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## **Zesty Macaroni & Cheese**

*Serves 4*

Homemade stovetop macaroni and cheese is the ultimate comfort food! The recipe below is an easy recipe that spices things up a bit with the addition of fresh jalapeños, green chiles, chipotle chile powder, and smoked paprika. Three kinds of cheese increase the cozy factor with plenty of creamy goodness. Thinking outside the box has never been so delicious!

### ***Ingredients:***

#### **PASTA:**

1 lb elbow macaroni  
About 4 quarts of water  
Salt for pasta water

#### **SAUCE:**

4 tablespoons unsalted butter  
3 cloves garlic minced  
2 jalapeño peppers, seeded and finely diced  
1/4 cup all purpose flour  
2 cups milk  
8 oz Extra Sharp Cheddar cheese, coarsely grated  
4 oz Monterey Jack cheese, coarsely grated  
4 oz Pepper Jack cheese, coarsely grated  
1/2 teaspoon Kosher salt  
1/2 teaspoon chipotle chile powder  
1/8 teaspoon smoked paprika  
1/4 teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper  
1 can (4 oz) green chiles

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**Directions:**

**BOIL THE MACARONI:**

1. Prepare the pasta by bringing 4 quarts of salted water to a rolling boil. Cook the macaroni until al dente. Drain in a colander; gently rinse with lukewarm water and set aside.

**PREPARE THE SAUCE:**

2. While the noodles are boiling, prepare the béchamel sauce. Melt the butter and garlic in a large pan over medium heat for about 2 minutes until the garlic begins to wilt. Add the minced jalapeños and cook for another 5 minutes.

3. Add the flour to the butter mixture and whisk for 2 minutes until a roux is formed. Allow the roux to cook another 2-3 minutes until the raw flour flavor cooks away and the sauce base is nice and thick.

4. Slowly add the milk in 1/2 cup increments, continuing to whisk and cook until the sauce thickens, about 5 minutes. Stir frequently until all of the milk is incorporated, and the sauce is smooth.

**ADD THE CHEESE:**

5. Remove the Béchamel sauce from heat. Stir in the salt, chile powder, paprika, and pepper.

6. Slowly add the cheese in small amounts, continuously stirring to keep the cheese from clumping. Stir until the cheese is fully melted and all of the ingredients are incorporated, roughly 3-5 minutes.

7. Pour the cooked pasta into the sauce and add the green chiles. Stir to combine. Enjoy immediately!