



Mac 'n' Cheese For One

INGREDIENTS

75g/2¾oz dried pasta, preferably penne or macaroni
20g/¾oz butter
20g/¾oz plain flour
300ml/10fl oz milk
50g/1¾oz cheddar (preferably mature), finely grated
salt and ground black pepper
crusty bread, to serve (optional)

1. Half-fill a large saucepan with water and cover with a lid. Place over a high heat and bring to the boil. Add the pasta, stir well and return to the boil. Cook without a lid for 10–12 minutes, or until the pasta is tender but retains a little 'bite', stirring occasionally so it doesn't stick.
2. Meanwhile, place a medium saucepan (ideally non-stick) over a medium heat, add the butter and allow to melt. As soon as the butter has melted, sprinkle over the flour and stir well with a wooden spoon until it is completely mixed with the melted butter.
3. Slowly start adding the milk, just a little at a time and stirring well between each addition. (Adding the milk just 3 tablespoons at a time to begin with will help keep the sauce smooth). When you first add the milk, the flour mixture will seize up and look a little lumpy, but the more you stir, the smoother it will become. Continue gradually adding and stirring until all the milk is used up.
4. Stir in roughly two-thirds of the cheese, a generous pinch of salt and 3–4 twists of black pepper (roughly ¼ tsp coarsely ground pepper). Simmer the sauce gently for 2–3 minutes, stirring constantly until it is thickened and glossy.
5. Drain the pasta well in a colander or sieve and return to the pan. Pour the cheese sauce over the top and stir well. Either serve from the pan with the remaining grated cheese on top or transfer to an ovenproof dish and place under a hot grill for 1–2 minutes until lightly browned. Serve with the bread, if using.