Oklahoma Cooks

Forward Foods Mac n Cheese with Della Terra Pasta Originally aired 3/24/12

(Serves 4)

**Ingredients:**

2 oz. flour  
2 oz. butter  
1 quart whole milk, cold  
½ onion, peeled  
1 clove  
Salt to taste  
White pepper to taste (pinch, a little goes a long way)  
Nutmeg to taste (pinch, a little goes a long way)  
5 oz. gruyere, 1 oz. reserved for the top of the assembled Mac n Cheese  
2 oz. Parmigiano Reggiano or Grana Padano  
1 lb. cooked Della Terra Rigatoni  
1 cup panko bread crumbs  
3 Tb. butter  
2 tsp. thyme, fresh  
Salt and pepper to taste

**Equipment needed:**

1 cutting board  
1 chef’s knife  
(2) 2 quart sauce pots  
(1) 1.5 G stock pot  
(1) 8 inch sauté pan  
1 wooden spoon  
4 individual casserole dishes or (1) 8 x 8 casserole  
1 fine mesh strainer or regular strainer with cheesecloth  
1 colander
Instructions:

1. Preheat a 2 quart sauce pot on medium heat. Add the butter to the pan and let it melt. Add all of the flour and begin to stir to incorporate the flour completely. Cook the roux for about 2 minutes.

2. Add cold milk to the pot while using a whip to incorporate the milk into the roux. Prepare the onion by placing the clove in the onion. Add onion to the milk. Season with salt, white pepper, and nutmeg and bring to simmer.

3. Reduce the heat to a low simmer and cook the béchamel (that’s what you’ve just made) for about 1 hour or until the flour taste has been cooked out of the béchamel. Stir the mixture about every 5 minutes.

4. Strain the béchamel through a fine sieve or strainer with cheesecloth into a clean 2 quart sauce pot.

5. Add the cheese away from the flame and stir to incorporate and melt the cheese evenly. Adjust the seasonings with salt, white pepper, and nutmeg if necessary. Hold the Mornay sauce warm (this is what you’ve just made).

6. Bring 1 gallon of salted boiling water to a boil and add the rigatoni. Cook the rigatoni for about 6 minutes (if it’s Della Terra) or follow the instructions on the box if using another rigatoni. Strain the pasta.

7. Start by adding 2 cups of the Mornay to the 1 lb of rigatoni. If you would like more, feel free to add it, but this should be sufficient. Reserve the rest of the Mornay for something else. Hold warm.

8. Preheat an 8 inch sauté pan on medium and add the butter and allow it to melt. Add the bread crumbs and thyme and toast lightly. This should take 3 to 4 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

9. Portion the Mac n Cheese into individual casserole dishes or one dish, sprinkle with remaining 1 oz or gruyere, add the bread crumbs and warm in oven under the broiler to finish toasting the bread crumbs and warm the Mac n Cheese. Serve immediately. Enjoy!