

Chipotle-Sweetcorn Mac & Cheese

Time 30 mins prep; optional 20 mins baking **Serves** 6

Who remembers Huxtable, a buzzy little restaurant in the inner Melbourne suburb of Collingwood? Our favourite dish there was chef Dan Wilson's take on mac-and-cheese laced with spicy, smoky chipotle chillies and studded with sweetcorn. Huxtable closed some years ago, spurring us to create this near relation to eat at home. We often serve it as a family dinner and recently added it to our cellar door take-home menu.



Ingredients

- 3 cobs fresh sweetcorn, husked
- 35 grams butter, plus extra to grease baking dish
- 35 grams plain flour
- 700 ml milk
- 150 grams cheddar, grated
- 1.5 tablespoons finely chopped chipotle in adobo
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 350 grams short pasta (such as macaroni or penne)
- 300 grams mozzarella, grated
- handful chopped chives, optional
- 1/2 cup breadcrumbs, optional

Method on reverse

Method

1. Blanch sweetcorn cobs in boiling salted water. Allow to cool, cut the kernels away from the cobs and set aside.
2. Make a béchamel (white) sauce by melting the butter in a saucepan and stirring in the flour until it forms a paste and begins to bubble. Whisk in the milk slowly at first, the flour will thicken before becoming loose again. After all the milk is added, keep stirring and scraping the bottom with a spatula until the mixture thickens enough to coat the back of the spatula.
3. Check thickened sauce for lumps of flour. Tiny ones are not a problem in this dish but if they are big and gluey, strain them out. Stir in the grated cheddar and chipotle, remove sauce from heat and season with salt and pepper.
4. Boil the pasta according to directions on packet. Drain and combine cooked pasta with the sauce. Stir in the grated mozzarella and chives, if using. **At this point you can simply dish it up in bowls OR go to steps 5 & 6 below as we did for our pic.**
5. Tip it all into a buttered ovenproof dish. (If you are making this dish ahead of time you can cover and refrigerate it at this point until you're ready to bake it.) Scatter with breadcrumbs and bake in a preheated 180C oven approx. 20 minutes (longer if you refrigerated it) until warmed through and the breadcrumbs are lightly browned.
6. Allow to rest for a few minutes before serving with salad.

AND ... Chipotle in adobo is sold in cans (popular brands include La Costena and La Morena). The chipotle chillies are very hot, so if you don't have great chilli tolerance use a spoonful of the adobo sauce instead of the chopped chilli – it will deliver the smoky flavour with less of the heat.

Frozen corn kernels are a good option if you can't find/can't be bothered with fresh sweetcorn but don't use canned sweetcorn.

This dish freezes and reheats easily, so we often make a double batch and freeze half for another time.

Dan Wilson's brilliant cookbook *Huxtabook* (Hardie Grant, 2014) can be hard to find these days but if you're lucky enough to get your hands on a copy you'll find his original recipe on page 119.