

Recipe Ingredients

◦ Macaroni and Cheese with Sausage

- Salt
- 1 pound elbow macaroni
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound Italian sausage, casing removed
- 1 red bell pepper- chopped
- 1 onion- chopped
- 2 ½ cups half and half
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Two 8 ounce packages light cream cheese.
- One block sharp chedder- grated
- 1 cup grated Gruyere

- For a Vegetarian option, just leave out the sausage and enjoy the homemade macaroni and cheese!

◦ **Healthier Substitutions:**

- Turkey Sausage/Chicken Sausage
- Low Fat Creamer instead of Half and Half
- Low fat Cheddar

Instructions

- 1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.
- 2. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the macaroni and cook according to package directions. Save 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups of the cooking water and drain the rest. Set pasta and cooking water aside separately.
- 3. Heat the oil in a large saucepot over medium-high heat. Add the sausage and cook until lightly browned, breaking the meat into small pieces, for about 5 minutes.
- 4. Transfer the browned meat to a plate with a slotted spoon. Add the bell pepper, onion, and a pinch of salt to the drippings in the pot. Cook until lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Transfer to the plate with the sausage.
- 5. Carefully wipe out the pot, add the creamer (half and half) and the cayenne and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Simmer for about 15 minutes.
- 6. Add the cream cheese and stir until melted. Gradually whisk in the Cheddar and Gruyere cheese until all the cheese is melted and sauce is smooth. Remove from heat.
- 7. Add the cooked pasta and the reserved cooking water to the cheese sauce and stir. Add in the sausage and vegetable mix. Add salt and pepper if needed. Stir.
- 8. Pour into a large baking dish and bake until bubbly and lightly browned, about 10-12 minutes. You may wish to broil for 4-5 minutes to brown the top.