

APPLE MACARONI AND CHEESE

- 12 ounces penne pasta
- 15 ounces apple (10 ounces diced and 5 ounces grated), Fuji, Braeburn, or Granny Smith
- 2 1/2 cups milk
- 1/2 cup apple cider
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, plus 1 tablespoon
- 1 1/4 ounces (by weight) all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 6 ounces Cheddar cheese, grated
- 3 ounces Gorgonzola cheese, grated
- 1 ounce Parmesan cheese, grated



Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Bring 4 quarts of salted water to a boil over high heat, add pasta, and cook until *al dente*. Drain, rinse, and set aside.

In a large saucepan, melt 1 tablespoon of butter. Add the apples and sauté until they're just beginning to become tender (4 to 5 minutes). Remove from pan and set aside.

In a separate saucepan, heat the milk and apple cider just until boiling, remove from heat, and set aside.

In the pan you used for the apples, melt the remaining butter over low heat. Add the flour and whisk for 5 minutes. Add the milk gradually and whisk to ensure that there are no lumps. Add the nutmeg, salt, and pepper, and whisk until the mixture begins to thicken slightly. Gradually add the Cheddar and Gorgonzola cheese and stir to combine.

Stir in the apples and penne pasta.

Transfer to a buttered 13-by-9-inch glass baking dish and sprinkle the Parmesan cheese on top. Bake for 20 minutes or until bubbling. If the dish isn't brown on top, turn on the broiler and brown for 2 to 3 minutes. Serves 8 to 10 as a side dish.

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