

Mac & cheese GROWS UP

BY JENNIFER HARRIS



WHIP UP A MEAL OR SIDE DISH WITH THESE MORE SOPHISTICATED GF OPTIONS

Amy's has the answer if you're looking for ready-made macaroni and cheese. The company offers four frozen options, some of which also come in family-sized packages. Flavors include rice, dairy-free rice, broccoli and cheddar, chili mac and three-cheese kale.

➔ amys.com/products

Cooksimple's entrees include Alfredo with cheesy chickpea pasta and kale. Made with simple ingredients, this meal kit gets its nutritional kick from the antioxidant-rich kale and protein-rich pasta.

➔ cooksimplemeals.com

Daiya Foods introduced three flavors of "cheezy" vegan macaroni mixes in the past year: Deluxe Alfredo Style, Deluxe Cheddar Style and Deluxe White Cheddar Style Veggie. Each box comes with a bag of liquid sauce ready to be combined with cooked brown rice pasta. The veggie medley contains peas, carrots and red bell peppers.

➔ us.daiyafoods.com

Earth Balance has added vegan mac and cheese to its product line. Available in a gluten-free cheddar flavor, the mac and cheese is non-GMO (genetically modified organism), trans-fat free and uses gluten-free pasta made from corn and white rice flour. Look for the blue boxes with the orange gluten-free label across the top.

➔ earthbalancenatural.com/product/gluten-free-vegan-cheddar-mac-cheese

Horizon's new macaroni and white cheddar cheese is organic and contains pasta made from a blend of lentils, rice and corn flours, making it a good source of protein and fiber.

➔ horizondairy.com/products/macaroni-cheese/gluten-free-macaroni-white-cheddar-cheese

Kim's Simple Meals' organic and vegan macaroni casserole is made with non-GMO ingredients and contains brown rice pasta and a cheese-less seasoning packet. This versatile

The ultimate comfort food has evolved from its meager beginnings as an inexpensive and easy to prepare dish into a powerhouse with many options.

Gluten-free mac and cheese now comes in as many forms as gluten-containing versions. You can buy it frozen, as a mix or as a meal kit, with or without meat. The macaroni is made with everything from chickpeas to lentils, rice or corn. Some gluten-free brands are also vegan, coating the pasta in a cheese alternative.

The various versions take convenience, health and additional dietary restrictions into account while delivering creamy macaroni and cheese that can be on the table in minutes.

meal can be prepared as a casserole baked in the oven or whipped up on the stovetop in just minutes. Either way the only ingredient you add is water.

➔ kimssimplemeals.com

Laurie's Kitchen's flavored pasta and sauce kits include Chicken Alfredo and Chicken Parmesan Truffle. Combine the cheese seasoning mix with the cooked corn and rice flour corkscrew pasta for a warm side dish or add your own cooked chicken and vegetables to turn it into a meal.

➔ laurieskitchen.com

Maple Grove Foods recently added dairy-free, Vegan Mac Uncheddar to its Pastariso line of macaroni and cheese products, which are also soy free. Other varieties include quick-cooking Mac and Cheeze with brown rice pasta and white or yellow cheese, and white rice pasta with yellow cheese. And for those on the go, the company has four flavors of mac and cheese meal cups. Just add water and microwave.

➔ pastarisofoods.com

Modern Table Meals' Homestyle Mac & Cheese combines lentil rotini with peas and carrots and white cheddar sauce. Just add water and oil for a meal or side. You can also add chicken or broccoli to make an even heartier dinner. Weighing in at 24 grams of protein and five grams of fiber per serving, it is one of the healthier options available.

➔ moderntable.com

So Delicious Dairy Free is test marketing cheddar and pizza flavors of vegan mac and cheese in select Whole Foods Markets across the country for the next several months.

➔ sodeliciousdairyfree.com

Udi's Gluten Free has added Chicken Parmesan, Chicken Florentine and Chicken Alfredo to its line of skillet meals. Each frozen meal comes with brown rice pasta, breaded or grilled chicken, and a seasoning packet. The company also has a frozen line of mac and cheese that includes Penne & Cheese, Penne & Cheese with Bacon and a Mac and Cheese Bakeable Meal topped with breadcrumbs.

➔ udisglutenfree.com

Van's Foods, perhaps better known for its breakfast items, has entered the pasta market with three boxed mixes: Creamy Herb & Garlic pasta, Rotini & Red Sauce and Ultimate Cheddar Penne. The pastas are made with brown rice and red lentil flour or brown rice and white rice flour.

➔ vansfoods.com

In addition to these brand names, you might find a store brand of gluten-free mac and cheese. Bay Valley Foods, which supplies products for store branding, offers boxed mac and cheese mixes. Giant Food, for example, has its own brand of Deluxe Rice Shells and Cheese Sauce and Rice Pasta and Cheddar Cheese Mix. **GF**

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