

BLUE CHEESE BACON MACARONI & CHEESE

Makes 8 servings

- 8 oz. blue cheese, crumbled
 - 2 cups cooked, chopped peppered bacon
 - 1 red onion, sliced
 - 2 cups chopped mushrooms (shitake or wild)
 - 1 ½ cups half and half
 - 6 Tbsp. Butter, salted
 - 5 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 - 1 Tbsp. garlic powder
 - ¼ tsp. *cumin
 - ½ Tbsp. salt
 - 8 oz. elbow macaroni
 - 8 oz. pasta shells
 - Fresh Basil
 - 1 cup (water from pasta boil)
1. Cook your bacon, set aside for later. Reserve 1 Tbsp. bacon grease for caramelizing the onion.
 2. Caramelize onion using 1 Tbsp. of bacon grease and 2 Tbsp salted butter, then add chopped mushrooms toward the end to sauté. Set aside on a paper towel with bacon.
 3. In a clean pan melt 4 Tbsp. butter, and add the half and half, stir until blended. Add in the garlic, garlic powder, cumin, and salt.
 4. When you can smell the garlic heating up, stir in blue cheese.
 5. Start the pasta water. (You'll reserve 1 cup of cooked pasta water for the starch and thickener later, remember)
 6. When the water is ready, add (half a bag of macaroni large noodle and half a bag of shells)
 7. While pasta is cooking, stir the blue cheese sauce consistently. Bring to a simmer. Stir in caramelized onion, bacon, and mushrooms. Add a handful of fresh basil leaves.
 8. When your pasta is finished, 6-8 minutes of boil; drain and reserve 1 cup of cooked water. Add it to the sauce.
 9. Stir for five more minutes, then turn the heat off and let it set up.
 10. Toss your pasta in the sauce, and serve.