

# Damian's Pulled Pork Mac and Cheese

Based on Alton Brown's baked macaroni and cheese, adapted with pulled pork.

## Recipe Notes

- For best results, do not substitute starred ingredients.
- Ingredients are listed first as a full list, then grouped by mise en place for easier prep.
- If cooking in bulk, make two separate batches instead of one oversized batch.
- The pulled pork method is intentionally flexible. The version here is a simple crock-pot approach.

## Ingredients

### Pulled Pork

- 1 (4-7 pound) pork butt (pork shoulder), boneless or bone-in
- 1 onion
- 1 bottle barbecue sauce (any flavor you like; Stubb's Sweet Heat is a good fit)
- Powdered mustard
- Paprika
- Powdered onion
- Powdered garlic
- Salt
- Pepper
- (Optional) pre-mixed meat rub instead of the individual seasonings
- 1 bottle or can of beer or dark soda

### Mac and Cheese

- 1 (1 pound) box cavatappi pasta
- 3-4 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1 tablespoon ground powdered mustard
- 3 cups milk
- 1/2 cup yellow onion, finely diced
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika (hot or smoked)
- 1 teaspoon Sweet Heat pepper flakes from Flatiron Pepper Co\*
- Hotter option: substitute Sweet Heat with 1/2 teaspoon Hatch Valley Green and 1/2 teaspoon Smoke Show\*
- 1 tablespoon liquid smoke
- 16 ounces Cabot Seriously Sharp cheddar, shredded\*
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- Fresh black pepper
- **Topping:**
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup seasoned panko bread crumbs

Note: Do not buy pre-shredded cheese. Anti-caking starches interfere with the roux.

Note: If making in bulk, buying a larger block of cheddar works well.

## Pulled Pork Method

1. Roughly chop the onion and place it into the bottom of a crock pot.
2. Add the beer or soda to the crock pot.
3. Pat the pork dry and trim excess fat thicker than 1/4 inch.
4. Season the outside of the pork liberally so it is fully coated.
5. Cook on low for 9-11 hours, until tender and falling apart.
6. Remove the pork, shred it, and add barbecue sauce to taste. Add a little cooking liquid if desired, but avoid making it too wet.
7. Set aside for mixing into the mac and cheese.

## Mise en Place

<b>Pasta</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 (1 pound) box cavatappi pasta</li></ul>	<b>Bowl 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3-4 tablespoons butter</li></ul>	<b>Bowl 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3 tablespoons flour</li><li>• 1 tablespoon ground powdered mustard</li></ul>
<b>Bowl 3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3 cups milk</li><li>• 1 tablespoon liquid smoke</li></ul>	<b>Bowl 4</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1/2 cup yellow onion, finely diced</li></ul>	<b>Bowl 5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 bay leaf</li><li>• 1/2 teaspoon paprika (hot or smoked)</li><li>• 1 teaspoon Sweet Heat pepper flakes from Flatiron Pepper Co*</li><li>• Hotter option: 1/2 teaspoon Hatch Valley Green + 1/2 teaspoon Smoke Show*</li></ul>
<b>Bowl 6</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 16 ounces Cabot Seriously Sharp cheddar, shredded*</li></ul>	<b>Added to taste</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kosher salt</li><li>• Fresh black pepper</li></ul>	<b>Topping</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3 tablespoons butter</li><li>• 1 cup seasoned panko bread crumbs</li></ul>

## Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. In a large pot of salted boiling water, cook the pasta to al dente.

- 3.** While the pasta cooks, melt the butter in a separate pot. Whisk in the flour and mustard over medium heat for about 5 minutes, keeping it smooth and lump-free.
- 4.** Stir in the milk, liquid smoke, onion, bay leaf, pepper flakes, and paprika. Simmer for 10 minutes, then remove the bay leaf.
- 5.** Temperature control matters here: raise the heat briefly to bring the mixture up to temperature if needed, but do not let it boil. Once it reaches a simmer, reduce heat to medium or medium-low and hold a gentle simmer so the sauce stays hot enough to melt the cheese cleanly.
- 6.** Still on heat, stir in 3/4 of the cheese a handful at a time, mixing between additions until melted. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- 7.** Fold the macaroni into the sauce. Add pulled pork to taste. A good range is 1/4 to 3/4 of the total cooked pork, depending on how pork-forward you want the final dish.
- 8.** Pour into a 2-quart casserole dish and top with the remaining cheese.
- 9.** Melt the butter in a saute pan, toss the bread crumbs to coat, and top the macaroni.
- 10.** Bake for 30 minutes. Remove from oven and rest for 5 minutes before serving.

Source recipe adapted and reformatted for a clean printable version.