



HEARTH & HOLLOW
THE TEST KITCHEN COLLECTION

Cast Iron Cajun Mac & Cheese

Seafood Mac & Cheese with Leeks, Pancetta, Dual Cheddars & Broiled Topping

Coastal comfort meets French bistro indulgence — buttery leeks, Cajun spice, sweet seafood, and molten aged cheddar, all baked in a cast iron cradle of smoky pancetta and golden crumbs.



LEVEL
Made With
Intention



SERVES
4–6
servings



PREP TIME
20
minutes



REST TIME
5
minutes



COOK TIME
25
minutes



TOTAL TIME
50
minutes

INGREDIENTS

- ½ lobster tail, picked and chopped
- ¼ lb snow crab, picked and chopped
- Handful of crawfish, chopped
- Kernels from 1 ear of corn
- 1 small leek, white and light green parts thinly sliced
- 2–3 oz pancetta, diced
- 2 tbsp butter, plus 1 tbsp for topping
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 cup whole milk (or 2%)
- ½ cup heavy cream
- ½ cup aged white English cheddar, shredded
- ¾ cup white cheddar, shredded (reserve a small handful for topping)
- 1–2 tbsp strained seafood boil juice, to taste
- Cajun seasoning, salt, and black pepper, to taste
- 2 cups cooked pasta (rotini, shells, or cavatappi)
- ½ cup Panko breadcrumbs
- 1 tbsp melted butter
- 1 green onion, thinly sliced
- Optional: squeeze of lemon juice or pinch of smoked paprika

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 CRISP THE PANCETTA**
Render pancetta in a cast iron skillet until golden and fragrant. Remove and set aside, leaving about 1 tbsp of fat in the pan.
- 2 SOFTEN THE LEEKS**
Add leeks and sauté until soft and glossy, about 5 minutes.
- 3 BUILD THE SAUCE**
Add butter and whisk in flour. Cook for 1–2 minutes. Slowly whisk in milk and cream until smooth. Stir in both cheddars until melted and creamy. Stir in seafood boil juice and season to taste.
- 4 FOLD IN THE SEAFOOD & PASTA**
Add corn and seafood first, folding gently. Add cooked pasta and toss until everything is coated in the sauce.
- 5 LAYER FOR BROIL**
Sprinkle reserved cheddar over the top. Mix pancetta, Panko breadcrumbs, and melted butter. Spread evenly across the surface.
- 6 BROIL**
Set under the broiler for 2–3 minutes, watching carefully, until bubbling and golden brown.
- 7 FINISH & SERVE**
Top with green onion and (optional) lemon juice or smoked paprika. Let rest for 5 minutes before serving. Serve straight from the skillet.

Notes from the Hearth

- ★ This recipe was born from leftovers after a seafood boil and quickly became a keeper.
- ★ Use whatever seafood you have on hand. Lobster, crab, crawfish, shrimp, or a combination all work beautifully.
- ★ The seafood boil juice is the secret ingredient — even a tablespoon or two adds incredible depth and ties all the flavors together.
- ★ Freshly shredded cheese melts more smoothly and creates the creamiest sauce.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS



Roasted
Broccolini



Crusty
Artisan Bread



Cheddar
Biscuits