

## Buffalo Bacon Mac & Cheese Bites: The Ultimate Crunchy, Cheesy Indulgence!

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**OVEN**  
**375°F**

**TIME**  
**1 min**

**METHOD**  
**Air fryer**

**PRINT**  
**Recipe Card**

### INGREDIENTS

8 oz elbow macaroni  
6 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled  
1/4 cup buffalo sauce (adjust to your spice preference!)  
2 cups shredded cheddar cheese (sharp works wonderfully here)  
1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs  
2 tbsp butter, divided  
1/4 cup all-purpose flour  
2 cups milk  
Salt and pepper to taste

#### Swaps and Notes:

**Macaroni:** While elbow macaroni is classic, you can use any small pasta shape like ditalini or small shells.

**Bacon:** If you prefer, turkey bacon can be used, or omit it entirely for a vegetarian version. You could also try diced ham or cooked sausage.

**Buffalo Sauce:** For less heat, use a milder buffalo sauce or reduce the amount slightly. If you want more fire, go for a spicier brand or add a pinch of cayenne pepper.

**Cheese:** Feel free to mix up your cheeses! Monterey Jack, Colby, or even a smoked gouda would be delicious additions.

**Panko Breadcrumbs:** Regular breadcrumbs can be used, but panko provides a superior crunch. For a gluten-free option, use gluten-free panko or

crushed gluten-free crackers.

Milk: Any type of milk (whole, 2%, skim) will work, but whole milk will give you a creamier sauce.

## DIRECTIONS

1. Let's break down how to create these irresistible bites:
2. Prep : Your Oven and Macaroni: Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C). Lightly grease a mini muffin tin - this is crucial for easy removal. Cook the elbow macaroni according to the package directions until al dente. Drain it well and set it aside.
3. Make the : Cheese Sauce: In a large skillet, melt 1 tablespoon of the butter over medium heat. Whisk in the flour to create a smooth roux, cooking for about 1 minute until lightly golden. Slowly pour in the milk, whisking constantly to prevent lumps. Continue to whisk and cook until the sauce thickens to your desired consistency. Remove from heat and stir in the shredded cheddar cheese until it's completely melted and smooth. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
4. Combine the : Mac & Cheese: Add the cooked macaroni, crumbled bacon, and buffalo sauce to the cheese sauce. Stir everything together until the macaroni is evenly coated and all the ingredients are well distributed.
5. Fill the : Muffin Tin: Spoon the mac and cheese mixture into each cup of your greased mini muffin tin, filling them almost to the top. Don't press down too hard, keep it relatively loose.
6. Add the : Crispy Topping: In a small microwave-safe bowl, melt the remaining 1 tablespoon of butter. Stir in the panko breadcrumbs until they're evenly coated. Sprinkle a generous amount of this breadcrumb mixture over the top of each mac and cheese bite.
7. Bake to : Perfection: Bake in the preheated oven for 20-25 minutes, or until the tops are beautifully golden brown and crispy. The cheese should be bubbly,

and the edges slightly browned.

8. Cool and : Serve: Let the bites cool slightly in the muffin tin for about 5-10 minutes before carefully removing them. This helps them set and makes them easier to handle. Serve warm and enjoy!

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## TIPS FOR SUCCESS

**Don't Overcook Macaroni:** Cook your macaroni slightly al dente, as it will continue to cook a bit in the oven.

**Season Generously:** Don't forget to season your cheese sauce and the final mixture.

**Grease Well:** Greasing the muffin tin thoroughly ensures your bites pop out easily without sticking.

It's what gives these bites their signature crunch.

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

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/buffalo-bacon-mac-cheese-bites-the-ultimate-crunchy-cheesy-indulgence/>