

WATERGARDENS



Pumpkin & Bacon Mac N Cheese

Recipe by Dani Venn

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Serves: 4

Ingredients

500g macaroni or elbow pasta

80g unsalted butter

1/4 cup plain flour

1 litre of full cream milk

1 – 2 cups pumpkin puree (see tips)

½ teaspoon ground smoked paprika

250g tasty or cheddar cheese, grated

Salt flakes, to season

Cracked black pepper, to season

1 tablespoon olive oil

2 long rashers of bacon, rind removed, diced

¾ cup panko breadcrumbs

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Method

Preheat fan-forced oven to 150 degrees on grill setting.

Place large pot of salted boiling water over high heat, when boiling add pasta and cook for about 2 minutes less than packet instructions suggests as pasta will cook further when placed in the oven.

Place a large saucepan over medium heat, add butter and allow butter to melt and bubble a little before adding flour, whisk together and cook flour for about two minutes to cook out the flour taste. Add milk a little at a time and whisk together until smooth. Cook for a further minutes until thickened. Season with salt, cracked black pepper and stir through pumpkin puree and cheese until smooth, reserve a little of the cheese to sprinkle over the top before baking.

Pour pasta into cheese sauce and stir through, place into oven proof baking dish.

To make your crunchy topping, place medium sized saucepan over medium heat, add olive oil, when hot add bacon and cook for a minute or so then add panko breadcrumbs and cook through for a few minutes until coated in oil and slightly golden.

Sprinkle bacon topping on top of pasta, add a little more grated cheese and place in the oven to bake for about 15 minutes until topping is golden and crunchy. Remove from oven and serve warm.

Tip:

To make this recipe gluten free, use gluten free pasta and add cornflour instead but add about ½ cup of water to corn flour before adding to pan and don't cook for as long before adding the milk.

To make pumpkin puree, remove skin from pumpkin and dice into chunks. Steam pumpkin until softened then blitz in a blender until smooth or press through a sieve.

You can add in extra veg like steamed cauliflower, blanched frozen peas, steamed carrot or sweet potato.