



## Hard Apple Cider Mac and Cheese (with Bacon!)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 5 from 1 reviews

Author: [Jessie](#) Prep Time: 15 minutes Cook Time: 45 minutes Total Time: 1 hour Yield: Serves 6 Category: Dinner Cuisine: American

### Description

This easy mac and cheese recipe gets a boost of fall flavor from hard cider and crispy bacon!

### Ingredients

SCALE

- 1 pound pasta (we used large shells)
- 1/2 pound thick-cut bacon, diced into 1/2-inch pieces
- 3 Tablespoons flour
- 2/3 cup hard apple cider
- 1 1/3 cup milk
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 1/2 cups shredded sharp white cheddar cheese (we love [this aged cheddar from Kerrygold!](#))

### Instructions

- 1 Cook **pasta** in very salty water until al dente. Drain and set aside.
- 2 Heat a large saucepan over medium-high heat (we use the same pot we just cooked the pasta in!) Add the **diced bacon** and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5-7 minutes until crispy.
- 3 Remove **crispy bacon** from pot with a slotted spoon and set aside. Leave the **bacon fat** in the pot - you want about 3 Tablespoons!
- 4 Reduce heat to medium. Add **flour** and whisk together with bacon fat to form a roux. Cook for about a minute until the roux is sizzling.
- 5 Add **hard apple cider** to pot a little at a time, whisking constantly to work out any lumps. Add **milk** and whisk to combine. Cook, whisking frequently, until sauce has thickened and reached a low simmer, about 8 minutes.
- 6 Add **salt** and **pepper** to taste.
- 7 Remove pot from heat and stir in **shredded cheese**. Mix until cheese is melted and you have a smooth sauce.
- 8 Stir **half of the crispy bacon pieces** into the sauce (save the rest for topping later!)
- 9 Add **cooked pasta** to sauce and stir to combine. Top with remaining **crispy bacon** and serve immediately.

### Notes

- <sup>i</sup> **What apple cider should I use?** We recommend a hard cider on the drier side for best results. **The cider you use will definitely affect how your sauce tastes**, so use a cider you like to drink! If you use a sweet cider, you'll end up with a sweeter sauce. Be sure to read the post above for a full list of our favorite cider brands for this recipe. If you prefer not to use alcohol, use a dry apple juice or nonalcoholic dry apple cider.
- <sup>i</sup> **Additions and Substitutions.** Use brie or smoked gouda cheese in place of or in addition to the white cheddar here. Add some veggies for color (broccoli, spinach, and kale are our favorites), a few teaspoons of diced jalapeño for some spice, or some grilled chicken or sausage for extra protein.
- <sup>i</sup> **For a lighter sauce**, use our [Magic Cauliflower Cream Sauce](#) in place of the flour and milk!
- <sup>i</sup> **For a baked mac and cheese**, follow the "how to bake" directions in our [Mac and Cheese 101](#) post.

**Find it online:** <https://www.lifeasastrawberry.com/hard-apple-cider-mac/>