

MEMBER RECIPE: TWO-WAY MAC & CHEESE

March 19, 2024



By Greg Costikyan

I've cooked for years for both kids and adults. Naturally, kids like mac and cheese. It's gooey and bland—how could they not? And naturally, I am not really enthusiastic about eating undifferentiated cheesy glop. This recipe is a compromise—some regular old mac and cheese for the brats; and something rather spicier, with chorizo, for the grown-ups. Everyone walks away happy.

FOR THE BASE

- **12 oz macaroni** (3/4 of a 1 lb. package)

- **3 tbsp butter**
- **3 tbsp flour**
- **3 cups milk**
- **1/2 lb sharp cheddar cheese** (The Coop's white cheddar is a little sharper than the orange stuff)
- **1 tsp salt**
- **Dash of hot sauce**

FOR THE SPICY PART

- **1/2 lb chorizo sausage**
- **1 tbsp olive oil**
- **1 medium onion, chopped**
- **2 cloves garlic, finely chopped**
- **2 tsp paprika** (I prefer the unsmoked variety in this recipe, but smoked is okay)
- **1/4 tsp red pepper flakes** (more if you're a capsicum masochist)
- **1 tsp Dijon mustard**
- **1 tsp hot sauce**

DIRECTIONS

1. Cook the macaroni according to package directions, and drain.
2. Slice the chorizo into 1/4 inch rounds. Set a cast iron skillet over high heat for a minute or two. When hot, add the oil and then the chorizo slices. Brown them, about 90 seconds per side, then remove to a plate.
3. When the chorizos are done and removed from the skillet, add the onions and garlic to the skillet, cooking them in the same oil as the chorizos. Turn the heat down to medium, and stir frequently until slightly browned, about 5 minutes. Remove and add to the chorizos.

4. Grate the cheddar. Turn the oven to 400 degrees to warm up.
5. Take two oven-proof containers, and butter them both.
6. In a medium-sized saucepan, melt the butter. In the meantime, warm up the milk. (I pour 2 cups into a measuring cup, nuke for a couple of minutes, and use that, then warm up the third cup later as needed, because who has a 3-cup measuring cup?)
7. When the butter is melted, add the flour and whisk it into the butter. With the heat on medium, add the milk, a little at a time, whisking it in. Incorporate each batch of milk before adding more to avoid lumps. The last cup or so you can just pour in, because by that time the mixture is pretty liquid.
8. Add the salt and dash of hot sauce to the liquid, and continue to heat over medium, whisking occasionally, until the liquid thickens—about 5 minutes. (Be careful not to let it boil over when it does.)
9. Mix in the grated cheddar until it melts, and remove from the heat.
10. Mix together the cheese mixture and the macaroni. What you have now is the non-spicy mac. Transfer half to one buttered container.
11. To what's left, add the chorizo, onions, and everything else listed under "the spicy part." Mix thoroughly, then transfer to the other buttered container.
12. Bake both for about 20 minutes.

If you only want regular mac & cheese, skip steps 2, 3, and 11.

If you only want spicy mac, increase the quantities for "the spicy stuff" by a third, and don't bother making a separate container of non-spicy.