



Pasta, Macaroni and Cheese

MyPlate Food Group: **Grains**



Nutrition Information

- ½ cup cooked macaroni and cheese counts as 1 ounce of grain in the ChooseMyPlate.gov Grains group. Macaroni is a refined grain.
- Grains are divided into 2 subgroups: Whole Grains and Refined Grains.
- Refined grains have been milled, a process that removes the bran and germ. This process also removes dietary fiber, iron, and many B vitamins.
- Most refined grains are enriched. This means certain B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, folic acid) and iron are added back after processing. Fiber is not added back to enriched grains.
- Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel — the bran, germ, and endosperm. Examples of whole grains include whole-wheat flour, bulgur (cracked wheat), oatmeal, whole cornmeal, and brown rice.
- For specific information about macaroni and cheese, please refer to the product’s Nutrition Facts Panel or ingredient list.

Uses and Tips

- Add more vitamins and minerals to macaroni and cheese by adding some cooked frozen veggies and tuna, leftover taco meat and salsa, or chopped up cooked chicken and broccoli.
- Top cooked macaroni and cheese with toasted bread crumbs and bake in the oven at 375 degrees for 15 minutes for a crispy topping.

Storing Foods at Home

- Store unopened packages of macaroni and cheese in a cool, clean, dry place.
- Once prepared, store any leftover macaroni and cheese in the refrigerator in a sealed container not made from metal.

MyPlate Facts

- Try to make at least ½ of the grains you eat each day whole grains.
- Grains are important sources of many nutrients, including dietary fiber, B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, and folate), and minerals (iron, magnesium, and selenium).
- Dietary fiber from whole grains or other foods, may help reduce blood cholesterol levels and may lower risk of heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.
- Fiber is important for proper bowel function. It helps reduce constipation and promotes regularity. Fiber-containing foods such as whole grains help provide a feeling of fullness with fewer calories.



USDA Foods

Mac 'n Cheese with Broccoli

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients:

10 ounces fresh or frozen broccoli, chopped
1 box of macaroni and cheese pasta (*Need milk and margarine to make the macaroni and cheese per instructions on the box)

Directions: Wash hands with soap and water.

1. Cook macaroni noodles according to package directions.
2. Add broccoli to cooking noodles 5 minutes before the noodles are done. Drain water from noodles and broccoli.
3. Add cheese sauce, margarine, and milk according to package directions. Stir well.

Recipe adapted from University of Maryland Extension

Tuna-Mac Surprise

Makes 6 servings

Ingredients:

1 box macaroni and cheese dinner (*Need milk and margarine to make the macaroni and cheese per instructions on the box)
½ cup low-fat milk
1 can (about 12 ounces) tuna, in water, drained
1 can (about 10¾ ounces) cream of mushroom soup

Directions: Wash hands with soap and water.

1. In a medium saucepan, prepare macaroni and cheese as directed on the package.
2. Add the milk, tuna, and soup. Mix well and continue to cook until heated throughout.

Note: For added nutrition, add 1 cup thawed frozen chopped broccoli, peas, carrots, or other fresh or frozen vegetables.

Recipe adapted from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service