

Recipe Finder

Greens Mac and Cheese

WEEKNIGHT VEGETARIAN JAN 26, 2020

Leeks, broccolini and spinach add color and nutrition to this cheesy pasta, which gets a dose of crunch from a toasted almond topping.

SERVINGS:

When you scale a recipe, keep in mind that cooking times and temperatures, pan sizes and seasonings may be affected, so adjust accordingly. Also, amounts listed in the directions will not reflect the changes made to ingredient amounts.

Tested size: 8 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more as needed
 - 1 large leek
 - 1 pound broccolini (may sub broccoli)
 - 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
 - 3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
 - Leaves from 6 stems fresh thyme
 - 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
 - 4 cups reduced-fat (2 percent) milk, or more as needed
 - 1 pound dried elbow macaroni
 - 1 ounce Parmesan cheese, grated
 - 5 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, grated
 - 4 ounces (4 cups packed) baby spinach leaves
 - 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or more to taste
 - 2 ounces (1/2 cup) sliced almonds
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DIRECTIONS

Place a baking rack in the middle of the oven and preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Bring a large pot of generously salted water to a boil.

Meanwhile, cut off the bottom quarter-inch of the leek, removing the root, and the dark green, fibrous parts of the leek (where it starts to unfurl) and discard, compost or save for vegetable broth. Cut the remaining leek in half lengthwise. Using just the white and light green parts, wash the leeks under running water, separating them to rinse in between the layers, until the water runs clear. Thoroughly pat dry and thinly slice.

Separate the broccolini florets from the stalks and chop the florets into bite-size pieces. Thinly slice the stalks.

In a large ovenproof skillet or fireproof casserole set over medium heat, melt the butter. Add the leeks, broccolini stalks, garlic and thyme and cook, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are softened, about 15 minutes. Stir in the flour, then slowly stir in the milk. Cook, stirring frequently, until slightly thickened, 5 to 10 minutes.

Add the macaroni to the boiling water and cook for a minute or two less than the package instructions, until al dente; drain.

While the pasta is cooking, stir the Parmesan and all but a few tablespoons of the cheddar into the sauce and mix well. Transfer to a blender (or use an immersion blender), add the spinach and puree until smooth. (You may need to work in batches to avoid

overcrowding the blender.) Stir in the 1/2 teaspoon salt and the pepper, taste, and add more, if needed.

Return the sauce to the skillet or casserole and stir in the pasta and broccolini florets, loosening with a splash of milk, if needed. Sprinkle the remaining cheddar on top, along with the almonds.

Transfer to the oven and bake for about 30 minutes, or until golden and bubbling. Serve hot.

RECIPE SOURCE

Adapted from “[Ultimate Veg](#),” by Jamie Oliver (Flatiron Books, 2020).

Tested by Joe Yonan.