

Homemade Hamburger Helper: Easy One-Pan Cheeseburger Mac

simplicity combined with superior flavor



TIME
12 min

PRINT
Recipe Card

SAVE
PDF

SOURCE
ChefManiac

INGREDIENTS

3 lbs ground beef (lean recommended, like 85/15 or 90/10)
3 cups hot water
6 cups milk (whole or 2% recommended)
4 cups elbow macaroni (equivalent to two 1-pound boxes, dry)
3 tablespoons cornstarch
6 teaspoons paprika
3 teaspoons onion powder
3 teaspoons garlic powder
3 teaspoons salt
3 teaspoons sugar
3 cups cheddar cheese, shredded (equivalent to two 8oz bags, sharp or mild)

DIRECTIONS

1. Let's get this delicious : Homemade Hamburger Helper cooking!
2. **Brown : Ground Beef:** In a large skillet or Dutch oven (ensure it's large enough to hold all ingredients, about 5-6 quart capacity), brown the 3 lbs of ground beef over medium-high heat. Use a spoon to break up the meat into crumbles as it cooks. Cook until no pink remains. Drain any excess grease thoroughly from the skillet.
3. **Add : Liquids & Dry Ingredients (Except Cheese):** Return the drained ground beef to the skillet. Add the 3 cups hot water, 6 cups milk, 4 cups dry elbow macaroni, 3 tablespoons cornstarch, 6 teaspoons paprika, 3 teaspoons onion powder, 3 teaspoons garlic powder, 3 teaspoons salt, and 3 teaspoons sugar. Stir everything well to combine, ensuring the cornstarch is fully dissolved and no dry clumps remain.
4. **Boil & : Simmer Pasta:** Bring the mixture to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally to prevent the macaroni from sticking to the bottom of the pan. Once boiling, reduce the heat to low, cover the skillet, and simmer for 12 minutes, or until the pasta is tender and most of the liquid has been absorbed, stirring every few minutes.
5. **Stir in : Cheese:** In the last few minutes of the cooking time for the pasta, add the 3 cups shredded cheddar cheese to the skillet. Stir well until the cheese is completely melted and the sauce is creamy. Re-cover the skillet briefly to ensure the cheese melts thoroughly.
6. **Rest & : Serve:** Remove the skillet from the heat and uncover. Let it stand for about 5 minutes. The sauce

will continue to thicken as it cools slightly. Ladle into bowls. Top with additional shredded cheese, if desired, and serve immediately.

SWAPS & NOTES

Ground Beef: Lean ground beef works best to prevent excess grease.

Ground turkey or a mix of ground beef and pork can also be used.

Milk: Whole milk or 2% milk will provide the creamiest sauce.

Skim milk can be used but may result in a thinner sauce.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Large Skillet is Key: Make sure you use a skillet or pot large enough to accommodate all the ingredients comfortably.

Drain Beef Thoroughly: Excess grease will make the finished dish greasy.

Stir Frequently: When the pasta is simmering, stir often (every 1-2 minutes) to prevent it from sticking to the bottom of the pan and clumping together.

Hot Water Helps: Using hot water initially helps bring the mixture to a boil faster.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/homemade-hamburger-helper-easy-one-pan-cheeseburger-mac/>