

MACHEESMO

- MEALS -

COZY COMFORT

This time of the year I just want to cozy up with a big bowl of something warm (or a plate). This bowl (or plate) better be able to take the chill off. Cheese helps.

This meal plan features some of my favorite comfort food meals for this cold season. They all have slight spins on them though to change them up a bit and make the flavors new.

If you only try one recipe, make it the potato soup! Stay warm, people!

Helpful Equipment:

- Cast Iron Skillet
- Blender



You can click on these to zap you to Amazon and see my recommendation for each.

MEAL 1

- Green Chile Potato Soup

MEAL 2

- Hummus Patty Melts
- Spinach Salad

MEAL 3

- Chicken Sausage Penne

PBBB!

- The PBBB Sandwich

#macheesmomeals: If you make anything in the meal plan, I would love it if you snapped a quick photo and shared it on Instagram or Twitter with the hashtag #macheesmomeals ! Thanks!



MEAL 1 | Green Chile Potato Soup

This is a magical soup. It tastes rich and almost cheesy but mostly just potatoes. The green chiles kick it up a notch and add some nice heat to the party. You can use mild or hot versions depending on your liking.

Chile Potato Soup

Yield: 6 servings | Time: 45 min.

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 yellow onion, diced
2 carrots, chopped
2 stalks celery, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 4.5 oz. cans green chiles
4 medium Russet potatoes, cubed
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 quart vegetable stock
1 cup milk
1/2 cup heavy cream
1/2 teaspoon chili powder
Salt and pepper
Chives, for garnish
Crusty Bread, for serving

Directions:

- 1) Prepare all your ingredients: chopping onions, carrots, celery, potatoes. Also, scrape out the seeds from the roasted chiles and chop them up roughly.
- 2) In a large, heavy pot, add butter over medium heat. Once melted, add onions, celery, carrots, and chiles. Cook for 4-5 minutes until they start to soften. Season with a pinch of salt and pepper.
- 3) Add potatoes to the pot and continue to cook for another 4-5 minutes. Potatoes shouldn't be cooked all the way at this point.
- 4) Stir in flour and cook for a minute or two to cook out flour taste. Then add vegetable stock and bring to a light simmer. Stir the soup to make sure stuff isn't sticking to the bottom, cover the pot and let simmer for 10 minutes until potatoes are tender.
- 5) Add milk, cream, and chili powder to the soup.
- 6) Working in batches, ladle out some of the soup and add it to a blender. Blend until smooth (be very careful blending hot liquid. It's best to let it cool slightly before blending and never fill your blender more than 2/3 full). Blend most of the soup but leave some of it unblended for texture.
- 7) Return the blended soup to the pot and season the soup to your liking with salt and pepper.

Serve soup with crusty bread garnished with chives.





MEAL 2 | Hummus Patty Melt

Using a quick smear of hummus is a simple way to brighten the standard patty melt, but don't get me wrong... it's still simple comfort food at its best.

Hummus Patty Melt

Yield: Serves 4 | Time: 30 min.

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 large yellow onion, sliced
1 pound lean ground beef
4 slices provolone cheese
1/2 cup hummus
2 tablespoons olive oil
8 slices sturdy sourdough bread
Salt and pepper



Directions:

- 1) Add butter to a medium pan over medium heat along with sliced white onions. Sprinkle with a pinch of salt and let the onions cook, stirring occasionally, until they are cooked down and a light brown color, about 15 minutes.
- 2) Divide the ground beef into four even-sized patties that are roughly the shape of your bread slices. It's okay if they are on the thin side. Season each patty with salt and pepper.
- 3) In a large skillet or on a griddle over medium-high heat, add the patties and cook until they are cooked through, about 3-4 minutes per side.
- 4) Remove the patties from the heat and add a drizzle of oil to the pan or griddle. Place the bread slices down on the pan and spread a liberal amount of hummus on each piece. Turn heat down to medium so the bread doesn't burn.
- 5) Top the hummus with a patty per piece of bread. Divide the onions between the patties and top each with a slice of cheese.
- 6) Top each sandwich with the other piece of bread. I like to drizzle a little extra oil over the top of the sandwiches.
- 7) Let the sandwiches cook for 3-4 minutes on the first side and then flip each sandwich. Cook on the second side for a few minutes. If the bread is burning or the cheese isn't melting, you can add a spoonful of water to the pan and cover the sandwiches with a bowl. The steam will immediately melt the cheese and make the patty melt really cheesy and delicious. You might not need to do that though.
- 8) Take the sandwiches off the heat when the cheese is melted and the bread is golden brown. Slice them in half and serve immediately!

Spinach Salad

Yield: 4 servings | Time: 15 min.

Ingredients:

5-6 cups baby spinach
1 red pepper, diced
1 avocado, diced
1/2 cup dried cranberries
Croutons

Lemon Buttermilk Dressing:

1/2 cup Greek yogurt
1/2 lemon, juice only
1 tablespoon buttermilk
1 teaspoon honey
Pinch of salt

Directions:

- 1) Whisk together dressing ingredients.
- 2) Divide spinach between plates and top with red pepper, avocado, and dried cranberries. (Use 3/4 of a red pepper because you'll need a tiny amount for the chimichurri.)
- 3) Drizzle dressing over the top of the salad and dot with croutons.



