



BAKED MACARONI & CHEESE



FOOD HISTORIANS DEBATE whether Thomas Jefferson brought home a recipe for macaroni and cheese from England or from northern Italy. No one knows. What we do know is that a variant of the dish was served at a state dinner in 1802 and mentioned in reports as “a pie called macaroni.” A variation of this dish appears in *The Virginia Housewife: Or, Methodical Cook*, an 1824 cookbook by Mary Randolph, a cousin of Jefferson’s. Whatever its origin, the dish has been taken to the hearts and stomachs of African Americans in the United States and in the Caribbean, where it is sometimes known by its British name, macaroni pie. This version uses Cheddar, though some cooks use other cheeses.

4 tablespoons unsalted butter
½ cup all-purpose flour
1 cup whole milk
3 cups half-and-half
1 teaspoon dry English mustard
⅛ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

1 pinch cayenne pepper
2 teaspoons kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
12 ounces sharp orange Cheddar cheese, grated, divided
1 pound elbow macaroni, cooked and drained

Preheat the oven to 325°F. Lightly butter a 9-by-13-inch broiler-proof baking dish.

In a large saucepan over low heat, melt the butter. Add the flour and stir with a wooden spoon until smooth. Increase the heat to medium and cook, stirring, until the mixture turns a light golden color, about 3 minutes. Whisk in the milk and half-and-half, then bring to a simmer while continuing to whisk. Simmer the sauce for about 5 minutes, until nicely thickened. Remove from the heat.

Stir in the mustard, nutmeg, cayenne, salt, and pepper to taste, followed by three-quarters of the grated cheese. Whisk until all the ingredients are fully incorporated. Add the cooked macaroni to the cheese sauce and toss to blend.

Pour the macaroni mixture into the prepared baking dish. Bake for 30 minutes, until the mac and cheese is bubbly. Top with the remaining cheese. Reset the oven to the broiler setting and broil until the cheese has slightly blistered and is lightly browned. Serve hot.



CONTINENTAL
UNITED STATES

SERVES
4 to 6

ACTIVE TIME
30 MINS

TOTAL TIME
1 HR
10 MINS