

BAKED MACARONI AND CHEESE

2 pound elbows, orecchiette, rotini, or cavatappi pasta
6 tablespoons butter
1/2 cup plus, 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
1-quart whole milk
8 cups grated cheese - your choice (cheddar, gouda, and gruyere is nice)
salt and pepper to taste
1/2 teaspoon grated nutmeg
1 teaspoon dry mustard

Optional - bread crumb topping -
2 cups fresh breadcrumbs- any bread you have around, pulsed in processor to chunky pieces
3-4 scallions, chopped with greens
2 tablespoons butter

Boil pasta and cook until al dente.

Melt butter in large saucepan. Stir in flour, salt, pepper, nutmeg, dry mustard. Cook over low heat stirring constantly for 3 minutes. You need to cook out the raw flour taste. Add milk and heat to a low boil while stirring. Add cheese and stir until melted. Keep on low heat, stirring occasionally while pasta cooks.

Drain pasta (saving a cup of the pasta liquid) and pour back into pasta pot. Add your cheese sauce and stir to combine. Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary. Pour into into 9 x 13-inch buttered baking dishes.

In a sauté pan add 2 tablespoons butter, add your scallions and cook until softened, add your breadcrumbs and toast lightly.

Top casserole with breadcrumbs and Bake at 350 for 30 minutes until bubbly.

NOTE – you can add choose to cook less pasta and make this extra cheesy and or cut the recipe in half for a smaller quantity.

CHICKEN CUTLETS PARMESAN

4 skinless, boneless, chicken breasts (about 1.5 pounds)
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
1 tablespoon water
1 cup dried bread crumbs – SEE NOTE
Salt & pepper
Parmesan cheese

Assemble your ingredients for the chicken to make an assembly line. Place a long piece of plastic wrap on the counter and lay the chicken on the wrap with room in between. Place another piece of plastic wrap on top of chicken. Pound the chicken breasts with a flat meat mallet, until they are about 1/2-inch thick.

Put the flour in a shallow platter and season with a fair amount of salt and pepper; mix with a fork to distribute evenly. In a wide bowl, combine the eggs and water, beat until frothy. Put the bread crumbs on a plate, season with salt, pepper, and parmesan cheese (optional).

Heat enough olive to create a shallow pond in a large skillet over medium-flame. Lightly dredge both sides of the chicken cutlets in the seasoned flour, and then dip them in the egg wash to coat completely, letting the excess drip off, then dredge in the bread crumbs. This can be done ahead of time.

When the oil is nice and hot, add the cutlets and fry for 4 minutes on each side until golden and crusty, turning once. If doing multiple batches, you may need to clean your skillet in between and start again with fresh oil. Remove from heat to brown paper(BEST) or paper towels. Serves 4
Make double batches for sandwiches, salads, or chicken parmesan.

Chicken Parmesan

Cheese of Choice – mozzarella or sliced provolone
One jar Tomato Sauce

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Place chicken cutlets on a lined baking sheet and spread each breast lightly with tomato sauce. Top with cheese and bake in the preheated oven until cheese melts.

BREADCRUMBS- using fresh breadcrumbs is a key step to making these extra delicious. Take a fresh loaf of bread. Tear it into small pieces and process in your food processor, store in a plastic bag in your freezer. You can also use, gluten free bread for a GF option.

ARUGULA, SPINACH & RADICCHIO SALAD

Equal parts spinach and arugula in bowl, usually one handful per person
1 medium head radicchio, sliced thin crosswise
Salt and Pepper

Culinary Works House Dressing:

One jar or shake able container (with lid)
One garlic clove – minced fine
1 generous teaspoon Dijon mustard
½ lemon zested
1 lemon juiced
1 generous tablespoon apple cider vinegar
½ cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil
Salt and Pepper – dash of each

Combine all ingredients in jar, top with lid and shake very well. Taste with a piece of lettuce and adjust the seasoning.

GARLIC BREAD

2 sticks (1 cup) unsalted butter, softened, but not melted
5 large garlic cloves, minced
2 teaspoons kosher salt – if using unsalted butter
1/2 bunch chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
2 large loaves of crusty bread, halved horizontally –
Prepare grill for cooking.

Combine softened butter, garlic, parsley in a bowl. Stir in salt and pepper to taste.
Spread butter on inside of loaves. Close bread like a sandwich, dampen it well with water and place on upper rack of your grill for 5-10 minutes, until butter is melted and bread is heated through.
Slice on the diagonal and serve immediately.

- Herb-garlic butter can be prepared a few days in advance and chilled and it is also great atop chicken or fish.

Oven Method

Preheat the oven to 350°. Keep the bread closed and dampen the entire closed loaf of bread with water. Bake on a sheet pan for 8-minutes, then open it up and let it brown a bit on the inside, another 3-4 minutes. .

Note - you can use all olive oil in lieu of or in addition to the butter.