

## **Macaroni and Cheese with Tomatoes**

The addition of tomatoes to the ultimate comfort food, Mac 'n Cheese, makes this classic dish even more memorable! The nutmeg adds a savory taste that lingers in your mouth.

**Kosher salt**

**Vegetable oil**

**1 pound elbow macaroni or cavatappi noodles**

**1 quart milk**

**8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, divided**

**1/2 cup all-purpose flour**

**4 cups Gruyere, grated**

**2 cups extra-sharp Cheddar, grated**

**1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**

**1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg, optional**

**3/4 pound fresh tomatoes (4 small), plus 2 -3 extra for slicing on top, optional**

**Or**

**1 small can diced tomatoes, drained really well**

**1 cup bread crumbs or Panko**

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.

Drizzle oil into a large pot of boiling salted water. Add the macaroni and cook according to the directions on the package, 6 to 8 minutes. Drain well.

Meanwhile, heat the milk in a small saucepan, but don't boil it. Melt 6 tablespoons of butter in a large (4-quart) pot and add the flour. Cook over low heat for 2 minutes, stirring with a whisk. While whisking, add the hot milk and cook for a minute or two more, until thickened and smooth. Off the heat, add the Gruyere, Cheddar, salt and pepper to taste, drained tomatoes and nutmeg. Add the cooked macaroni and stir well. Pour into a 3-quart baking dish that has been sprayed with Pam.

Slice the tomatoes and arrange on top. Melt the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter, combine them with bread crumbs or Panko, and sprinkle on the top. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, or until the sauce is bubbly and the macaroni is browned on the top. Serves 6 to 8.

Note: As a change of pace or if your family doesn't like tomatoes, you can leave them out.