



THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES

A FOOD BLOG

Butternut Squash Macaroni and Cheese (adapted from Branny Boils Over)

You can adapt this in a number of ways. The easiest is by changing the type of cheese, although if you can, using a combination of cheddar and a good melter will give you consistently great results. Branny adds in a couple ounces of cream cheese, which will make the sauce extra creamy, but I decided I could skip it and make this a little healthier.

Most homemade macaroni and cheese recipes call for a final baking step, which I've skipped here simply because I wanted to make this as easy as possible for a weeknight dinner. If you prefer your mac and cheese baked, I recommend pouring it into a broiler-safe 8-inch square pan, topping it with bread crumbs made from fresh bread, and heating it about 5 inches from the broiler for a couple of minutes.

Each serving has about 325 calories.

Serves 8

1 small butternut squash
12 ounces elbow macaroni
salt
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon powdered mustard
2 cups milk
4 ounces Monterey Jack cheese, shredded (1 cup)
4 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, shredded (1 cup)

1. Adjust oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 425 degrees. Cut the squash in half lengthwise, scoop out the seeds, and lay the halves cut side down on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake for 25-35 minutes, or until a butter knife inserted into the flesh meets no resistance. Scoop 2 cups of flesh from the squash and mash it with a fork, or, if you're willing to put a bit more effort into it (I wasn't), puree it in a blender or food processor.
2. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. Once it boils, add about a tablespoon of salt and the pasta. Cook the pasta until it's tender. Drain and return the pasta to the pot.
3. Melt the butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Once the foaming subsides, add the flour and mustard. Whisk constantly for 1 minute, then gradually whisk in the milk. Bring the mixture to a simmer over medium heat, whisking frequently, then lower the heat to medium-low and simmer for 5-6 minutes, until the mixture has the consistency of heavy cream. Add the cheeses, ½ teaspoon salt, and the squash, stirring until the cheese melts.
4. Pour the sauce over the drained pasta and stir thoroughly. Serve immediately.