Beef and Baked Bean Macaroni Hotdish

One 9×13 in (23×33 cm) dish, at least 3.5 qt/3.3 L; 6 main-dish portions · Active 25 min · Total 1 hr 25 min

Ingredients

- 7 oz dry elbow macaroni (200 g)
- 10 cups water (2.4 L), for pasta
- 1 teaspoon neutral oil (5 ml)
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped (150 g)
- 1 lb lean ground beef (450 g)
- 2 cans plain baked beans in tomato sauce, undrained (14 oz/400 g each; 800 g total)
- 1 can crushed tomatoes with juice (14 oz/400 g)
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar (15 ml)
- 1 tablespoon prepared yellow mustard (15 g)
- 1 teaspoon mild smoked paprika (2 g)
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 3 oz cheddar, grated (85 g)

Set out

Oven, 9×13 in (23×33 cm) baking dish, at least 3.5 qt/3.3 L, Large pasta saucepan, 12-in/30-cm deep skillet, Colander, Rimmed baking sheet, Food thermometer

Allergens

Wheat, Milk, Mustard; check baked-bean labels for pork, soy, celery or other ingredients relevant to eaters. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Heat oven to 375°F (190°C). Set the dish on a rimmed sheet and bring pasta water to a boil.

2. Heat oil in the skillet over medium heat. Cook onion 6–8 minutes until soft. Add beef, raise heat to medium-high and cook 8–10 minutes, breaking it up, until several places reach 160°F (71°C). Safely drain excess fat if needed.

3. Stir in both cans of beans with their sauce, tomatoes, vinegar, mustard, paprika and pepper. Simmer uncovered 8–10 minutes, stirring, until hot and lightly thickened but still moist.

4. Meanwhile boil macaroni 2 minutes short of its packet time and drain. Fold into the hot filling, spread in the dish and scatter cheddar. Bake 20–25 minutes until lightly golden and the center and several other spots reach 165°F (74°C).

5. Rest 5 minutes and divide into six portions.

Keep the tomato distinction clear

The crushed tomatoes supply a sharper, less sweet sauce alongside the beans' prepared sauce. Replacing them with a second can of sweet baked beans would change both the balance and the pasta coating.

A useful detail

The 85-minute total allows chopping, the full skillet stage, overlapping macaroni cooking and the oven finish. The base has no extra salt or sugar because the baked-bean sauce, mustard and cheese already season it.

Keep it well

Refrigerate shallow portions within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F (32°C), at 40°F (4°C) or below. Use within 3 days or an earlier ingredient deadline. Reheat to 165°F (74°C), adding a little water if the pasta has absorbed the sauce. Freeze promptly cooled portions for up to 1 month for quality and thaw in the refrigerator.