



Mac 'n' cheese for one

★★★★☆ 4.3 | 17 ratings



By Justine Pattison

A really creamy and lush macaroni cheese on a budget. It's worth making a homemade cheese sauce here as it's cheap and can be made in just a few minutes. The sauce is also great as a topping for cooked vegetables or other pasta bakes.

This recipe is part of a Budget meal plan for one. In March 2023 this recipe was costed at an average of 98p when checking prices at five UK supermarkets (excluding the optional crusty bread to serve). This recipe is designed to be made in conjunction with a low-cost store-cupboard.

Ingredients

75g/2³/₄oz dried pasta, preferably penne or macaroni

20g/³/₄oz butter

Method

1. Half-fill a large saucepan with water and cover with a lid. Place over a high heat and bring to the boil. Add the pasta, stir well and return to the boil. Cook without a lid for 10–12 minutes, or until the pasta is tender but

Prepare

Less than 30 mins

Cook

10 to 30 mins

Serve

Serves 1

Dietary

Egg-free | Nut-free |
Pregnancy-friendly |
Vegetarian

20g/³/₄oz plain flour
300ml/10fl oz milk
50g/1³/₄oz cheddar
(preferably mature),
finely grated
salt and ground black
pepper
crusty bread, to serve
(optional)

retains a little 'bite', stirring occasionally so it doesn't stick.

2. Meanwhile, place a medium saucepan (ideally non-stick) over a medium heat, add the butter and allow to melt. As soon as the butter has melted, sprinkle over the flour and stir well with a wooden spoon until it is completely mixed with the melted butter.
3. Slowly start adding the milk, just a little at a time and stirring well between each addition. (Adding the milk just 3 tablespoons at a time to begin with will help keep the sauce smooth). When you first add the milk, the flour mixture will seize up and look a little lumpy, but the more you stir, the smoother it will become. Continue gradually adding and stirring until all the milk is used up.
4. Stir in roughly two-thirds of the cheese, a generous pinch of salt and 3–4 twists of black pepper (roughly ¹/₄ tsp coarsely ground pepper). Simmer the sauce gently for 2–3 minutes, stirring constantly until it is thickened and glossy.
5. Drain the pasta well in a colander or sieve and return to the pan. Pour the cheese sauce over the top and stir well. Either serve from the pan with the remaining grated cheese on top or transfer to an ovenproof dish and place under a hot grill for 1–2 minutes until lightly browned. Serve with the bread, if using.

Recipe tips

If your sauce does end up a little lumpy, don't worry. Just transfer to a bowl and give it a good whisk, blitz with a stick blender or pass through a sieve before reheating.

If you have a non-stick pan and a silicone covered whisk, you can make the sauce all at the same time. Simply put the butter, flour and milk in the saucepan over a medium heat and whisk together for about 5 minutes or until the sauce is smooth and thick.

Buy mature or extra mature cheese for cooking as a little goes a long way. If you are using a milder cheese, you will probably find that you need to add more to get the same level of taste.