Pip's Mac and Cheese

Caroline, Recruiting Coordinator, Boston

Ingredients

IMPERIAL

4 tbsp butter, plus more for greasing

1/2 cup flour

3/4 lb White American Cheese

8 oz bag shredded cheddar cheese*

8 oz block sharp cheddar cheese*

1 lb elbow macaroni

4 cups milk

1 tbsp salt

1 tbsp pepper

1 tbsp paprika, plus more to taste

METRIC

57 g butter, plus more for greasing

60 g flour

340 g White American Cheese

220 g shredded cheddar cheese*

220 g block sharp cheddar cheese*

450 g of elbow macaroni

1 liter milk

15 g salt

15 g pepper

15 g paprika, plus more to taste

**We find that the Tillamook brand of cheddar cheese melts the best*

Instructions

1. Instructions
2. Make the roux. In a saucepan, melt the butter over low-medium heat. Once the butter is melted, add the flour and whisk into a paste. If the paste is too thick, add more butter.
3. Add milk to the roux and heat over a medium flame. Once the milk has warmed, add American cheese until melted, whisking consistently.
4. Boil salted water for pasta.
5. Heat oven to 375°F/190°C.
6. Reduce flame on cheese sauce and slowly incorporate cheddar cheese, stirring until blended. The cheese sauce should be silky and thickened.
7. Add pepper, salt, and paprika. Taste and adjust seasoning to your liking.
8. Cook pasta for 5-6 minutes, until chewy. Drain and set aside.
9. Cut block of cheddar cheese into small cubes.
10. Grease large glass pan with butter, add cooked pasta and slowly pour cheese sauce over the pasta. Mix and spread evenly.
11. Add the cubed cheese by pressing each one into the mixture throughout the pan.
12. Sprinkle top with paprika and bake for 35-40 minutes, until bubbly and golden on top. Serve warm.

*

This mac and cheese recipe comes from my Italian-American grandmother, whom our family called Noni, but whom everyone else knew as Pip. It's been a staple at nearly every family gathering, and is the most requested dish for birthdays, holidays, and visits home from college.

Boeuf Bourguignon

Jeanne, Associate, London

Ingredients

IMPERIAL

1 1/2 lbs beef, diced (beef for slow cooking, e.g.: braised steak, brisket, beef shin, beef cheek)

2 small onions

4 oz mushrooms

1/4 lb lardons

3 tbsp butter

1/4 cup flour

A couple of bay leaves

1 bottle of red wine (no need for a fancy one!)

METRIC

700 g beef, diced (beef for slow cooking, e.g.: braised steak, brisket, beef shin, beef cheek)

60 g small onions

100 g mushrooms

100 g lardons

50 g butter

30 g flour

A couple of bay leaves

1 bottle of red wine (no need for a fancy one!)

Optional: carrots and potatoes (just make sure to use a type of potato that holds its shape when cooked)

Instructions

1. In a large pot, melt the butter over medium-low heat. Sauté the onions and lardons.
2. Remove the onions and lardons and set aside. Add the meat to the pot and cook over a medium flame.
3. Add flour and stir, letting the meat brown slightly.
4. Add the wine and scrape the bottom of the pot.
5. Put the onions and lardons back in the pot. Season with salt, pepper, and bay leaves.
6. Simmer on low heat for at least 4 hours, stirring occasionally to keep it from sticking.
7. If you'd like to add large chunks of carrots and potatoes, add them to the pot at least 3 hours before serving.
8. Half an hour before serving, add the sliced mushrooms.
9. Taste and adjust seasoning.
10. Serve hot with potatoes, rice, or some lovely bread.

*

This recipe originally comes from Ginette Mathiot (a name every French grandmother and mother knows), with a few personal touches from my grandma and mum. This dish reminds me of my childhood in France and our family meals on winter Sundays.

