

FAMILY RECIPES

Great Dishes From Local Chefs | By Christina Elston



Glenda Galvan-Garcia is executive chef at Granville. Her recipe is based on the restaurant's popular Uptown Mac & Cheese.

A SNEAKY TAKE ON GRANVILLE

Mac and Cheese

Faced with a toddler who was a picky eater, Glenda Galvan-Garcia resorted to something that has worked for many parents: sneaking vegetables into his food by disguising them among the other ingredients. It worked for a while, until Isaac was about 3. Taking a bite of the macaroni and cheese into which Galvan-Garcia had mixed pureed garbanzo beans, he turned to her and said, "Mom, you made sneaky mac and cheese!"

"I was busted, and for years after that, he didn't really trust my cooking because he thought I was going to sneak something in there," she says. Isaac, now 8, has recovered some of his trust but is still a little picky. However, he loves this mac and cheese recipe in which Galvan-Garcia promises the squash is undetectable.

Galvan-Garcia is executive chef and co-creator of Granville, with locations in Glendale, Burbank, Studio City and West Hollywood (opening soon in Pasadena). The dish is based on the local chain's popular Uptown Mac & Cheese. "I wanted to create a dish that didn't require a roux, that could be done while you're away at work and that has extra vegetables," she says. "It's approachable for the novice in the kitchen, it's upscale enough for the foodie and it's delicious enough for the picky eater."

That's partly because the recipe requires no fussy browning of flour and butter, but instead comes together with a blender. You can put everything into the slow cooker in the morning, then just puree the sauce, boil the pasta and veggies and add your protein when you're ready to eat. You could also simmer the sauce ingredients in a pot on the stovetop until the

squash is fork tender.

The ingredients are flexible. Galvan-Garcia says the smoked Gruyere works well with bacon or other meat, but might overwhelm a vegetarian version of the recipe, so it's OK to use plain Swiss cheese if you prefer. You can use any shape of pasta you like, even egg noodles. And you can add any cooked vegetable your child likes (at Granville, they add peas and asparagus). If you like a cheesy, crumbly topping, add some shredded cheese and bread crumbs and pop the dish into the oven.

You can also get your kids into the act, something Galvan-Garcia encourages. "You look at some generations and they're just kind of lost in the kitchen," she says. "Even though people appreciate food, they don't necessarily know how to prepare it." Start teaching your next generation with a little sneaky mac and cheese.



PHOTOS COURTESY GRANVILLE

SLOW COOKER BUTTERNUT MAC AND CHEESE

Serves 4-6

- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese, divided
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- ½ cup Gruyere cheese (applewood smoked, if desired)
- 12-ounce can evaporated milk
- ½ cup whole milk
- 4 ounces cream cheese, cubed (1½ cups)
- 8 ounces diced butternut squash
- ¼ cup unsalted butter (preferably grass-fed)
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- Pinch of black pepper
- Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
- 12 ounces dried cellentani pasta (corkscrew shape, ¾ cups)
- 3 cups broccoli florets or asparagus
- Grilled chicken, cooked bacon crumbles, ham, sausage or lobster (optional)

Place one cup mozzarella cheese and the cheddar and Gruyere cheeses, evaporated and whole milk, cream cheese, squash, butter, salt, pepper and nutmeg in a slow cooker. Mix well.

Cook on low for two hours, setting the cooker to switch to “keep warm” mode until you want to continue with the recipe. Test the squash and make sure that it is fork tender. (The sauce will be a bit curdled.) Transfer the sauce to a blender or use an immersion blender to blend until the sauce is smooth. If there are any firm bits stuck to the bottom of the cooker, discard them.

Bring a large stock pot of salted water to a boil. Add the pasta and boil until al dente. If using broccoli, add it during the last two to three minutes of cook time. If using asparagus, add it during the last 30 seconds. Drain the pasta and vegetables and place in a serving dish.

Pour half of the warm cheese sauce over the pasta and vegetables. Sprinkle with the second cup of mozzarella cheese. Pour the remaining sauce over the pasta. Gently stir to coat pasta with sauce.

Top with bacon, chicken, ham, sausage or lobster, if desired. ♦



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