

# Creamy Baked Macaroni and Cheese

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By [Eric Kim](#)

**Time:** 1 hour  
**Yield:** 6 to 8 servings  
**Rating:** 4 out of 5



Christopher Testani for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Barrett Washburne.

This macaroni and cheese recipe, inspired by Stouffer's, delivers the best of all worlds: creamy, saucy comfort, with a consistency that's slightly more set than a stovetop version, thanks to a final bake in the oven. It stays voluptuous and molten as a result of a higher ratio of sauce to noodles, which are cooked completely so they don't soak up as much liquid. The Velveeta is necessary here, as it has sodium citrate, which prevents the sauce from separating in the oven. Elbow macaroni works fine, but cavatappi is an especially fun shape to eat with its telephone-cord bounciness.

## Ingredients

- Salt
- 1 pound cavatappi or elbow macaroni
- ½ cup unsalted butter
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 6 cups whole milk
- 1 pound sharp or extra-sharp yellow Cheddar, coarsely grated (5¼ cups)
- 8 ounces Velveeta, torn into pieces
- 4 ounces Pecorino Romano, coarsely grated (1 cup)
- ½ teaspoon dry mustard powder
- ¼ teaspoon onion powder
- Pinch of ground cayenne
- Freshly ground black pepper

## Preparation

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and season generously with salt. Add the pasta and cook according to package instructions, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon, until just past al dente. Drain and set aside.
3. Return the empty pot to the stove (no need to clean it) and set over medium heat. Melt the butter and simmer, whisking occasionally, until the butter stops spurting and quiets down, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the flour and cook, whisking, until smooth like gravy, about 1 minute.
4. Whisk in the milk. Raise the heat to high and bring to a simmer, whisking constantly, then immediately reduce the heat to low and continue simmering until the sauce lightly coats the back of a spoon, 2 to 5 minutes. At this stage, the sauce should be smooth but relatively loose. Take the pot off the heat.
5. To the pot, add the Cheddar, Velveeta, Pecorino Romano, mustard powder, onion powder and cayenne, and season generously with salt and black pepper. Whisk until the cheese is melted and smooth like nacho cheese. Add the drained pasta, breaking up any clumps, and stir until evenly coated in the cheese sauce. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper.
6. Transfer to a 9-by-13-inch baking pan or dish and bake until bubbling at the edges, 15 to 20 minutes. Serve immediately.

## Nutritional Information

955 calories	58 grams fat
34 grams saturated fat	0 grams trans fat
14 grams monounsaturated fat	2 grams polyunsaturated fat
64 grams carbohydrates	2 grams dietary fiber
44 grams protein	1311 milligrams sodium