



GEORGE
CHIALA'S
RECIPE
OF
THE MONTH
COLLECTION

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Recipe 138



Spinach, Bacon & Pumpkin Mac and Cheese

Cooks Note: This sweet and savory pumpkin mac and cheese dish incorporates the best of the season's pumpkins. It is an ultimate comfort food meal the whole family is sure to love.

Bon Appétit
-George

(photo by Marc-Henri)

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Spinach, Bacon & Pumpkin Mac and Cheese

PREPARATION

1 - Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9x9 inch or 11x7 inch baking pan.

2 - Boil the ziti until al dente, drain and place in large bowl.

3 - Cook your bacon: Add bacon to a large skillet on medium low heat. Cook on both sides until crispy and golden brown. Once bacon is done, blot with a paper towel to absorb excess grease and then chop into bite sized pieces and transfer to the large bowl with the noodles.

4 - Drain the grease from the bacon pan and then add spinach. Cook on medium low until the spinach wilts. Remove from heat and transfer to the large bowl with the noodles and bacon.

5 - In the same pan, add in 2 tablespoons of butter and place over medium heat. Once butter is melted, whisk in a little bit of the flour and then slowly add in milk, a little bit at a time, alternating with the flour and vigorously whisking away any lumps. Bring mixture to a boil, then reduce heat to a simmer and stir occasionally until the sauce thickens up.

6 - Once the sauce has thickened, turn off the heat and stir in garlic powder, parmesan and cheddar cheese, salt and lots of freshly ground black pepper. Finally stir in the pumpkin puree.

7 - Add the pumpkin cheese sauce to the bowl with the pasta, bacon and spinach. Season again with salt and pepper, to taste. Stir well to combine, then pour mixture into your prepared baking pan and spread out. Top with remaining 1/2 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese.

8 - In a small bowl, mix breadcrumbs with melted butter. Sprinkle breadcrumb mixture on top of casserole and bake for 25 minutes or until breadcrumbs are golden brown.

INGREDIENTS

10 ounces ziti pasta
12 ounces bacon
6 ounces fresh spinach

For the pumpkin cheese sauce:

2 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup all purpose flour (or whole wheat flour or all purpose gluten free flour)
2 cups unsweetened almond milk (or cashew milk or regular milk)
1/2 cup finely grated (not shredded) parmesan cheese
1/2 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
3/4 teaspoon salt, plus more to taste
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
Freshly ground black pepper
1 cup pumpkin puree

For the topping:

1/2 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs, gluten free if desired
1 tablespoon butter, melted

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