

MEALTIME HELPER

MAKING MEALTIME EASY

Lobster Mac and Cheese - Recipe

Prep time: 25 minutes (includes prepping lobster and grating cheese)

Cook time: 30–35 minutes (stovetop + bake)

Total time: 55–60 minutes

Servings: 6

Ingredients

- 12 oz (340 g) pasta (cavatappi, shells, elbow, or small penne)
- 1 lb (450 g) cooked lobster meat, coarsely chopped (from 2–3 lobster tails or 2–3 cups pre-cooked)
- 4 tablespoons (60 g) unsalted butter, divided
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 cups (480 ml) whole milk, warmed
- 1/2 cup (120 ml) heavy cream (optional — for extra richness; may substitute with more milk)
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/4–1/2 teaspoon cayenne or a pinch of smoked paprika (adjust to taste)
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt (adjust to taste)
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup (100 g) sharp cheddar, grated
- 1 cup (100 g) Gruyère or fontina, grated (or mix mozzarella + Parmesan)
- 1/2 cup (50 g) grated Parmesan or Pecorino, divided
- 1 cup panko breadcrumbs
- 2 tablespoons olive oil (or 2 tablespoons melted butter) for breadcrumbs
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley or chives, for garnish
- Lemon wedges, for serving (optional)

Optional add-ins:

- 1/2 cup roasted corn or peas for color
- 1 tablespoon brandy or dry sherry added when deglazing for depth

Directions

1. **Preheat oven and prep pasta:** Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and cook pasta 1–2 minutes shy of al dente (it will finish in the oven). Reserve 1 cup pasta water, drain pasta, and set aside.
2. **Prepare lobster:** If using raw lobster tails, boil/steam until cooked through (internal temp ~140°F) then cool, remove meat, and chop coarsely. If using pre-cooked lobster, chop and keep chilled until step 6. Pat lobster lightly dry so it doesn't water down the sauce.
3. **Make a roux:** In a large skillet or heavy saucepan over medium heat, melt 2 tablespoons butter. Whisk in the flour and cook 1–2 minutes until lightly golden and nutty (don't let it darken too much).
4. **Build the cheese sauce:** Gradually whisk in warmed milk and cream until smooth. Bring to a gentle simmer, stirring often, until sauce thickens and coats the back of a spoon, about 4–6 minutes. Whisk in Dijon, cayenne or smoked paprika, salt, and pepper. Turn heat to low.
5. **Melt cheeses:** Stir in cheddar, Gruyère (or fontina), and half of the Parmesan until melted and smooth. If sauce is too thick, thin with a splash of reserved pasta water. Taste and adjust seasoning.
6. **Combine pasta and lobster:** Add drained pasta to the sauce and toss to coat. Fold in chopped lobster (reserve a few nice chunks for topping if you want) and any optional add-ins (corn/peas). Mix gently to avoid breaking up the lobster. If the mixture seems dry, add a bit more reserved pasta water.
7. **Prepare breadcrumb topping:** In a small bowl, toss panko with the remaining 2 tablespoons melted butter or olive oil and the remaining 1/4 cup Parmesan.
8. **Assemble and bake:** Transfer the mac and cheese to a lightly buttered 9×13-inch casserole (or equivalent). Sprinkle the breadcrumb mixture evenly over the top and place the reserved lobster chunks on top for presentation.
9. **Bake:** Bake uncovered 18–22 minutes at 375°F (190°C) until bubbly and golden on top. If you want extra browning, broil 1–2 minutes—watch carefully.
10. **Finish and serve:** Remove from oven and let rest 5 minutes. Sprinkle with chopped parsley or chives and serve with lemon wedges for squeezing over the lobster.

Tips and variations

- For ultimate richness, stir in 1–2 tablespoons cream cheese or mascarpone with the grated cheeses.
- To prevent overcooked lobster, add most of the lobster near the end; reserve a few pieces to place on top before baking.
- Make ahead: assemble, cover, and refrigerate up to 24 hours. Add 5–10 minutes to baking time if baking straight from the fridge.

- For a lighter version, use half-and-half instead of cream and reduce the cheese slightly.
- Substitute toasted panko mixed with chopped herb and lemon zest for a brighter topping.

Creamy, cheesy, and lobster-forward — this Lobster Mac and Cheese is indulgent comfort with a touch of seaside elegance.