bubbling, thickened and creamy, and bread crumbs are evenly golden brown, **25 to 30 minutes**. Let cool slightly before serving.

Also add: togarashi, sausage, mushrooms, eggplant, red bell pepper



Easy Macaroni and Cheese (Version 2)

Serves 4

- 70 g pasta (farfalle or fusillili)
- 14 g salted butter
- 8 g all-purpose flour
- Salt (to taste)
- 1/8 tsp garlic powder
- 180 ml whole milk (or 120 ml milk + 60 ml heavy cream)
- 35 g Greek yogurt
- 85 g shredded cheddar cheese
- Ground black pepper or paprika (optional)
- Green peas (optional)
- Optional: 0.5 g black pepper or paprika (1/8 tsp)



1. Bring a pot of salted water to a boil (about 1 liter of water for every 100 g of pasta).
2. Add the **pasta** and cook until al dente. Drain and set aside.
3. In a small saucepan, melt the **butter** over **medium heat**.
4. Add the **flour** and whisk continuously for **about 1 minute** to cook the raw taste out of the flour.
5. Stir in the **salt** and **garlic powder**.
6. Gradually whisk in the **milk** (or **milk + cream**) a little at a time to avoid lumps.
7. **Cook for 3-5 minutes**, stirring, until the sauce thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon.
8. Reduce the heat to **low**. Stir in the **cheese** a handful at a time until fully melted.
9. Add the **Greek yogurt** and mix until smooth. Adjust seasoning if needed.
10. Add the cooked pasta to the sauce and stir until well coated.

Optional Baking Step

For a baked version of Mac & Cheese, transfer everything to a small baking dish (around 20 cm square). Sprinkle extra cheese on top and bake at **190°C** for **15 minutes**, until bubbly and slightly golden.

Protein Options and How to Incorporate Them

1. Cooked Chicken (Shredded or Diced)

Amount: 100–120 g (about 1 small cooked chicken breast)

How: Add the chicken to the cheese sauce after melting the cheese, just before mixing with the pasta.

2. Ham (Diced or Sliced)

Amount: 100–120 g

How: Stir the ham into the sauce after melting the cheese. You could also sprinkle it on top if you're baking the dish.

3. Cooked Bacon (Crispy, Crumbled)

Amount: 2–3 slices (about 30–50 g)

How: Crumble the bacon and mix it into the sauce or sprinkle it on top for a crunchy, smoky finish.

4. Tuna (Canned, Drained)

Amount: 80–100 g (about 1 small can)

How: Flake the tuna into the cheese sauce before combining it with the pasta. This creates a tuna casserole-like variation.

5. Cooked Ground Beef or Sausage

Amount: 100–120 g

How: Brown the ground meat in a separate pan, drain the excess fat, and stir it into the sauce before mixing with the pasta.

6. Eggs (Soft-Boiled or Poached)

Amount: 1 egg per person

How: Top each serving with a soft-boiled or poached egg for a creamy, rich addition.

7. Cooked Shrimp (Peeled, Deveined)

Amount: 100 g (small or medium shrimp)

How: Sauté the shrimp with a bit of garlic and butter, then mix them into the pasta before serving.

8. Chickpeas (Canned or Cooked)

Amount: 80–100 g (drained and rinsed if canned)

How: Stir into the cheese sauce for a vegetarian protein boost.

Tips for Balancing Protein with the Recipe

- Stick to the suggested amounts to avoid overpowering the dish.
- If the protein you add is salty (like bacon, ham, or tuna), reduce the salt in the recipe slightly.
- For proteins like chicken or shrimp, season lightly with salt, pepper, or garlic powder to complement the dish.

Mac & Cheeses nutritional breakdown (not with additions)

Cal: 400

Protein 14 g