

MACARONI AND HOOP CHEESE RECIPE

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Follow our complete, step-by-step, instructions to learn how to make this old fashioned, Southern style mac and cheese. Made with hoop cheese but you can use any cheddar style cheese you prefer.



Hoop cheese is an old Southern favorite cheddar cheese. It has a texture similar to a mild cheddar. The name comes from the round shape of the cheese mold during processing. Old country stores in the South sell it straight from it's wooden box, sliced to the size and amount you request.

The very first thing Mama taught me how to cook was Macaroni and Cheese. Yes, it came in a blue box and used some type of powdery cheese, but it was pretty popular and easy to make. And, even though that was a very long time ago, that same Mac and Cheese in the blue box is probably more popular than ever today. Smile.

Folks have come to know that type of Mac and Cheese as their favorite. Youngsters these days don't really know any other kind. So, this version may be a bit of a surprise for many.

I've been wanting to make this Hoop Cheese version for a long time, and I'm glad to finally have the chance to share it with you here on Taste of Southern. It's almost as easy to make as the blue box type, but to me, it tastes much better. It's all about the hoop cheese.

Hoop cheese gets its name from the round molded shape the cheese is made and sold in. It's generally about 40 pounds in weight and often wrapped in a red or black rind as its called. Sadly, this Farmers Cheese does spoil fairly quickly after it's made. Some is aged, but most is not. As for flavor, it's fairly mild, but most old Southerners love it.

You'll still find it around Farmers Markets and in old Country Stores throughout the South. It's often packed in a round wooden box and sliced at the point of sale. A good merchant can slice off a pound within just an ounce or so.

You'll often find a much smaller piece sliced off and being sold with a small pack of soda crackers placed beside the register. I can't resist those when I see them in a store. It just brings back all sorts of memories for me.

Mama use to slice it thin and place on white bread to toast it in the oven. Or, she'd cut it up in chunks and melt it in her cast iron skillet. We'd eat it right off the plate or place some in a hot Buttermilk Biscuit. I could go on and on about hoop cheese. Smile.

My brother gave me a couple of pounds of this for Christmas just a few days ago. He had his own grocery store for years and always sold Hoop Cheese. Now, he buys a whole wheel each Christmas and has it sliced and wrapped into one pound sections to give to his family, friends and Sunday School Class members as gifts.

So, when I got my slices this year, I knew I had to make some Macaroni and Hoop Cheese to share here. I hope you will get the chance to try it one day soon. I'd also love to hear your memories of

Hoop Cheese in the Comments section at the end of the recipe.

Ready to give it a try? Alright then, let's head on out to the kitchen, and... Let's Get Cooking!

Macaroni and Hoop Cheese – You'll need these ingredients.

You can order Hoop Cheese online from a good number of places. Here's a North Carolina location that makes and sells it in case you're interested. [**Ashe County Cheese Company**](#)

Begin the recipe by grating your block of cheese.

The cheese will grate much easier if it's cold. Smile.

Prepare the pasta according to the directions on the package. But, cook it about 4 minutes less than the time it calls for. It should still have a little "bite" to it since we will be baking it as well.

Use a colander to drain the pasta, then rinse lightly under cold running water. Drain again.

Prepare your baking dish by rubbing the bottom and sides with butter.

Place the drained pasta in a large mixing bowl. Add the Duke's® Mayonnaise.

Add the evaporated milk.

Add the ground mustard.

Add the paprika.

Add about 3/4ths of the grated hoop cheese. We'll use the remainder in a moment.

Grab a big spoon and stir everything together.

Spread the pasta and cheese mixture into your baking dish.

Use the remaining cheese to cover the top of the pasta in the baking dish.

Place the dish in your oven that has been pre-heated to 350F degrees. Let the mac and cheese bake for 30 minutes. It should be bubbling hot and just slightly browned on top.

Remove from the oven when done. Place on a folded towel or rack and let it rest for about 10-15 minutes prior to serving. This time will help it to firm up a bit for easier serving. This dish is best when served warm so keep that in mind when cooking and serving.

Enjoy!