

## Baked Macaroni and Cheese

If you have been curious enough to turn to this page, what with all the packaged versions of this dish that the name brings to mind, you'll be pleasantly surprised.

There are several versions of Baked Macaroni and Cheese. Most use a béchamel sauce in addition to the cheese. This is too rich for my tastes. This simpler version is not only much faster to put together, it doesn't weigh on your stomach and stay with you the way richer recipes do. And it's still creamy and delicious, as the cheese melts all around the pasta.

You can use flat noodles or elbow macaroni for this. I like to use a combination of spinach and whole-wheat noodles. With the tomatoes and the cheese, the resulting dish looks like the Italian flag.

1/2 lb.	sharp cheddar cheese, grated
1/4 lb.	Parmesan cheese, grated
2-3 pinches	freshly grated nutmeg
some	freshly ground pepper
3/4 lb.	flat noodles or elbow macaroni
2 T.	olive oil
2 lbs.	ripe tomatoes, seeded and sliced thin, or 2 cans tomatoes, drained and sliced thin
2 T.	dry white wine
1 c.	whole-wheat bread crumbs
1 T.	butter

Preheat oven to 375° and butter a 3-4 quart casserole. Start the water heating for the pasta.

Grate the cheeses and mix them together. Toss with the nutmeg and the pepper.

Cook the pasta to slightly firmer than al dente. Drain and toss with the 2 tablespoons olive oil.

Layer one third of the tomatoes over the bottom of the casserole. Top with one third of the pasta. Top the pasta with one third of the cheese. Repeat the layers twice, ending with the cheese. Sprinkle on the white wine, spread the bread crumbs over the top, and dot with butter.

Bake uncovered, for 20-30 minutes, until the top browns and the casserole is bubbling. Serve very hot, with a big, tossed green salad.