



Truffled Macaroni Cheese

For many food lovers, fresh black truffles are the highlight of winter. I developed this recipe using white Italian truffles from Alba (during their short mid-October to mid-December season), but it works just as well with black truffles. This recipe can easily be doubled or tripled and is also a great side dish without the truffles. Quail eggs take about 4 minutes for hard boiled, but you can also use hen eggs and roughly chop them. Use any small hollow pasta such as elbow macaroni or small smooth penne. The truffles and rich cheese sauce in truffled macaroni cheese work well with an aromatic white wine, such as the fiano from Margaret River's Juniper Estate.

Serves 2 as a starter

INGREDIENTS

- 125g macaroni
- Extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling
- 25g butter
- 1 tablespoon plain flour
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ¾ cup milk
- 70g grated Gruyere cheese (about ¾ cup)
- 2 tablespoons finely sliced chives
- 6 quail eggs, hard boiled and quartered
- 10g white or black truffle

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Boil pasta in well-salted water until just tender. Drain well, toss with a drizzle of oil and set aside.
3. Melt butter in a saucepan, add flour and mustard and stir for a minute or 2 until bubbling and slightly darker.
4. Remove from heat, stir in milk, return to heat and stir for a few minutes, until it thickens and starts to boil.
5. Remove from heat, stir in ½ cup of the cheese.
6. Stir chives and pasta through the cheese sauce.
7. Divide a third of the pasta mixture between 2 x 250ml ramekins.
8. Press half the egg pieces into the mixture.
9. Top with another third of the pasta mixture and press remaining egg pieces into it.
10. Top with remaining pasta mixture, press down into the ramekin and sprinkle with remaining cheese.
11. Place in the oven for 15-20 minutes until golden and bubbling.
12. Grate truffle over the top and serve.