



Baked Macaroni and Cheese

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

8 oz. whole grain macaroni or rotini (about 2½ cups)
8 oz. reduced fat grated cheese (about 2 cups)
2 cups low fat or fat free milk (divided)
4 oz. Neufchatel cheese* (light cream cheese)
2 Tbsp. cornstarch
1 teas. prepared mustard (optional)

1 cup bread crumbs or unsalted cracker
crumbs (about 20 – 24 whole grain crackers)
1 Tbsp. butter or vegetable oil
1 teas. salt-free herb seasoning

*Neufchatel cheese comes in an 8 oz. pkg.
Freeze the other half and save for another recipe.

Directions: Cook macaroni or rotini according to package directions; drain. Spray an 8 X 10 baking dish with pan spray; spread cooked macaroni evenly into dish.

Add grated cheese, 1¾ cup milk, and Neufchatel cheese, to heavy bottomed sauce pan. Stir continuously while cooking on low heat until hot and cheeses have melted. Add cornstarch to ¼ cup cold milk, mix well so there are no lumps. Add cornstarch mixture and optional mustard to the sauce pan. Continue to cook on low heat, stirring continuously until mixture thickens. Do not boil. Pour cheese sauce over cooked macaroni in baking dish; mix so all macaroni pieces are covered with cheese sauce.

Thoroughly mix bread or cracker crumbs, butter or vegetable oil, and herb seasoning. Sprinkle bread crumbs evenly on top of macaroni and cheese. Bake in a 325° oven for 40-45 minutes until casserole is bubbling and top is golden brown. Let casserole sit for 5 minutes after removing from the oven before serving.

Substitutions: You may use evaporated skim milk to replace the low fat milk. You may substitute ¼ cup of flour for the cornstarch. You may eliminate the crumb topping, but cover the casserole while baking.

Nutrition: This recipe provides whole grains and reduced fat and low fat dairy. It has reduced amounts of fat and sodium. To reduce saturated fat further, use vegetable oil in place of the butter when making the crumb topping. If you use bread crumbs for the topping, use whole grain bread for the most fiber and flavor.