

Beer-baked Macaroni and Cheese

Originally printed in the Los Angeles Times' Culinary SOS column in 2010. Recipe adapted from the Rackhouse Pub in Denver. Recipe tester's note: If you are not a fan of blue cheese, omit it and add an extra 1 cup of cheddar cheese. The restaurant uses this beer: Railyard Ale from the [Wynkoop Brewing Co.](#)

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter

1/2 cup flour

1/2 cup amber beer

2 cups half-and-half

1/2 pound brie

16 ounces (2 packages) cream cheese

1 1/2 cups crumbled gorgonzola cheese

2 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese

1 1/2 cups grated Parmesan cheese, divided

1 (16-ounce) box penne pasta, cooked and drained

Salt and pepper

1/2 cup panko or bread crumbs

Heat the oven to 350 degrees.

In a medium, heavy-bottom pot, melt the butter over medium heat. Whisk in the flour to form a light roux. Slowly whisk in the

beer and half and half.

Add the brie and cream cheese to the sauce, stirring until the cheeses are melted and incorporated. Stir in the gorgonzola, cheddar and 1 cup Parmesan.

Stir in the pasta, taste and adjust the seasonings as desired with salt and pepper. Some of the cheese will be salty, and the mixture may need only a little salt, if any.

Pour the mixture into a 13-by-9-inch baking dish. Top the mixture by sprinkling over the remaining Parmesan cheese and panko crumbs. Place the dish in the oven and bake until the sauce is bubbly and the toppings are crisp and golden, about 1 hour.

Cool slightly before serving.

Yield: 12-16 servings.