Grandma's Ginger Snaps

Jarone, Manager, Toronto

Ingredients

IMPERIAL

3/4 cup vegetable oil
3/4 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup molasses
1 egg
2 cups flour
2 tsp baking soda
2 tsp ginger
1 1/2 tsp cinnamon
1/4 tsp salt

METRIC

180 g vegetable oil
150 g brown sugar
80 g molasses
1 egg
240 g flour
10 g baking soda
10 g ginger
4 g cinnamon
2 g salt

Instructions

1. Heat oven to 350°F/175°C.
2. Mix all ingredients in a large bowl.
3. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
4. Roll the dough into balls, then roll each ball in white sugar, coating fully. Transfer each ball to the baking sheet, spacing them at least 2 inches apart.
5. Bake cookies for 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and let them rest on the baking sheet for 2 minutes, then move to a cooling rack.

Liège Meatballs

Elisa, Senior Analyst, Brussels

Ingredients

IMPERIAL

For the meatballs

1 lb ground beef
1 lb ground pork
4 slices of crustless white bread soaked in milk
1 onion, finely chopped
1 small bunch fresh parsley, finely chopped
2 eggs
Salt
Ground black pepper
Ground nutmeg
Breadcrumbs

For the sauce

4 onions, chopped
4 tbsp dark brown sugar
2 tbsp red wine vinegar
4 cups beef or veal stock
2 tbsp Liège syrup
4 whole cloves
6 juniper berries
2 bay leaves
½ tsp thyme
¼ cup raisins
1 tbsp flour or cornstarch (optional)
Salt and pepper to taste

METRIC

For the meatballs

450 g ground beef
450 g ground pork
4 slices of crustless white bread soaked in milk
1 onion, finely chopped
1 small bunch fresh parsley, finely chopped
2 eggs
Salt
Ground black pepper
Ground nutmeg
Breadcrumbs

For the sauce

4 onions, chopped
50 g dark brown sugar
30 ml red wine vinegar
1 liter beef or veal stock
30 ml Liège syrup
4 whole cloves
6 juniper berries
2 bay leaves
1 g thyme
40 g raisins
8 g flour or cornstarch (optional)
Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

The meatballs

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C.
2. Knead all the ingredients together into a homogeneous mixture.
3. Shape into large meatballs (about 3.5oz/100g each) and place in covered Dutch oven.
4. Bake for 40 minutes.

The sauce

5. Remove meatballs from Dutch oven and set aside. Over a medium-low flame, brown the onions. Add thyme and stir for 1-2 minutes.
6. Add the brown sugar, then deglaze with the vinegar.
7. Add the stock, bring to a boil, and then add the Liège syrup, cloves, juniper berries, bay leaves, salt, and pepper.
8. Lower heat and simmer for 30 minutes.
9. Add the raisins and, if desired, slightly thicken the sauce with a little cornstarch or flour.
10. Put the meatballs back into the sauce and let them simmer for a few minutes over low heat.
11. Serve with fries and a salad.

✳

This comforting dish embodies Belgian generosity and conviviality, and is often enjoyed in local brasseries with crispy fries and a green salad. Sharing this recipe means sharing a taste of Belgian warmth and tradition.

Spinach Pesto

Emma, Vice President, San Francisco

Ingredients

IMPERIAL

2 cups fresh baby spinach
A few basil leaves for flavor
1/3 cup avocado oil
1/4 cup grated Parmesan
1/4 cup pine nuts

METRIC

60 g fresh baby spinach
A few basil leaves for flavor
80 g avocado oil
30 g grated Parmesan
35 g pine nuts

Instructions

1. In a pan over medium heat, toast the pine nuts.
2. In a medium saucepan, bring water to a boil. Add the spinach and cook for 30 seconds. Remove promptly to a bowl of ice water and squeeze to remove the excess liquid.
3. Put the spinach in a food processor with the basil, avocado oil, grated Parmesan, and pine nuts. Blend until smooth.
4. To preserve the color and freshness, finish with a thin layer of oil on top before storing.

