

## Creamy Seafood Mac and Cheese: A Decadent Comfort Food

1 lb elbow macaroni, cooked according to package directions



**OVEN**  
**375°F**

**TIME**  
**20-25 min**

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**SAVE**  
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### INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb elbow macaroni, cooked according to package directions
- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 medium onion, finely diced
- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 cup milk
- 1 tsp Cajun seasoning
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 cup shredded Gruyère cheese (or Monterey Jack)
- 1 lb raw shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 lb lump crab meat
- 1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs
- 2 tbsp butter, melted

#### Swaps and Notes:

**Seafood:** I've used a combination of shrimp and crab meat, but you can use other seafood like lobster, scallops, or even a different type of white fish.

**Cheese:** The combination of sharp cheddar and Gruyère provides a perfect balance of flavor. You can swap the Gruyère for Monterey Jack or even smoked Gouda for a different flavor profile.

**Cajun Seasoning:** This adds a lovely, subtle spice that complements the seafood. You can use your favorite brand or make your own with a blend of

paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, and a pinch of cayenne.

**Breadcrumbs:** Panko breadcrumbs give the mac and cheese a beautiful, crispy topping. You can use regular breadcrumbs if that's all you have.

**How to Make Seafood Mac and Cheese:**

**Cook the Pasta:** Cook the elbow macaroni according to the package directions until al dente. Drain and set aside.

**Sauté the Aromatics:** In a large saucepan or Dutch oven, melt 1 tablespoon of butter over medium heat. Add the diced onion and cook until it's soft and translucent. Add the minced garlic and cook for another minute until fragrant.

**Make the Cheese Sauce:** Pour in the heavy cream and milk. Whisk in the Cajun seasoning, salt, and pepper. Bring the mixture to a simmer, then reduce the heat to low. Gradually stir in the shredded cheddar and Gruyère cheeses until they are completely melted and the sauce is smooth and creamy.

**Add the Seafood and Pasta:** Gently fold the cooked macaroni, raw shrimp, and lump crab meat into the cheese sauce. Stir until everything is well combined and the shrimp are distributed throughout.

**Bake:** Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C). Pour the mac and cheese mixture into a 9x13 inch baking dish. In a small bowl, mix the panko breadcrumbs with the melted butter. Sprinkle the breadcrumb mixture evenly over the top of the mac and cheese.

**Bake and Serve:** Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the shrimp are pink and cooked through, and the topping is golden brown and crispy. Let it rest for a few minutes before serving.

**Tips for Success:**

**Don't Overcook the Pasta:** Cook the pasta to al dente, as it will continue to cook in the oven. This prevents it from getting mushy.

**Grate Your Own Cheese:** Pre-shredded cheese often has anti-caking agents that can prevent it from melting smoothly. Grating your own cheese will give you the creamiest sauce.

**Raw Shrimp:** Use raw shrimp and cook it in the sauce. This ensures it doesn't get tough or overcooked.

**Serving Suggestions and Pairings:**

**Storage and Leftover Tips:**

**More Recipes You Will Love:**

For a classic that never disappoints, my Spaghetti Recipe with Homemade Sauce is a must-try.

## DIRECTIONS

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9. **Raw : Shrimp:** Use raw shrimp and cook it in the sauce. This ensures it doesn't get tough or overcooked.
10. **Serving Suggestions and Pairings:** This Seafood Mac and Cheese is a complete meal on its own, but it pairs beautifully with a simple side salad or some crusty bread for soaking up the extra sauce. For other great Southern-inspired dishes, you could serve it with my Cajun Chicken Sausage Gumbo or with my Tomato Skillet with Okra and Sausage.
11. **Storage and Leftover Tips:** Leftovers are delicious! Store them in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. To reheat, you can microwave individual portions or warm the entire dish in the oven until heated through. You might need to add a splash of milk to bring back some of the creaminess.
12. **More Recipes You Will Love:** If you're a fan of rich, comforting, and crowd-pleasing meals, you'll want to check out some of these other favorites:
13. For a classic that never disappoints, my [Spaghetti Recipe with Homemade Sauce](#) is a must-try.
14. For a quick dinner that feeds a crowd, these [Sheet Pan Quesadillas](#) are a lifesaver.
15. My Easy [Turkey Wings](#) are a perfect comfort food for a lazy weekend.
16. **Final Thoughts:** This Seafood Mac and Cheese is a recipe that takes a classic comfort food and elevates it to a whole new level of deliciousness. It's a perfect dish for a special occasion, but it's simple enough to make whenever the craving strikes. I hope you give it a try and discover for yourself just how wonderful this decadent twist on a classic can be.
17. If you make this dish, I'd love to hear about it! What's your favorite kind of seafood to add to a creamy pasta? Let me know in the comments below.

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

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/creamy-seafood-mac-and-cheese-a-decadent-comfort-food/>