



From the Kitchen of Executive Chef Jessica VanRoo

Crunchy Spinach and Squash Macaroni Bites

Serves 4, makes about 24 pieces

Description from Live Well UCI Health Blog: www.ucihealth.org/blog

Adding butternut squash to these other nutritious ingredients boosts the fiber, vitamin and minerals while being low in calories.

Total cost of recipe: \$5.05/\$1.26 per serving

Ingredients - Macaroni mix

- ½ pound elbow macaroni, preferably whole wheat
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- ½ yellow onion, diced
- 2 teaspoon flour
- 5 ounces butternut squash, pureed (winter squash)
- 1 ¼ cups, low-fat milk
- 3 ounces extra-sharp cheddar cheese, freshly grated (Let kids grate.)
- 2 ounces Monterey Jack cheese, freshly grated (Let kids grate.)
- ¼ cup cottage cheese
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon granulated garlic
- 5 ounces frozen spinach, defrosted and squeezed dry (Let kids squeeze dry.)



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Ingredients - Crust mix

- 1/3 cup panko bread crumbs, preferably whole-wheat
- 2 tablespoon Parmesan cheese, freshly grated (Let kids grate.)
- ½ tablespoon olive oil

Instructions

1. Preheat your oven to 375 degrees. Prepare a mini-muffin tin by spraying it with nonstick cooking spray. (Let kids spray pan or lightly brush oil in each muffin cup.)
2. Cook the macaroni according to the package directions. Drain and toss with a few drops of olive oil to prevent sticking. (Let kids help toss with olive oil.)
3. In a saucepan, heat olive oil over medium-high heat, add onions and cook for 3 minutes, stirring until onions begin to turn clear. Turn flame to low-medium and sprinkle in flour and stir well. (Let kids stir.)
4. Add milk to the saucepan, stirring constantly and add butternut squash puree. Turn heat to medium and cook just until the milk begins to simmer, stirring occasionally.
5. Turn off the heat, add the cheeses, salt and granulated garlic into the milk mixture and stir well.
6. Add the cooked macaroni to the cheese mixture and stir well to combine. Then stir in the spinach. (Let kids add macaroni and spinach.)
7. In a small bowl, combine the crust ingredients and mix well. (Let kids make the topping.)
8. Let kids spoon macaroni mixture into each mini-muffin cup and sprinkle with the panko mix.
9. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes or until the tops are golden brown.
10. Remove from oven and set aside to cool for at least 10 minutes before serving.