

# Baked Macaroni & Meatballs



**Serves 4 Prep 1h mins**

**Cooking 40 mins**

**Easy**

## **For the cheese sauce**

750ml whole milk  
2 bay leaves  
30g unsalted butter  
40g plain flour  
200g gruyere, grated  
1 tsp mustard  
salt  
ground black pepper

## **For the meatballs**

2 tbsp olive oil  
½ onion, finely chopped  
1 tsp dried oregano  
250g/10½oz minced veal

## **For the macaroni**

2 tbsp olive oil  
4 shallots, finely sliced  
150g macaroni  
20 cherry tomatoes, halved  
12 sun-blushed tomatoes  
1 tsp dried oregano  
2-3 tbsp milk, if needed  
2 tbsp grated parmesan

1. Preheat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6. For the cheese sauce, place the milk & bay leaves into a pan & place over a medium heat. Heat the milk to the boiling point, then remove from the heat. Leave to infuse. In a clean saucepan, melt the butter over a medium heat, then stir in the flour and cook for 3 mins. Be careful not to let the mixture turn brown. Remove the bay leaves from the milk mixture & add a little milk to the flour and butter mixture. Stir to combine the milk and flour paste over a low heat, then repeat the process, gradually adding milk and stirring in, until a smooth paste is formed. Add the rest of the milk and bring to boil, stirring all the time, then reduce the heat and simmer for 3 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat & add the cheese, mustard & season, to taste, with salt and black pepper.
2. For the meatballs, heat 1 tbsp of the oil in a saucepan over a medium heat. Add the onion, & oregano and fry until softened, then remove from heat and allow to cool. Place the onion mixture into a bowl and add the mince. Season well with salt and pepper, and mix together to combine. Roll the mince mixture into small 2.5cm meatballs. Heat the remaining tbsp of oil in a clean frying pan over a medium heat. Add the meatballs and fry, turning occasionally, until brown all over and completely cooked through.
3. Cook the macaroni in boiling salted water according to packet instructions. Drain well. Heat the oven to 200C/ Fan 180C/ Gas 6.
4. Heat the oil in a large frying pan. Add the shallots and fry for 2 minutes to soften, then add the cooked pasta and stir well. Add the tomatoes & oregano and cook for 2-3 minutes, then add the meatballs and the cheese sauce. (add a little milk to loosen the cheese sauce if needs be.) The sauce should coat, not swamp, the macaroni. Transfer the macaroni & meatballs to a large ovenproof dish. Top with parmesan & place into the oven to bake for 15 minutes. Preheat the grill to its highest setting and place the dish under the grill to melt and brown the cheese before serving. Serve with a fresh green salad.