✳

This baby-friendly recipe is easy and quick to make, and the whole family loves it, which makes it especially helpful for new parents (like myself) trying to get something healthy on the table fast!

Festive Wreath Cookies

Ashley, Vice President, Dallas

Ingredients

IMPERIAL

4 cups cornflakes cereal, divided

1 /2 cup unsalted butter

30 large marshmallows

1/4 tsp salt

1 1/2 tsp green food coloring

1 tsp vanilla extract

Red decorating icing with a plain piping tip, for berries

Confectioners' sugar, for snow (optional)

METRIC

120 g cornflakes cereal, divided

113 g unsalted butter

30 large marshmallows

1 g salt

7 ml green food coloring

5 ml vanilla extract

Red decorating icing with a plain piping tip, for berries

Confectioners' sugar, for snow (optional)

Instructions

1. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Spray the parchment paper lightly with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Place half of the cornflakes in a large resealable plastic bag. Seal the bag and pound with your hands until the cornflakes are crushed and similar in size to Rice Krispies. Set aside.
3. In a medium saucepan, melt the butter over medium-low heat. Add the marshmallows and cook, stirring frequently, until completely melted. Remove the pan from the heat and add the salt, food coloring, and vanilla; stir until the mixture is evenly green. Add the crushed cornflakes and the reserved cornflakes, and stir until the mixture is uniform.
4. Fill a wide skillet with 1 inch of very hot water. Place the saucepan into the skillet so the cornflake mixture stays warm.
5. Using two spoons, drop mounds of the cornflake mixture (about 2 heaping tablespoons each) onto the prepared pans. Spray your fingers with nonstick cooking spray, and then use your fingers to form the mounds into wreath shapes (spray your fingers with more nonstick cooking spray as necessary). Let set until cool, dry to the touch, and stiff enough to lift from the baking sheets, about 1 hour.
6. Using a mini fine sieve, dust the top third of the wreaths with the confectioners' sugar, so that it looks like snow. Pipe berries onto each wreath with the decorating icing (an odd number of berries looks best). Store the wreaths in a single layer in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days.

*

These wreath cookies, adapted from Once Upon a Chef, are a fun holiday activity with my kids. We love making and eating them together!

