

# ACCENT

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Max Fitzpatrick

## County historical preservation a team effort

The Johnson County Historical Society is your first link in finding solutions to problems with family or community history projects. It is governed by a board of local citizens.

You may contact them through the Johnson County Museum of History at 135 N. Main St. in Franklin. The staff is well organized and meets on an established schedule.

Some of the services include:

- Locating and restoring historical markers
- Genealogical aid in your research of family history
- A remarkable museum filled with continually renewed exhibits and displays
- A large volunteer staff of dedicated workers directed by professional administrators
- Information for receiving state recognition of your historic home, farm or business
- The opportunity to audio-record your history
- Extensive files concerning local cemeteries and obituaries
- A library of family and community histories
- Scheduled seminars, lectures, forums and programs
- Assistance from the Indiana Historical Society.

The staff and other community leaders care about the past, present and future of Johnson County. The county commissioners, members of the county council and members of the county historical society all play major roles.

We all have a part in the preservation of history. Your list of contacts is extensive.

One of the interesting features of my position as county historian is to review plans for public projects such as bridges, roadways, parks, trails and other corporate expansions. The company with the winning bid prepares an elaborate set of descriptions, surveys and pictures.

This packet is submitted to several agencies. The information is reviewed to determine if the project affects existing historical artifacts or land use.

You would be amazed at the extensive research. Much concern is exercised to preserve our history. The latest packet that I received dealt with the new Greenwood trails proposal.

Now it is time to travel into an exciting new year. We all have a chance to recharge our efforts to succeed as we chase our dreams.

My wishes for you include peace, love and happiness. Remember that happiness is an inside job as it comes from within each of us. Be happy.

*Johnson County Historian Max Fitzpatrick is a former educator and long-time community volunteer.*

## Prevent grout grumbling

The Associated Press

You've just laid tile and added grout. Now it's crumbling and coming out.

You can end this problem if you know the five steps to grouting success.

- If you have a wood subfloor, be sure you use a concrete backer board.
- Make sure the thin-set mortar is not too dry.
- To check, lay a tile and pull it up to make sure at least 75 percent is covered.
- Don't mix up more mortar than you can use in a half-hour.
- Mix your grout with an acrylic additive and use sanded grout on all joints over 1/8-inch wide.

If you follow these five simple steps your grout will never turn into a crumbling mess, and your kitchen or bathroom floor will stay good as new.

By AMY MCCONNELL SCHAARSMITH  
PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

**D**iet season is upon us, in this post-holiday period of resolutions, good intentions and low-calorie portions. What better time to whip up a big pot of macaroni and cheese?

Not to be completely contrary, but no one can be good all the time.

And if you're going to have an occasional splurge on a decadent dish, isn't it better to slip into a bowl of luxurious mac and cheese than to throw away those prized calories on a lukewarm, dried-out Big Mac or that package of stale Oreos you've been hiding from yourself?

Homemade mac and cheese, whether it's made with Velveeta or Vacherin Fribourgeois, is one of the world's great comfort dishes, perfect for gloomy winter evenings when you're tired and cold and hungry and stressed out.

As expected, it is heavy on the calories and fat. Depending on the recipe, one cup will cost you about 500 calories and half your daily recommended intake of fat.

But it also contains one serving of protein and about 30 percent of the calcium you're supposed to eat each day.

Like most food, mac and cheese eaten in moderation, say, as a special family treat once a month, with some healthy vegetables on the side, has a respectable place at the dinner table.

### MORE MAC AND CHEESE, PLEASE

To make fabulous macaroni and cheese, keep these tips from the book "Macaroni & Cheese," by Marlena Spieler (Chronicle Books), in mind:

- Allow lots of rapidly boiling water — about 1.5 quarts per pound of dried pasta — for cooking so pasta cooks evenly.

- Be sure water is at a rolling boil before putting pasta in so that the outside edge of the pasta cooks immediately, or pasta will turn mushy.

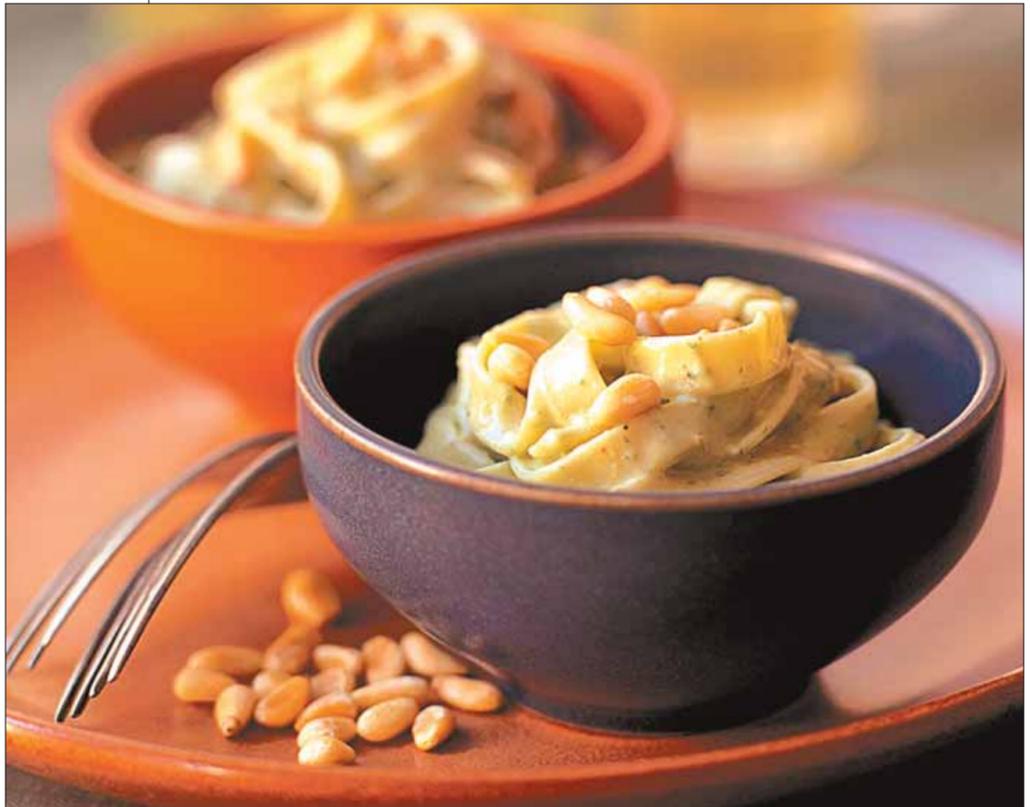
- Stir pasta immediately after putting it into the boiling water to keep it from sticking.

