

Elle's Easy Macaroni and Cheese

Serves: 4 to 6

Total time: 25 minutes

Ingredients:

1 pound pasta (macaroni or shells work great)

4 tablespoons butter

4 tablespoons flour

½ teaspoon salt, plus more to taste

½ teaspoon black pepper, plus more to taste

2 cups milk (ideally, whole milk)

8 ounces cheese, grated, or 2 cups shredded cheese (Buy a hunk of cheese and grate it yourself for maximum freshness. Try any combination of melty cheeses, like cheddar, Gruyère, Monterey Jack, Gouda.)

Toppings (optional) (Things like toasted breadcrumbs, hot sauce, crumbled cooked bacon, etc.)

Equipment:

Cheese grater

Big pot or saucepan

Wooden spoon or whisk

Colander/pasta strainer

Directions:

1. In a boiling pot of water, prepare your pasta according to the directions on the package. The pasta's done when it's al dente — cooked but chewy and slightly firm. Drain the pasta and let it sit off to the side while you prepare the sauce.
2. To a second pot over medium-low heat, add the butter. Allow it to melt, 1 to 2 minutes.
3. To the liquid butter, add the flour, salt, and pepper. With a wooden spoon or whisk, stir continuously for 3 minutes.
4. Stirring constantly, slowly add your milk. Keep stirring until it comes to a simmer (gently bubbling), about 3 minutes.
5. To the sauce, add your grated cheese. Keep stirring until it's melted, smooth, and creamy, about 2 minutes.
6. Add your drained pasta to the cheese sauce. Stir gently until each noodle is coated.
7. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add hot sauce and any toppings you like.