

# TASTE BOOK

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Mac & Cheese Bar Edition





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[www.BrendaNovak.com](http://www.BrendaNovak.com)

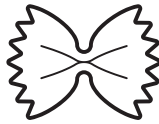


## STEP 1: Choose your pasta

When choosing your pasta, look for shapes with plenty of texture. The best pasta for mac and cheese has deep grooves, pockets, and ridges--features that help each noodle catch as much cheese sauce as possible.



Elbow



Farfalle



Shells



Rigatoni



Cavatappi



Rotini

## STEP 2: Choose your cheese

Experiment to find which cheeses you like for the cheese sauce.

White Cheddar

Colby Jack

Pepper Jack

Parmesan

Gruyere

Smoked Gouda

Racelette

Blue Cheese

Sharp Cheddar

Mozzarella

Brie

Goat Cheese

## STEP 3: Choose a recipe to follow

This is my favorite recipe for a simple mac and cheese that pleases everyone, but also allows you to experiment with different cheese combinations.

### Directions:

1. Heat medium pot of salted water to boiling. Cook macaroni by following package directions.
2. In a large saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Sprinkle flour over melted butter and stir until combined. Reduce heat to medium-low. Gradually drizzle milk into pot while whisking, until slightly thickened. Add minced garlic and salt. Return heat to medium and bring cheese sauce to a simmer while continuing to whisk for 1 minute or until thickened. By handfuls, add in cheeses. Stir constantly and allow cheese to melt before adding more. Continue cooking and stirring the sauce until the cheeses have melted and blended. Remove from heat.

### Ingredients:

- 4 tbsp. butter
- 1/4 c. all-purpose flour
- 2 1/2 c. whole milk
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 12 oz. Cheddar cheese
- 8 oz. Gruyere
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 lb. macaroni





## STEP 4: Combine cheese sauce and pasta

Keep warm so cheese stays melted, making it easier to stir in desired toppings.  
Any leftovers can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

## STEP 5: Choose your toppings

Choose toppings that can be combined with other toppings to create a more unique experience. Offer a variety of toppings so everyone is able to personalize their meal just the way they'd like. Here are some of our favorites.

Pesto Lover: pesto, artichoke hearts, fresh basil, mozzarella

Margarita: tomatoes, mozzarella, fresh basil

BBQ: pulled pork, baked jalapeños, drizzle of BBQ sauce

Savory: bacon, baked jalapeños

Western: bacon, breadcrumbs, drizzle of BBQ sauce, a few drops of jalapeño oil

Buffalo: shredded chicken breast, buffalo sauce, blue cheese crumbles, green onions

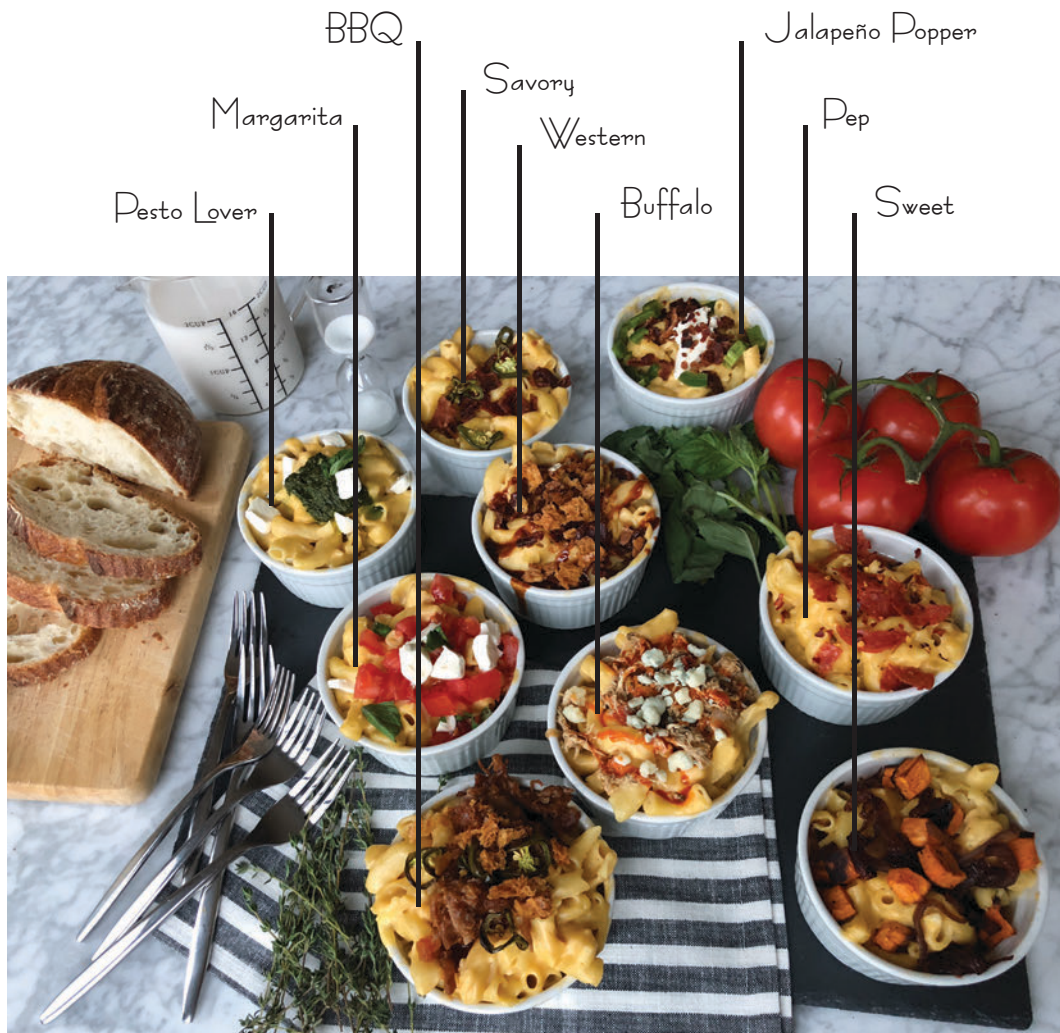
Jalapeño Popper: fresh jalapeños, bacon, cream cheese

