



Fiery Tomato-Basil Mac n Cheese

by George Duran

Imagine what happens when you take an ordinary mac n cheese recipe and twist it with the smoky-sweet flavors of Hunt's® Fire Roasted Diced Tomatoes. Oh yeah, I'm happy too.

Ingredients

- 1 lb. macaroni (elbow or whatever)
- Kosher Salt
- 2 cans (14.5 oz. each) Hunt's® Fire Roasted Diced Tomatoes
- 1 cup packed fresh basil, chopped
- 1 stick butter
- ½ cup flour
- 5 cups whole milk
- 4 cups (16 oz) sharp cheddar, grated

For Topping

- 1 ½ cup Italian Style breadcrumbs
- 4 Tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 cup grated Parmesan or Romano cheese
- Basil leaves for garnish

Preheat oven to 400° F. Bring 6 quarts of water to a rolling boil and add salt to taste. Add macaroni and stir gently allowing it boil for about 7 minutes until "al dente." Remove from heat and drain well and place in an extra large bowl. Add both cans of Hunt's Fire Roasted diced tomatoes and chopped basil and mix with a rubber spatula. Set aside.

For béchamel sauce start by making a roux in a medium stock pot. Melt butter under medium heat and whisk in flour. Keep whisking over medium heat until roux is browned, about 5-6 minutes. Add 2 tsp. salt. Gently whisk in the milk until properly combined. Constantly whisk the sauce until it thickens and begins to simmer, about 10-12 minutes. Remove from heat and add 4 cups of cheddar. Gently mix it with a rubber spatula until completely melted. Combine cheese sauce and macaroni and pour into a 13X9-inch baking pan that has been sprayed with PAM® cooking spray.

Make topping by combining all of the ingredients and spread it evenly on top of mac n cheese. Bake 15-20 minutes until top is golden brown. Serve and garnish with basil leaves.

Hands On: 30 minutes **Total:** 1 hour **Makes:** 8 servings