

## Cauliflower Mac 'n' Cheese | By Chef Amanda DeLaura

When I was in middle school my mother planted a garden. We anticipated producing a modest supply of vegetables, but we ended up harvesting hundreds of large zucchini that were longer and wider than any vegetables I had ever seen before. That summer we dined on zucchini bread, zucchini ratatouille, zucchini brownies. Everything had zucchini! It was a brilliant way my mother used our overabundance of produce but also secretly added vegetables to our diet. Whenever cooking for clients with young children, I adopt my mother's strategy and grate zucchini into pasta sauce and cauliflower into mac 'n' cheese. I haven't encountered a single kid who's noticed. Good luck and bon appétit!

Makes 8 servings

### Ingredients:

1/4 cup all-purpose flour (or gf)  
4 Tbsp grass-fed butter  
4 cups whole milk  
1/2 tsp salt  
1/4 tsp black pepper (or white)  
1/4 tsp smoked paprika  
1/8 tsp nutmeg  
5 oz shredded smoked gouda  
2.5 oz shredded gruyere  
2.5 oz shredded sharp white cheddar  
16 oz pasta shells (or gf)  
1 small head cauliflower, *grated*

3 oz grated pecorino  
1/2 tsp dried oregano  
1/2 tsp smoked paprika

### Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Bring a large pot of water to boil and season generously with salt.
2. Meanwhile, in a large sauce pan, heat the butter over medium heat and add the flour. Mixing with a wooden spoon or whisk, cook till the roux is a deep golden brown, about three to five minutes. While whisking, slowly add the milk. Continue to stir until the milk almost reaches a boil (but does not boil!). Lower the heat to medium-low and stir in the salt, pepper, paprika, and nutmeg.
3. Continue to whisk till the mixture begins to thicken, about two to five more minutes. You want the mixture to be thick but not too thick. It should adhere well to a spoon but not stick without any movement. Add the gouda, gruyere, and cheddar and whisk till the cheese is fully melted and well incorporated. Taste and adjust with salt and pepper. Remove from heat.

4. Carefully pour your pasta into boiling water and set a timer for two minutes less than the instructed cooking time on the pasta box. Pay careful attention to the timer and texture of your pasta as you want it to be very al dente so that it doesn't overcook while baking in the oven.
5. Meanwhile, combine the pecorino, oregano, and paprika in a small bowl and set aside.
6. When there is one minute left to your pasta timer, add your grated cauliflower and continue to cook for the remainder of the timer. Drain your noodles and cauliflower through a fine mesh colander and add to the Dutch oven. Thoroughly combine the noodles with the cheese mixture and transfer to a large casserole dish.
7. Sprinkle the pecorino mixture over the noodles. Place the dish into the oven and bake for thirty minutes or until the pecorino topping begins to brown.
8. Remove from the oven and let sit for five to ten minutes before serving.

Note: To make your mac 'n' cheese particularly exceptional in flavor, nutrients, and richness, use grass-fed butter and raw cow's milk. If you have access to these ingredients it is totally worth it. Trust me!