Mushroom Patty Melt

If you are looking for a vegetarian version of this meal, slice up about 1 1/2 pounds of cremini mushrooms and saute them in olive oil until they are lightly browned and lose their liquid.

Use the mushrooms piled onto the sandwiches instead of a beef patty.



MEAL 3 | Penne Pasta Toss

This is a fantastic, simple two pot meal. It's really easy to make and perfect if you're just starting out in the kitchen. The leftovers are easy to reheat and make for a great lunch the next day or two.

Chicken and Pea Penne

Yield: 6 servings | Time: 35 min.

Ingredients:

1 pound penne, cooked al dente
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 pound ground chicken sausage
1 yellow onion, diced
3 cloves garlic, minced
1/2-1 cup chicken stock
1 28-oz can diced tomatoes
1/2 cup heavy cream
1 cup frozen sweet peas
Salt and pepper
Fresh basil, garnish
Parmesan cheese, garnish

Directions:

- 1) Cook penne according to package. Once cooked, drain, and toss with a tablespoon of olive oil to keep the pasta from sticking. Reserve a cup of pasta water.
- 2) In a large sturdy pot, like a Dutch oven, add olive oil and chicken sausage. Remove casing from chicken sausage if it has it and break sausage up as it browns. Cook for 8-10 minutes until cooked through.
- 3) Add onions and garlic to the pan and cook until vegetables are translucent, another 3-4 minutes.
- 4) Add stock and tomatoes and bring sauce to a light simmer, turn heat down to medium low and simmer until the sauce thickens, just a few minutes.
- 5) Stir cream and peas into the sauce and toss in cooked penne pasta. Stir to combine. If the pasta is too dry, add reserved pasta water to the pot to loosen the pasta.
- 6) Season pasta with salt and pepper and serve garnished with basil and parmesan cheese.



Vegetarian Version

Making this recipe vegetarian is pretty easy since it's a very hearty meal even without the sausage.

You could just leave the sausage out and proceed with the recipe as is, but I would grab a package of vegetarian spicy sausage and use that in the recipe in place of the chicken sausage.





A Special Sandwich

You might think this recipe is crazy, but it's SO good. It's one of my favorite comfort food lunches. It's totally filling and a guaranteed crowd pleaser for the kiddos.

The PBBB

Yield: 2 Sandwiches | Time: 35 min.

Ingredients:

4 slices good sandwich bread
1/4 cup peanut butter
4-5 slices bacon, crispy and chopped
2-3 tablespoons honey
1 banana, sliced thin
2 tablespoons unsalted butter

Directions:

- 1) Lay out the bacon strips on a sheet pan or on a cooling rack and bake at 350 degrees for about 25 minutes until the strips are very crispy. Let the bacon cool slightly and chop it finely.
- 2) Lightly butter four pieces of good sourdough or sandwich bread.
- 3) Heat a large cast iron skillet over medium heat. Add one piece of bread, butter side down. Spread on about two tablespoons of peanut butter.
- 4) Add in a drizzle of honey, sliced banana, and a big handful of chopped bacon.
- 5) Top with a second piece of bread, butter side up. Cook for about four minutes and flip. Slice and serve immediately!

You can also make this sandwich in a panini press or press the sandwich between two hot cast iron skillets until it's nicely toasted on both sides.





SHOPPING LIST

This is a full list of all the ingredients used in every meal in this week's plan. I recommend reviewing it for stuff you probably already have on hand before rushing out to the store and buying everything! If items on the list don't have amounts, it is most likely because the recipe uses a very small amount of that ingredient or it is used as a garnish.

Fresh Produce

- Avocado (1)
- Baby spinach (5 oz.)
- Banana (1)
- Basil
- Carrots (2)
- Celery (2 stalks)
- Chives
- Garlic (5 cloves)
- Lemon (1)
- Onions, yellow (3)
- Potatoes, Russet (4)
- Red pepper (1)

Meat, Poultry, Seafood

- Bacon (5 slices)
- Chicken sausage (1 lb.)
- Ground Beef (1 lb.)

Dairy

- Butter (7 Tbsp.)
- Buttermilk (1 Tbsp.)
SUB: cream + 1 teas. vinegar
- Cream (1 cup)
- Greek yogurt (1/2 cup)
- Milk (1 cup)
- Parmesan cheese, garnish
- Provolone cheese (4 slices)

Spices and Pantry Items

- All-purpose flour (2 Tbsp.)
- Black pepper
- Chicken stock (1 cup)
- Chili powder (1/2 teas.)
- Cranberries, dried (1/2 cup)
- Croutons
- Crusty bread, for soup
- Green chiles (2 4.5 oz. cans)
- Honey (3 Tbsp.)
- Hummus (1/2 cup)
- Kosher salt
- Olive oil (3 Tbsp.)
- Peanut butter (1/4 cup)
- Peas, frozen (1 cup)
- Penne (1 lb.)
- Sandwich bread (4 slices)
- Sourdough Bread (8 slices)
- Tomatoes, diced (1 28-oz. can)
- Vegetable stock (1 qt.)