Mangalorean Fish Curry

Neil, Manager, London

Ingredients

IMPERIAL

Tamarind pulp

1 tamarind

60 ml water

Masala

7-8 dried red chilies

6 g coriander seeds

2 g cumin seeds

1 g black peppercorns

1 g mustard seeds

1 g fenugreek seeds

1-inch fresh ginger, peeled and chopped

2 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped

60 g grated coconut

1 g ground turmeric

Fish curry

14 g ghee

150 g chopped onions

1 green chili, sliced

1 sprig of curry leaves

240 ml water

680 g salmon, cut into cubes

Salt to taste

Curry leaves to garnish

METRIC

Tamarind pulp

1 tamarind

1/4 cup water

Masala

7-8 dried red chilies

3 tsp coriander seeds

1 tsp cumin seeds

1/2 tsp black peppercorns

1/2 tsp mustard seeds

1/4 tsp fenugreek seeds

1-inch fresh ginger, peeled and chopped

2 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped

1 cup grated coconut

1/4 tsp ground turmeric

Fish curry

1 tbsp ghee

1 cup chopped onions

1 green chili, sliced

1 sprig of curry leaves

1 cup water

1.5 lb salmon, cut into cubes

Salt to taste

Curry leaves to garnish

Instructions

1. In a small bowl, soak tamarind in water for 10 minutes. Massage the pulp to release the juices, straining through a fine sieve. Set pulp aside and discard remaining solids.
2. In a dry pan over low heat, combine the chiles, coriander, cumin seeds, peppercorns, mustard seeds, and fenugreek seeds. Toast, stirring continuously for 5 minutes.
3. Transfer spices to a food processor, allowing to cool for a few minutes. Add ginger, garlic, coconut, turmeric, and reserved tamarind pulp. Blend until a smooth paste forms. Set aside.
4. In a large skillet over medium heat, heat the ghee. Add onions and green chilis. Sauté, stirring occasionally, for 3 minutes or until browned.
5. Add the prepared spice paste to the pan along with the curry leaves and the cup of water. Stir to combine, season with salt, and bring the mixture to a gentle boil. Reduce the heat and let it simmer for about 3 minutes.
6. Gently place salmon into the sauce. Nudge the pieces of fish lightly to coat without breaking them. Cover the pan and cook for 10-12 minutes, adding more water if the curry becomes too thick.
7. Garnish with additional curry leaves before serving with rice.

Mangalorean Fish Curry originates from a coastal city in the southwestern part of India, where my family is originally from. The dish is fantastic and is something I look forward to eating every time I visit them. This recipe, adapted from Nish Kitchen, reminds me of my family's curry.

Potato Latkes

Samara, Writer-Editor, Boston

Ingredients

IMPERIAL

1 pound russet potatoes, peeled
1/2 small yellow onion
2 tbsp matzo meal
1 tbsp flour
1 tbsp cornstarch
2 tsp Kosher salt
2 large eggs
Safflower oil, for frying (or other neutral oil)
Maldon sea salt flakes, for serving
Applesauce, for serving
Sour cream, for serving

METRIC

454 g russet potatoes, peeled
1/2 small yellow onion
16 g matzo meal
8 g flour
8 g cornstarch
10 g Kosher salt
2 large eggs
Safflower oil, for frying (or other neutral oil)
Maldon sea salt flakes, for serving
Applesauce, for serving
Sour cream, for serving

This makes about 10 latkes.

Instructions

1. Using a box grater or food processor, coarsely grate the potatoes and onion. Transfer to a potato ricer, and load with grated potatoes in batches. Squeeze the liquid into a bowl and set aside.
2. Place the squeezed potatoes and onions into another bowl and add matzo meal, flour, cornstarch, salt, and eggs. Mix with hands until well incorporated.
3. From the first bowl, pour off and discard the reserved liquid, revealing a thin layer of potato starch at the bottom. Scrape the starch into the potato and onion mixture and use your hands to mix again until combined.
4. In a large skillet, heat about 1/4 inch of oil over medium heat. Drop a small potato shred into the oil. Once the oil begins bubbling around the potato shred, you are ready to begin frying.
5. Working in batches, scoop about 1/3 cup-sized balls of the potato and onion mixture. Use your hands to squeeze any excess moisture into the bowl before placing it into the pan. Keep the balls about 2 inches apart.
6. Using an oiled spatula, smash each ball to flatten into a pancake. Cook for 2-3 minutes on each side, until golden.
7. Transfer latkes to a wire rack set on top of a baking sheet and sprinkle with a small pinch of Maldon sea salt flakes while they are hot.
8. Repeat with the remaining potato and onion mixture, adding more oil to the pan between batches. Make sure you let the oil get hot again before continuing to fry.
9. If you are making a large batch, you can stick the latkes into a 300°F/150°C oven to keep them warm without drying them out.
10. Transfer warm latkes to a platter and serve immediately with applesauce and sour cream.

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We celebrate Hanukkah with latkes, and everyone has their own recipe – or non-recipe. Mine is a collection of little tricks and traditions picked up over the years, with a dash of inspiration from my favorite Jewish cookbooks.

