

“WORLD’S BEST” MAC AND CHEESE

SERVES 4 AS A SIDE DISH

WE CAME UP WITH THIS RECIPE WHEN WE OPENED BEECHER'S. We wanted to show our customers that you can cook with and eat great cheese every day, and this killer mac and cheese uses two of our cheeses with a background hint of garlic powder and chipotle pepper. We've already won the vote for Seattle's best Mac and Cheese, but the 17,234 people a year from all over the world who eat it in our store tell us it's the world's best. This recipe serves about four people as a side dish. It doesn't look like a lot, but one bite of this creamy dish will show you why. If you double the recipe, bake it in a 9 x 13-inch pan for 30 minutes.

6 ounces penne
2 cups Beecher's Flagship Cheese Sauce
(recipe follows)
1 ounce Cheddar, grated (1/4 cup)
1 ounce Gruyère cheese, grated (1/4 cup)
1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon chipotle chili powder
(see Note)

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter or oil an 8-inch baking dish.

Cook the penne 2 minutes less than package directions. (It will finish cooking in the oven.) Rinse the pasta in cold water and set aside.

Combine the cooked pasta and the sauce in a medium bowl and mix carefully but thoroughly. Scrape the pasta into the prepared baking dish. Sprinkle the top with the cheeses and then the chili powder.

Bake, uncovered, for 20 minutes. Let the mac and cheese sit for 5 minutes before serving.

NOTE One-half teaspoon of chipotle chili powder makes a spicy mac, so make sure your family and friends can handle it! The proportion of pasta to cheese sauce is crucial to the success of the dish. It will look like a lot of sauce for the pasta, but some of the liquid will be absorbed.

MAKE AHEAD This recipe can be assembled before baking and frozen for up to 3 months—just be sure to use a freezer-to-oven pan and increase the baking time to 50 minutes.