

## A Favourite Macaroni And Cheese

Kid food, childhood memories, bubbly and golden mac 'n cheese with tomatoes...what's not to love? Because I adore tomatoes, this is right up my alley and I hope yours too! I like to make this with tomatoes that are available locally right up to the early fall; they are so sweet, juicy & delicious!

Makes 6 – 8 Servings

7 Tbsp. unsalted butter, room temperature  
2/3 cup breadcrumbs made from crusty bread\*\*  
1 Tbsp. chopped fresh thyme  
Salt & freshly ground black pepper  
1 lb. elbow macaroni or other short tubular pasta  
4 cups milk (not skimmed)  
5 Tbsp. unbleached flour  
½ cup chopped onions  
1 clove garlic, minced  
Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg  
1/8 – ¼ tsp. Tabasco or to taste  
4 cups grated cheese (a combination of 2 cups old cheddar, 1 cup each Gruyere & Parmesan or Fontina)  
1 lb. red & yellow tomatoes, cut into 1" pieces, or for small tomatoes, cut in half

Combine the breadcrumbs with 2 Tbsp. of the butter that has been melted, along with 1 tsp. of the chopped thyme 1/8 tsp. salt & ¼ tsp. of the pepper.

Preheat the oven to 375 F. Grease or spray with non-stick cooking spray, a 3 quart casserole or 9 x 13" baking dish.

Bring a large pot of water to the boil. Add 1 Tbsp. salt then add the macaroni, stirring for a minute to keep from sticking. Cook for 2 – 3 minutes (it will not be fully cooked), drain, rinse & set aside.

### Make the Sauce:

\*\*I like to do this in the microwave but you can do it in a pot on top of the stove.

In a **very large** glass, microwavable bowl, melt the 5 Tbsp. butter on medium (level 5) heat; remove & add the onions; return to the microwave & cook on level 5, in 2 minute increments, until the onions are softened (approximately 8 – 10 minutes. One minute before the onions are done add the garlic & microwave one minute more. Whisk in the flour; return to the microwave for 2 minutes, level 5, until it bubbles a bit; very slowly whisk in the milk; add the nutmeg & return to the microwave & microwave on high for 2 minutes; whisk & continue cooking, in 2 minute increments, until the sauce comes to a boil & thickens. **(If you don't have a large enough bowl; do this step twice, otherwise it could overflow. Once the sauce is done, combine the two, then add the cheeses & seasonings.)** Remove from the microwave; add the cheese, ½ tsp. salt, ½ tsp. pepper, remaining 2 tsp. chopped thyme & Tabasco, whisking until the cheese is melted.

Stir the macaroni & tomatoes into the sauce. Pour into the greased casserole; sprinkle with the buttered breadcrumbs; bake until bubbling & golden, about 30 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes or so before serving.

\*\*To make the breadcrumbs, please see **How To Make Breadcrumbs**.