

# Buffalo Chicken and Jalapeno Popper Mac & Cheese

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## Ingredients:

4 slices of bacon  
2 Tbsp. bacon grease, reserved from bacon  
1 cup onion, chopped  
2 jalapenos, sliced, ribs and seeds removed  
1 pound elbow macaroni

## *For the sauce-*

4 Tbsp. butter  
5 Tbsp. all purpose flour  
2 cups milk (I used skim)  
1/4 cup heavy cream  
salt & pepper, to taste  
1 pinch nutmeg  
2 ounces cream cheese  
1/4 cup hot sauce, I use Original Frank's Red Hot  
2 1/2 cups grated cheddar cheese  
1 cup grated mozzarella cheese  
1/4 cup grated provolone  
1/4 cup blue cheese crumbles  
2 cups precooked and shredded chicken, optional

## *For the topping-*

1 cup crackers or corn flakes, crushed (your choice)  
1/3 cup blue cheese crumbles  
cooked bacon crumbles, as listed above

## Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and spray a 9x13" baking dish with PAM, or any other cooking spray. Set aside.

In a medium skillet, fry the bacon until crispy, then remove to a plate lined with paper towel, and pat the bacon dry; this will remove any unwanted grease. Pour out the excess grease from the pan, making sure that you leave about 2 Tbsp. Now, place the skillet back over the heat and add in the onions and jalapeno peppers. Saute together until tender. This will take about 3-6 minutes over a medium heat.

Fill a large pot 3/4 of the way full with water and bring to a boil. Sprinkle in some salt and pour in the pasta. Cook until the pasta is very al dente, but not still crunchy. This may require you to sample it throughout the cooking process. Drain and set aside.

Using the same pot the pasta was in; melt the butter over a medium heat. Whisk in the flour and let cook for 1 minute. Pour in the milk, cream, salt, pepper, and nutmeg, then whisk together until well combined. Turn the heat up to medium high and continue whisking the mixture around until the sauce begins to thicken. This will take you a few minutes, but once the mixture has thickened enough, immediately remove it from the heat. Next, add in the cream cheese and hot sauce then stir around until the cheese has melted and the mixture appears smooth in texture. Pour the pasta, sauted onions and jalapeno peppers into the sauce and stir around until everything is well coated. Now it's time to add in all the cheeses and the chicken. Once again, be sure to stir the ingredients around until everything is well combined. (If you must.....go ahead and sample a small

bite, just to make sure it's seasoned the way you want it) Lastly, pour the mixture into the prepared baking dish, and spread out evenly. Top with some blue cheese crumbles, pieces of bacon, and crushed up crackers or cornflakes. Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the top starts to turn a nice golden color. Remove the dish from the oven and top with some fresh parsley. Bon appetite!!!