

BUTTERNUT SQUASH MAC & CHEESE

One taste of this creative spin on mac and cheese and you'll forget those prepackage, chemical laden boxed versions. Cooking the cubed butternut right in the pot saves on dishes AND infuses the sauce with even more squashy, fall flavor. A little thyme and a sharp cheddar cheese ramp up the mac and cheese factor! If you have them, a sprinkle of toasted breadcrumbs really elevates the finished bowls.



Ingredients

- 1 lb macaroni noodles
- 1/2 medium onion
- 2 Tablespoons thyme leaves
- 3 cups stock or water
- 1 lb butternut squash (about 1/2 med-lg squash)
- 1 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese

From your pantry:

- 3 Tablespoons oil
- 3 Tablespoons flour
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg (optional)
- Salt and pepper

Equipment:

- Large stock pot
- Large heavy bottom pot

PREPARATION: 10 MIN

COOKING: 20 MIN

READY IN: 30 MIN

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

Directions

*Read through entire recipe before getting started.
Wash and dry all produce.*

1. Small dice **onion**. Remove **thyme** leaves from woody stems and chop a little if needed. Peel and cube **butternut squash** into 1/2 - 1 inch cubes. (See back for butternut squash tips.)
2. Heat a pot of water to a boil for pasta. Salt the water, then add the **macaroni noodles** and cook to al dente. Drain when done and set aside until sauce is ready.
3. While pasta cooks, heat a large heavy bottomed pot over medium heat. Add the **oil** and when hot add the **onion** and **thyme**. Cook the onion for 1-2 minutes until starting to soften, then add **flour** and stir to coat. Whisk in **water or stock** until warmed through and smooth, bring sauce to a bubble. Add **butternut squash** cubes and cook until squash is very tender, about 15 minutes. Stir very vigorously until squash is broken up and sauce is mostly smooth. Stir in **cheddar cheese** in a figure 8 motion, season with **nutmeg, salt and pepper** (if using water, you may need a couple teaspoons of salt, start lower and taste before adding more).
4. Add cooked pasta to sauce. Enjoy!

Tips, Tricks, and Terms

PEELING BUTTERNUT SQUASH

Taking a funky, rolling pin shaped squash down to evenly sized cubes may seem intimidating at first but just takes a little practice and you'll be an old pro. The Kitchn has a simple 1, 2, 3 method for making this somewhat daunting process as easy as, well... 1, 2, 3.

1. Trim the ends. Place the butternut squash on it's side and cut off both the top and bottom.
2. Peel. Run a vegetable peeler (or sharp paring knife if you're comfortable) along the length of the squash to remove the skin, rotating the squash as you go.
3. Cut the squash in half at the neck where it narrows. Cut the neck side into cubes. Cut the body end in half, remove the seeds, and cut the halves into moons, then cubes.

A little about...

BUTTERNUT SQUASH: a winter squash high in fiber, vitamins A, C, E, & B, and magnesium. Research has shown it's also good for eye health!

NUTMEG: a warm, slightly nutty tasting spice, often used in desserts and curries. Contains powerful anti-oxidants and has anti-inflammatory properties.

FARMER SPOTLIGHT

Meet Rebecca (Becca) Carlson of Seeds Farm. Located in Northfield, MN, Seeds Farm is an eight-acre diversified vegetable farm. Becca grows over 100 varieties of certified organic vegetables to sell wholesale, many of her crops are also GAP certified by the USDA. Becca believes that nutritious and wholesome foods equate to healthier and happier lives and she is committed to preserving her land for future generations.

Visit seedsfarm.org to learn more and follow: @seedsfarm