- Use at least 1 tablespoon salt per quart of water to avoid making bland pasta. It sounds like a lot, but most of that salt is drained away with the cooking water.

- To prevent gloppy mac and cheese, don't overcook the pasta. If you're eating it right away, cook until it's al dente, or resists a bit when you bite it. If you're returning it to the stovetop to toss with cheeses and cook a bit longer, cook until it's almost al dente. If you'll be baking it as a casserole, cook pasta only until it has a tiny bit of crunch as you bite down on a piece.

# The mac daddy of comfort foods

## Make satisfyingly cheesy dinner from scratch for winter respite



SCRIPPS HOWARD PHOTOS

Macaroni's Got the Blues is featured in "Macaroni & Cheese" by Marlena Spieler. Some advice from Spieler: Add pasta to water at a rolling boil to prevent noodles from turning to mush.

### GET COMFORT-FOOD COOKING

#### Over the Rainbow Mac and Cheese

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 pound elbow macaroni
- 8 tablespoons plus 1 tablespoon butter
- 1/2 cup shredded Muenster cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded mild cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded Monterey Jack
- 2 cups half-and-half
- 1 cup Velveeta, cut into small cubes
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/4 teaspoon seasoned salt
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Heat the oven to 350 degrees. Lightly butter a deep 2 1/2-quart casserole.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the oil, then the elbow macaroni, and cook until the macaroni is just tender. Do not overcook. Drain well. Return to the cooking pot.

In a small saucepan, melt 8 tablespoons of butter. Stir into macaroni. In a large bowl, mix all the cheeses except Velveeta.

To the macaroni, add the half-and-half, 1 1/2 cups of the shredded cheese, the cubed Velveeta and the eggs. Season with salt and pepper.

Transfer to casserole dish. Sprinkle with the remaining shredded cheese and dot with one tablespoon of butter.

Bake until it's bubbling around the

edges, about 35 minutes. Serve hot.

**Servings:** Four to six

**Note:** It is sometimes difficult to buy some of the cheeses shredded. Buy blocks of the cheese, shred what's needed, and freeze the rest for the next time you make this dish.

— "LaBelle Cuisine: Recipes to Sing About" by Patti LaBelle et al

#### Macaroni's Got the Blues

- 8 ounces fine, briny pungent blue cheese such as Point Reyes Blue, Maytag Blue or Roquefort, crumbled
- 1/4 cup pine nuts
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 3 tablespoons pesto
- 12 ounces tubular pasta, such as penne; or flat noodles or ribbons, such as tagliatelle; or trofie (knot-shaped)

Lightly toast the pine nuts in a heavy nonstick frying pan over medium heat until they turn golden-brown in spots. Remove from heat.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine the blue cheese with the cream and pesto. Set aside.

Cook the pasta in a large pot of rapidly boiling salted water until al dente. Drain and reserve about a quarter-cup of the cooking water.

Toss the hot pasta with cheese, cream and pesto in a large bowl, adding a few spoonfuls of the hot cooking water to bind the sauce to the pasta.

Sprinkle with toasted pine nuts and serve right away.

**Variation:** Trim half pound of

asparagus and cut into 3-inch pieces, then add to the cooking pasta during the last minute or two. Drain and sauce along with pasta.

**Servings:** Four

— "Macaroni & Cheese," by Marlena Spieler

#### Penne Con Cacio e Pepe

(Pasta with lots of cheese and black pepper)

- 1 pound penne
- 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil, or more as needed
- 5 ounces pecorino romano or parmesan cheese, grated, plus a hunk for serving
- 1 to 1 1/2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper, plus extra for serving

Salt to taste, if necessary. Cook pasta in a large pot of rapidly boiling salted water until al dente. Drain and reserve about 1 cup of cooking water.

While pasta is cooking, mix oil with cheese and pepper in a bowl; stir together well to make a cheesy melange; ladle in 1/2 cup or so of the hot water and mix well.

Return the drained pasta to the pot and add the cheese-and-oil mixture in several batches, tossing as you go. (Adding too much cheese at once will encourage it to clump together.)

Add a little more of the cooking liquid if the pasta seems dry. Serve right away. Pass the extra cheese, black pepper and salt for those who want an added kick.

**Servings:** Four

— "Macaroni & Cheese"

Many varieties of cheese can make the perfect complement to macaroni. Consider using a combination of the following, as recommended by cookbook author Marlena Spieler: Mild cheeses such as Jack, provolone and Provatura; cheddars including Vermont and Wisconsin varieties; sharp cheeses including Parmesan, Romano and dry Jack; blue-veined cheeses such as Roquefort, Bleu des Causses and Stilton.