Pep: pepperoni, crushed red pepper

Sweet: caramelized onions, baked sweet potatoes







BBQ

Jalapeño Popper

Margarita

Savory

Western

Pep

Pesto Lover

Buffalo

Sweet

## More Topping Combinations

Chili: chili, sliced green onions, corn chips

Sriracha: bacon, goat cheese, Sriracha

Breadsticks: marinara, Parmesan

Arugula: fresh arugula, tomatoes, pepper

Bacon Ranch: bacon, caramelized onion, drizzle of ranch dressing

Pizza: pepperoni, mozzarella, red pepper, green pepper and tomatoes

Goat Cheese: sun-dried tomatoes, goat cheese

Cornbread: shredded chicken, drizzle of BBQ sauce, cornbread breadcrumbs

Hamburger: hamburger, tomatoes, breadcrumbs

Potato Chips: potato chips, drizzle of ranch dressing

Philly: caramelized onion, Philly steak

Artichoke Dip: sautéed spinach, artichoke, cream cheese, fresh jalapeños

Crab: Old Bay seafood seasoning, crab

Frito Pie: black beans, Fritos corn chips, green onions

Taco: grilled corn, crema Mexicana, cilantro

Veggie: broccoli, onion, olives



Ingredients:

3 tbsp. olive oil  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
3 c. tomato sauce  
1 tsp. dried oregano  
1 tsp. sugar  
salt & pepper

Ingredients:

1 1/2 c. ketchup  
1 c. light brown sugar  
1/2 c. water  
1/4 c. apple cider  
vinegar  
1 tbsp. Worcestershire  
1 tbsp. molasses  
1 tsp. salt  
1/2 tsp. garlic powder  
1/2 tsp. onion powder  
1/4 tsp. ground  
mustard  
1/4 tsp. paprika

## MARINARA SAUCE

Directions:

Heat olive oil in a medium saucepan. Add garlic and cook for one minute. Add tomato sauce, oregano and sugar. Season with salt and pepper. Bring sauce to a boil, then reduce the heat to low. The sauce should be simmering gently. Simmer for about 30 minutes or until desired thickness.

## BBQ SAUCE

Directions:

In a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, whisk together all ingredients until combined. Bring mixture to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally until thick, about 1 hour. Let cool to room temperature and store in an airtight container.

## PESTO SAUCE

### Directions:

Combine basil, garlic, and pine nuts in a food processor and pulse until coarsely chopped. Add 1/2 cup of the oil and process until fully incorporated and smooth. Season with salt and pepper. Add the remaining oil and pulse until smooth. Transfer the pesto to a large serving bowl and mix in the cheese.

### Ingredients:

2 c. packed fresh  
basil leaves  
2 cloves garlic  
1/4 c. pine nuts  
2/3 c. olive oil  
1/2 c. freshly grated  
Pecorino cheese  
salt & pepper

## CORNBREAD CRUMBS

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 425°. Whisk together first 6 ingredients in a large bowl. Whisk together buttermilk, butter, and egg in a small bowl. Add buttermilk mixture to cornmeal mixture, stirring until moist. Pour into a 9-inch baking pan coated with cooking spray. Bake 27 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into center comes out clean. Remove from pan and cool on a wire rack. Tear cornbread into small chunks; place on a baking sheet. Bake at 425° for 15 minutes or until lightly browned.

### Ingredients:

2 c. all-purpose flour  
1 c. yellow cornmeal  
2 tbsp. brown sugar  
4 tsp. baking powder  
1 tsp. salt  
1/2 tsp. baking soda  
1 3/4 c. buttermilk  
4 tbsp. butter  
1 egg

## Spice things up and try this Mac & Cheese Recipe

### Directions:

1. Heat medium pot of salted water to boiling. Cook macaroni by following package directions.
2. In a large saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Sprinkle flour over melted butter and stir until combined. Reduce heat to medium-low. Gradually drizzle milk into pot while whisking, until slightly thickened. Add mustard, black pepper and salt. Return heat to medium and bring cheese sauce to a simmer while stirring for 10 minutes. By handfuls, add in cheeses. Stir constantly and allow cheese to melt before adding more. Continue cooking and stirring the sauce until the cheeses have melted and blended. Remove from heat.

### Ingredients:

- 4 tbsp. butter
- 1/4 c. all-purpose flour
- 3 c. whole milk
- 1 tbsp. jalapeños, diced
- 6 tbsp. cream cheese
- 12 oz. Cheddar cheese, grated
- 16 oz. Gouda, grated
- 1/2 tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 lb. macaroni





We got the idea for this booklet while on the Philadelphia leg of my FACE OFF Book Tour. We had some time before my signing in Easton, so we were exploring downtown Philly. We came across Mac Mart and were impressed with their creative take on Mac & Cheese. We tried a few different selections and they each tasted as good as they sounded. We thought it'd be fun to create a small collection of ideas so other people would have the chance to experiment and personalize their own creations.



