

# Butternut Mac and Cheese

Courtesy of Carole's Creations

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 6 or more

**CChints:** Butternut Squash looks like a gourd and tastes similar to a sweet potato. Use a sharp knife to peel it. Discard the seeds and slice into pieces. Because this veggie is high in betacarotene it will turn your hands orange so you might want to wear a plastic glove. Amounts that you don't use for this recipe can be cooked in the microwave for 2 minutes on high and can substitute for a potato dish with another meal. This is a great way to get the non-veggie lovers in your family to eat vegetables.



1 pound macaroni  
salted water

2 cups fresh Butternut Squash or 10 oz. frozen

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

2 tablespoons butter

1/2 medium onion, diced

1 stalk celery, diced

2 cloves minced garlic, fresh or from a jar

2 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves, diced

3 tablespoons wheat or all-purpose flour

14 ounce can reduced fat chicken broth

1 cup milk or 3/4c milk and 1/4 c buttermilk

2 cups sharp low-fat Cheddar cheese, grated

1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1/2 teaspoon salt and a dash of pepper

1/4 cup seasoned bread crumbs

Spray butter or 2 tablespoons melted butter

Preheat oven to 300 degrees F and spray a 9x13 pan with nonstick spray.

Heat salted water to a boil in a large pot of water. The water will come to a boil faster if you cover the pot. Cook the pasta according to package directions but subtract 2 minutes from the cooking time. The pasta will finish cooking in the oven. Drain off the water after cooking.

While you are waiting on the pasta you can work on the squash. If you are using frozen squash, defrost it in the microwave. Since it has already been cooked, it just needs to be cut into small pieces. If you are using fresh squash it will need to be peeled and shredded or cut into small pieces. Put it in a food processor or use a hand grater. The fresh squash should be put into a microwave safe container and microwaved on high for 2 minutes to get it tender.

In a large saucepan, add the oil and butter over medium heat. When this mixture is hot add the onions and celery. Stir occasionally for 3 minutes. Add the garlic and thyme for 1 minute. Stir in the flour for 1 minute, then stir in the broth. Blend in the milk and squash and bring it to a low boil over medium heat. Stir in the cheeses through pepper. Drain the pasta and add it to the sauce.

Pour the mixture into your baking dish. Sprinkle with bread crumbs and spray the top lightly with spray butter or drizzle melted butter over the top.

Bake uncovered for 10 minutes or until the top starts to turn a golden brown. If the top does not brown, turn on the broiler for 1-2 minutes. Remove and serve.