

OVEN BAKED SMOKED GOUDA AND BACON MAC & CHEESE

INGREDIENTS

4 lardons of bacon, cut into 1-inch pieces
3 tablespoon butter
3 tablespoon flour
1/4 teaspoon cayenne powder
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
2 cups whole milk
1/4 cup heavy cream
8 ounces pasta (I used 3/4 of a box of tri-color rotini)
2 cups smoked gouda, grated
salt and pepper to taste
olive oil
3 tablespoon butter
1 cup panko bread crumbs
1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, grated

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 425F.

Cook your pasta according to directions, but undercook by a minute or two. Once baked, the pasta will be cooked perfectly.

In the meantime, in a medium saucepan over medium heat, render the bacon. Once crispy, remove and set aside but keep the rendered bacon fat in the pan. Add in the butter and let it melt before adding in the flour, onion powder and cayenne. Whisk continuously for 3-5 minutes and until mixture is smooth. Add in the milk and cream and bring to slow simmer. Season with a good pinch of salt and pepper. Remove from the heat and add half the gouda to the milk mixture.

Drain pasta and add in with cheese/milk mixture, combining until pasta is well coated. Toss in the bacon pieces.

Butter all sides of casserole dish or individual ramekins and add in the pasta mixture. Top with remaining cheese.

Using a sauté pan, melt the butter and fold in the bread crumbs and parmesan until mixed well. Sprinkle on top of the cheese and put on a baking tray and into the oven. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until browned and bubbling. Remove and let rest five minutes before serving otherwise your tongue will be scorched.