

3 Cheese Mac and Cheese with Smoked Bacon

- 350g pasta, your choice of shape, cooked al dente
- 125g smoked bacon, diced
- 30g butter, extra for greasing the baking dish
- 2 tbsp plain flour
- 600ml whole milk
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp paprika
- pinch of chilli powder
- 130g mozzarella cheese
- 130g Red Leicester cheese, grated
- 130g cheddar cheese, grated
- Greek basil leaves
- 2 tbsp sun-blushed tomatoes

Fry the bacon until crisp, remove with a slotted spoon and place onto kitchen paper to drain, set aside.

Melt the butter into the bacon fat, then add the flour and cook, stirring, for a couple of minutes. Gradually pour in a little of the milk, whisking until smooth and free from lumps. Continue adding the remaining milk gradually, whisking as you go.

Keep the sauce at a gentle simmer, then add the Dijon mustard, paprika and chilli powder. Stir well before adding the cheeses, reserving a handful of each for the topping.

Once the sauce has thickened and the cheeses have melted, add the crispy bacon, a good handful of Greek basil leaves and the cooked pasta. Mix well until everything is coated in the creamy cheese sauce.

Grease your baking dish with a little butter.

Spoon half of the mac 'n' cheese into the dish, then dot over half of the sun-blushed tomatoes, tucking them into the pasta.

Sprinkle over a layer of the reserved cheese.

Add the remaining mac 'n' cheese, then repeat with the remaining sun-blushed tomatoes and cheese.

Sprinkle over more basil leaves, then drizzle with a little of the tomato oil.

Place under the grill and cook until the cheese on top is bubbling and golden brown.

Serve.

