

Mac and Cheese •

Ingredients

Elbow macaroni	1 lb	Salt	¼ tsp
Butter	½ cup (1 stick)	Black pepper	¼ tsp
All-purpose flour	½ cup	Sodium citrate (optional)	½ tsp
Whole milk, warmed	4 cups	Sharp cheddar	1 lb
Heavy cream	½ cup	Gruyere cheese	½ lb
Smoked paprika	1 tsp	Smoked gouda cheese	¼ lb
Hungarian hot paprika	1 tsp	Cooked ham, diced	1 cup (6 oz.)
Garlic powder	½ tsp	Parmesan cheese	½ cup
Dry mustard powder	1 tsp	Panko breadcrumbs	½ cup
		Parsley	1 Tbsp

Directions

Preheat oven to 375°F — Lightly grease a 9x13" baking dish — Shred cheeses — Chop ham — Warm milk — Combine sodium citrate and 2 Tbsp. water

1. **Cook the Macaroni:** Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Add the **elbow macaroni** and cook according to package directions until al dente. Drain well and set aside. Do not rinse.
2. **Make the Roux:** In a large, heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven, melt the **unsalted butter** over medium heat. Whisk in the **flour**. Cook, stirring constantly, for 2-3 minutes until a pale golden roux forms.
3. **Build the Cheese Sauce Base:** Gradually whisk in the **warmed whole milk**, a little at a time, until smooth. Continue whisking until the sauce thickens about 5-7 minutes. Stir in the **heavy cream, smoked paprika, Hungarian hot paprika, garlic powder, and dry mustard powder**. Season with **salt and black pepper** to taste. Stir in **sodium citrate** thoroughly.
4. **Melt the Cheeses:** Reduce the heat to low. Add the shredded **sharp cheddar, Gruyere, and smoked gouda cheeses** to the sauce, a handful at a time, stirring constantly until melted and smooth.
5. **Combine Macaroni & Cheese:** Add the cooked macaroni to the cheese sauce and stir gently until fully coated. Fold in the diced **ham**.
6. **Assemble & Top:** Transfer the mac and cheese mixture to the prepared baking dish, spreading it evenly. In a small bowl, combine the **grated Parmesan cheese and panko breadcrumbs**. Sprinkle this mixture generously over the top.
7. **Bake:** Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the mac and cheese is bubbly around the edges and the topping is golden brown and crispy.
8. **Serve:** Let the mac and cheese stand for 5-10 minutes before serving. Garnish with fresh parsley.