

Prosciutto-Wrapped Macaroni and Cheese Cups



Makes: 12 servings

Few dishes are more comforting than gooey macaroni and cheese hot out of the oven. But we've managed to make it even more appealing by serving it in individual prosciutto cups topped with crispy panko. These mac 'n' cheese cups are an ideal party appetizer or midafternoon snack, or for a satisfying meal.

Lining the wells of the muffin pan is easiest using prosciutto slices that are at least 3 inches wide. Panko is coarse Japanese-style breadcrumbs. It's available in the international section of most supermarkets.

Game plan: Place the prosciutto in the freezer for about 5 minutes to make it easier to slice and line the muffin-pan wells with.

If you don't have a 12-well muffin pan, you can use two 6-well muffin pans; just be sure to bake them side by side in the oven.

INGREDIENTS

- 8 ounces elbow macaroni
- 6 very thin slices prosciutto (about 3 ounces)
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1/4 cup panko
- 1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons all-purpose flour
- 1 1/4 cups whole milk
- 1 1/2 cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese (about 4 ounces)
- 3/4 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese (about 2 ounces)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more for salting the pasta cooking water
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat the oven to 375°F and arrange a rack in the middle.
2. Bring a large saucepan (about 4 quarts) of heavily salted water to a boil over high heat. Add the pasta and cook according to the package directions. When the pasta is al dente, reserve 1/4 cup of the cooking water, then drain.

3. Meanwhile, cut the prosciutto in half crosswise.



4. Place 1 slice in each well of a 12-well muffin pan, pressing the prosciutto evenly into the bottom and up the sides of each well; set aside.



5. Melt 1 tablespoon of the butter in a small frying pan over medium heat until foaming. Add the panko and cook, stirring occasionally, until light golden brown, about 4 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and set aside.
6. While the pasta is draining, rinse the saucepan and wipe it dry. Melt the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter in the saucepan over medium-low heat until foaming. Add the flour and whisk until smooth. Cook, whisking occasionally, until the flour has darkened slightly in color, about 2 to 3 minutes.
7. Add the milk very slowly, whisking it into the flour-butter mixture. Continue cooking, whisking constantly to smooth out any lumps, until the mixture simmers and thickens, about 6 to 7 minutes.
8. Remove the saucepan from the heat. Add the reserved pasta water, cheeses, mustard, measured salt, and pepper and whisk until the cheese has melted and the mixture is smooth. Add the drained pasta and stir to combine.
9. Divide the pasta mixture among the wells of the prepared muffin pan and sprinkle with the toasted panko. Cook until the edges of the mac 'n' cheese cups are bubbling slightly and the tops are light golden brown, about 25 to 30 minutes.
10. Remove the muffin pan to a wire rack and let it cool for 5 minutes. Run a small knife around the perimeter of each well to loosen and remove the prosciutto cups. Serve immediately.