



INGREDIENTS

Serves 4 generously

- 400 g (14 oz) big macaroni pasta shells
- 500 g (1lb 2 oz) wild mushrooms, sliced
- 32-40 small baby leeks, finely shredded
- 2 bags of rocket
- garlic bread
- 6 tbsp or more of parmesan cheese, to taste
- olive oil for the pasta
- knob of unsalted butter and vegetable oil for frying

Sauce

- 150 g (5 oz) unsalted butter
- 150 g (5 oz) plain flour
- 1.5 litres (2.5 pints) milk
- 300 g (11 oz) mature cheddar or gruyère, grated
- salt and pepper

METHOD

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/ 350°F/ Gas mark 4.
- 2 Cook the pasta and then refresh by running under cold water to stop the cooking process.
- 3 Mix through a little olive oil to prevent it sticking. Leave to one side.
- 4 Heat a pan until very hot with a little oil and add the butter just before you add the mushrooms. Cook the mushrooms until nutty brown.
- 5 In another pan melt the butter and add the flour. Cook for a minute or so.
- 6 Add the milk gradually and stir.
- 7 Once all the milk is added and you have brought the sauce to the boil, remove from the heat and add the cheddar/ gruyère and allow it to melt into the sauce. Taste and add extra cheese if desired. Season with salt and pepper.
- 8 Mix the pasta with the sauce, the raw, thinly sliced leeks and cooked mushrooms.
- 9 Put in an earthenware dish and sprinkle with parmesan cheese.
- 10 Cook for 30-35 minutes until cooked and golden brown.
- 11 Serve with rocket salad and garlic bread.



ABOUT CHEESE



Different types of cheese behave differently when they are grilled. You could do an experiment to see what happens to them. Cut similar-sized cubes or slices of as many different cheeses as you have available. Cheddar, Halloumi and Mozzarella are good to choose. Put them on some foil on a grill-pan. Heat up the grill and put the cheese pieces under it. Look at them every minute. Try prodding them with a fork. Some melt, some go stringy and some go brown. But they will all be tasty to eat when they have cooled a little!

- The love of cheese is called *turophilia*; fear of cheese is *turophobia*.
- Certain kinds of hard cheese, like cheddar, have been found to help fight tooth decay if eaten soon after other foods.
- The first stage of cheese making involves separating the milk into curd (the proteins and fats) and whey (the liquid which is mainly water). This process is called coagulation.
- The holes in Emmental cheese are made by a bacterium called *propionibacteria*. This bacterium consumes the cheese's lactic acid during ripening and converts it into a combination of acids and carbon dioxide. The carbon dioxide produces the holes and the acids contribute to the flavour of the Emmental.
- Cheshire cheese was first produced in Roman times and was thought to have been made in a cat-shaped mould, later made famous as the grinning Cheshire cat in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*.

If these facts have inspired you to learn more about the animals from which milk, the raw material for cheese, is obtained, then you might like to take our short course, *Studying mammals* (S182), which is based around videos of the BBC *Life of Mammals* TV series.