Stefano's Cookies

Stefano, Director of Data Science, Boston

Ingredients

IMPERIAL

1 cup of butter (softened)

3/4 cup sugar

1 tsp vanilla extract (adjust to your liking)

1 tsp almond extract (adjust to your liking)

2 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 cup toasted almonds, finely ground

A dash of salt

Glacé cherries

METRIC

227 g of butter (softened)

150 g sugar

5 ml vanilla extract (adjust to your liking)

5 ml almond extract (adjust to your liking)

240 g all-purpose flour

60 g toasted almonds, finely ground

A dash of salt

Glacé cherries

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F/190°C.
2. Cream butter in large mixer bowl. Add sugar and beat until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and extracts, then blend in the flour, almonds, and salt until combined.
3. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
4. Using a pastry bag with a large tip, pipe dough into your preferred shape (e.g., star or circular) on the baking sheet. The piped cookie should be roughly 1.25 in/3 cm in diameter.
5. Decorate by placing a cherry in the center of each cookie.
6. Bake cookies for 10-11 minutes. Remove from the oven and let them rest on the baking sheet for 2 minutes, then move to a cooling rack.

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Etymology of name: Apparently, I loved these cookies so much as a child that my mother coined the name: "Stefano's cookies". I don't even know their original name.

Cazuela de Mariscos

Duvan, Benefits Assistant, Boston

Ingredients

IMPERIAL

- 1 medium red bell pepper, roughly chopped
- 1/2 medium green bell pepper, roughly chopped
- 3 large yellow onions, roughly chopped
- 5 oz green onions, roughly chopped
- 2 large carrots, chopped
- 3 plum tomatoes, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves
- 4 tilapia fillets
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2/3 cup clam broth
- 1 1/4 cups water
- 1/2 tsp paprika
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp onion powder
- 1/2 tsp adobo seasoning
- 10 oz mixed seafood (calamari, octopus, mussels, fish, crab sticks), thawed
- 7 oz shrimp, peeled and deveined
- Extra salt, pepper, paprika, garlic powder, and onion powder (see step 4)
- 3/4 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 cup coconut milk

METRIC

- 1 medium red bell pepper, roughly chopped
- 1/2 medium green bell pepper, roughly chopped
- 3 large yellow onions, roughly chopped
- 140 g green onions, roughly chopped
- 2 large carrots, chopped
- 3 plum tomatoes, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves
- 4 tilapia fillets
- 25 g vegetable oil
- 150 ml clam broth
- 300 ml water
- 1 g paprika
- 2 g salt
- 1 g pepper
- 2 g garlic powder
- 2 g onion powder
- 2 g adobo seasoning
- 300 g mixed seafood (calamari, octopus, mussels, fish, crab sticks), thawed
- 200 g shrimp, peeled and deveined
- Extra salt, pepper, paprika, garlic powder, and onion powder (see step 4)
- 200 ml heavy cream
- 100 ml coconut milk

Instructions

1. In a large pot, heat a tablespoon of vegetable oil over medium heat. Add the carrots, tomatoes, peppers, yellow onions, and green onions. Sauté for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
2. Add the garlic cloves and all the spices (paprika, salt, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, and adobo).
3. Add 2 tilapia fillets, the water, and the clam broth. Cover partially and simmer over low-medium heat for 40 minutes.
4. In a bowl, season the thawed seafood mix and shrimp with salt, pepper, paprika, garlic powder, and onion powder.
5. Heat a large skillet over medium heat with a tablespoon of oil. Sauté the seafood for 10–15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until lightly cooked (they will finish cooking in the stew).
6. After 40 minutes, use an immersion blender to blend the broth until smooth and creamy (you can also transfer to a blender in batches, but be careful with the heat).
7. Add the sautéed seafood mix, shrimp, and the remaining 2 tilapia fillets to the pot. Simmer for 10 minutes.
8. Stir in the heavy cream and coconut milk.
9. Reduce heat to low and cook for another 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Make sure it does not boil to avoid curdling the cream.
10. Taste and adjust salt and pepper if needed.

*

This dish is especially meaningful to me because it reminds me so much of home. I grew up in Colombia, where seafood is a big part of our cuisine and our culture. Every time I make the dish, the flavors bring me back to family gatherings, coastal trips, and the warmth of home. It's one of those dishes that instantly reconnects me with my roots, no matter where I am.