



Butternut Squash Macaroni and Cheese

8 ounces (2 cups) elbow macaroni (4 cups cooked)
1/2 pound Butternut squash peeled, chopped, cooked until soft*
1 cup low fat milk, as desired; warmed, divided
1 cup sharp or mild shredded cheddar cheese
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon dry mustard
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon onion powder
1/8 teaspoon black pepper
1/4 teaspoon hot sauce or as desired
2 Tablespoons Parmesan cheese, freshly shredded
2 Tablespoons Panko bread crumbs

Prepare macaroni according to package directions.

Meanwhile in food processor, puree cooked tender squash.
Place squash in medium sized saucepan with 1 cup milk; cook over medium heat; stir until smooth.

Add cheddar cheese, salt, dry mustard, garlic powder, onion powder, black pepper, and if desired hot sauce. Mix until well blended and cheese melts. Stir in desired warm milk if a thinner sauce is desired.

Pour half of the drained pasta into greased 8 to 9-inch square dish or 5 cup baking dish; spoon half of sauce to cover pasta; repeat layering. Spread the remaining sauce over the pasta.

Combine Parmesan cheese and bread crumbs; sprinkle over pasta. Bake in preheated 375 degrees F. for 20 minutes. Do not over bake. Place under broiler for a few minutes until lightly browned.
Yield: Serves: 6 to 8

To serve: Garnish center with well drained:
Tomato, Basil, and Mozzarella Salad – See Recipe: September, 2016

Recipe inspired by: Chef Monique Hooker at 2012 October training; Farm to School Columbia County – Wisconsin promoting using healthy, local foods in the school lunch program.

Cook's Note: The amount of milk depends on the moisture from the squash. I added 1 cup milk and it was moist but not extra creamy. I also added onion powder, garlic powder, and hot sauce for extra flavor. I used a mixture of sharp and mild cheddar cheese but any melting cheese can be substituted.

About the Recipe: It is hard to believe that it contains one-half pound of squash in this delicious casserole. The top is crisp while the center is soft with a mild cheddar flavor. The tiny tomatoes on the top add a nice juicy addition and are so attractive. You can serve it for a light supper with a fresh salad or as a side dish. Monique told me that it's one of the most popular recipes on a school lunch menu.

Cooking the Squash:

- Some stores sell squash already chopped and diced. which is a real time saver. I boiled the diced squash in lightly salted water until very tender, which took about 25 minutes.
- You could also toss the diced squash with a tablespoon olive oil and roast on a release foil lined baking pan in 400 degree F oven for 20 to

25 minutes; stir occasionally while baking. Tender squash cubes will be very flavorful but a little drier.

- You can also use a whole butternut squash. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line baking sheet with foil; cut squash in half lengthwise; lightly coat cut side with oil, salt, and black pepper to taste. Roast squash with cut side down in 350 degree F oven until soft about 40 minutes or fork tender. Cool until can be handled; scoop out seeds. Remove tender squash and mash until smooth.

Butternut Mac 'n Cheese

(Made using a white sauce)

8 ounces Italian Cavatappi Macaroni
8 ounces cooked butternut squash cubes, mashed
1/2 cup low fat milk
3 Tablespoons butter
3 Tablespoons white whole wheat flour
2 cups low fat milk or as desired
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon ground dry mustard
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 cups shredded sharp cheddar or mixed cheeses
1/4 cup bread crumbs
1/4 cup fine shredded Parmesan cheese

Cook macaroni pasta until tender according to package directions.

In a medium sized bowl, mash squash cubes; slowly stir in 1/2 cup milk. With a hand blender, beat mixture until smooth and creamy. Set aside.

In a large saucepan, melt butter; whisk in flour; cook for a minute or two; add milk slowly, whisking until smooth. Mix in nutmeg, dry mustard, salt, and black pepper. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to medium low; whisk until thickened. Stir in squash mixture until smooth. If mixture appears too thick, add milk until desired consistency. Stir in cooked macaroni pasta to coat.

Place half of macaroni pasta in well oiled 2 to 2-1/2 quart casserole dish. Sprinkle half of cheese over macaroni; add the remaining pasta; top with remaining shredded cheese. Sprinkle the top of casserole with combined bread crumbs and Parmesan cheese. Bake in preheated 400 degree F oven for 20 to 25 minutes or cheese starts to bubble. Remove from oven; serve warm. Yield: serves about 6

Inspired by: <http://www.twopeasandtheirpod.com/butternut-squash-mac-and-cheese/>

Inspired by: "Cooking with the Seasons" by Monique Jamet Hooker p .275 Monique's Pasta Au Gratin –used rotini pasta

About the Recipe: This was like a version of Mac 'n Cheese that she loved as a child. It was one of the first dishes Monique learned to cook because Maman felt learning to make a good base white sauce was fundamental in her kitchen. Pasta au gratin is a very easy recipe to make. Easily adaptable to whatever is on-hand, and perfect with a mixed salad for a light supper.