

RV GODDESS: Not Your Momma's Macaroni & Cheese

I cannot tell you how popular "Adult" Mac & Cheese is around our house. This makes an easy side-dish and is also a super-satisfying vegetarian main course. The recipe requires no sauce, saving a messy step, and can be made earlier in the day and baked just before serving. Sharp cheddar is good to use in this casserole, and mixing-in a little mozzarella is nice - but mixing in Jalapeno Jack makes it really spicy! Sometimes, I add green or red bell peppers too.

One pound penne (or similar) pasta
2 Tablespoons olive oil
One large onion, chopped
2 jalapenos, sliced into rings (I do not seed)
4 cloves garlic, minced
4 cups shredded cheese (16 oz.)
Salt & Pepper to taste
1/4 cup freshly shredded parmesan
1/4 cup coarse Italian-style breadcrumbs, optional

Heat oven to 375°. Oil a large, flat, casserole dish.

Cook the pasta according to package directions, drain and cool under running cold water, and return the cooled pasta to cooking pot. Set aside.

While pasta is cooking, sauté the onion, garlic and jalapeno in a two tablespoons olive oil in a medium skillet. Remove from heat and let cool a bit.

Stir the onion mixture into the pasta and add the cheese. Toss well to blend. Season with salt and pepper, if desired (I never do - it's salty & spicy enough). Pour mixture evenly into the prepared oiled casserole dish and top with parmesan cheese and/or breadcrumbs.

Bake for 30 to 40 minutes (use the longer time if you want a really crisp crust) until the top is brown and bubbly. Serves 8.