**Mac and Cheese Lite**

**Makes:** 4 servings

**Ingredients**  
Nonstick cooking spray  
Salt  
4 ounces whole wheat macaroni  
1/2 cup onion-garlic puree (see "Rocco's Secret Weapon," below)  
1/2 teaspoon dry mustard  
Pinch cayenne pepper  
1 cup shredded 50 percent reduced-fat cheddar  
1/3 cup nonfat Greek yogurt  
1/4 cup whole wheat panko bread crumbs  
1/4 cup grated Parmesan

**Directions**

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Mist an 8-by-8-inch baking dish with cooking spray; set it aside.
2. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add macaroni and cook according to [package](http://www.fitnessmagazine.com/recipes/dinner/healthy-mac-n-cheese/) directions, drain.
3. Meanwhile, bring onion-garlic puree, mustard, and cayenne to a simmer in a small saucepan over medium heat, stirring often. Whisk in cheddar until melted. Remove from heat and whisk in yogurt.
4. In a medium bowl, toss the macaroni with the cheese sauce. Season with salt to taste. Pour the mixture into the prepared baking dish and sprinkle panko over the top. Top with Parmesan.
5. Bake until Parmesan is melted and macaroni is hot throughout, about 10 minutes.

**Nutrition facts per serving (about 2/3 cup):** 237 calories, 17g protein, 31g carbohydrate, 7g fat (4g saturated), 3g fiber

**Healthy Cooking Tips**

**Flour Power:** Whole wheat macaroni keeps you satisfied longer, says award-winning chef Rocco DiSpirito.

**Better Cheddar:** Low-fat cheese can still be ooey-gooey and delicious. Try Cabot's 50% Reduced Fat Cheddar.

**Crunch Time:** Panko is the perfect topping. "These Japanese bread crumbs stay crispy, no matter what," DiSpirito says.

**Culture Club:** Nonfat Greek yogurt gives the rich, creamy texture of butter and cream minus the fat.

**Rocco's Secret Weapon**

Bechamel sauce (a mixture of milk, butter, and flour) plays a starring role in traditional mac and cheese recipes. DiSpirito uses this aromatic blend of onion and garlic to build flavor and texture without fat (makes 1 cup).

**Step 1** Combine 1 large Vidalia onion, 9 garlic cloves (roughly chopped), and 1/2 cup water in a microwave-safe bowl. Season with salt and black pepper to taste.

**Step 2** Cover the bowl tightly with plastic wrap and microwave on high 10 minutes.

**Step 3** Pour the mixture into a blender; blend until smooth. Season with salt and black pepper to taste. (Store in a covered container in the fridge for up to 72 hours.)

*Recipe from* Now Eat This! *a Ballantine Trade Paperback Original by Rocco DiSpirito © 2010 Spirit Media, LLC*

*Originally published in FITNESS magazine, September 2010.*