

GREENS MAC 'N' CHEESE

LEEK, BROCCOLI & SPINACH, TOASTED ALMOND TOPPING

SERVES 6 | 1 HOUR

1 large leek
3 cloves of garlic
400g purple sprouting or
tenderstem broccoli
40g unsalted butter
½ a bunch of fresh thyme (15g)
2 tablespoons plain flour
1 litre semi-skimmed milk
450g dried macaroni
30g Parmesan cheese
150g mature Cheddar cheese
100g baby spinach
50g flaked almonds

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas 4. Trim, halve and wash the leek and peel the garlic, then finely slice with the broccoli stalks, reserving the florets for later. Place the sliced veg in a large casserole pan over a medium heat with the butter, then strip in the thyme leaves and cook for 15 minutes, or until softened, stirring regularly. Stir in the flour, followed slowly by the milk, then simmer for 10 minutes, or until thickened, stirring regularly. Meanwhile, cook the pasta in a large pan of boiling salted water for 5 minutes, then drain.

Grate the Parmesan and most of the Cheddar into the sauce, and mix well. Tip into a blender, add the spinach and whiz until smooth – you may need to work in batches. Season to perfection with sea salt and black pepper, then stir through the pasta and broccoli florets, loosening with a splash of milk, if needed. Transfer to a 25cm x 35cm baking dish, grate over the remaining Cheddar and scatter over the almonds. Bake for 30 minutes, or until beautifully golden and bubbling.

Swap spinach out for any kind of exciting fresh or frozen greens, discarding any tough stalks. I also sometimes add breadcrumbs to the top for bonus crunch. Tasty!

To make vegetarian: swap Parmesan for vegetarian hard cheese.

ENERGY	FAT	SAT FAT	PROTEIN	CARBS	SUGARS	SALT	FIBRE
619kcal	25.1g	12.4g	29g	75.1g	12g	0.9g	6.4g