

A Sutherland Belle

Creamed Spinach Mac & Cheese

INGREDIENTS

- 1-pound medium shell pasta, cooked according to package directions
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional but highly recommend)
- 12 ounces fresh baby spinach
- 2 1/2 cups half-and-half
- 1/2 cup extra sharp white cheddar or mozzarella cheese, freshly grated
- 6 ounces Gruyere or Fontina cheese, freshly grated
- 1 cup parmesan cheese, freshly grated

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Bring a pot of generously salted water to a boil and boil pasta until very al dente (1-2 minutes less than package directions). Once cooked and drained, give it a good spritz of olive oil to keep the pasta from sticking.
Heat a large oven-safe pot over medium-low heat and add the butter. Stir in the onion and garlic with a pinch of salt and pepper. Cook, stirring often, until the onions have softened.
3. Stir the flour into the onions to create a roux. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes, until it becomes golden in color and starts to smell nutty. Slowly stream in the half-and-half while stirring constantly. The mixture will begin to come together and thicken. Stir in the salt, pepper, mustard, and cayenne.
4. Add in the spinach - it will seem like a lot at first, but it will quickly cook down! Stir until it cooks down and softens.
5. Once the spinach cooks down, stir in almost all the cheese (reserve about 3/4-1 cup for topping) and the pasta. Toss it together over and over until it is combined.
6. Top with the remaining grated cheese. Bake covered for 15-20 minutes. Uncover and turn the oven to broil. Broil until top is golden brown (2-3 minutes but watch closely as it can burn quickly).