



# Irish Cheddar Macaroni and Cheese

## Ingredients

- 4 strips thick-cut bacon, diced
- 4 cups shredded brussels sprouts
- Kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper
- 1 pound pasta shells
- 3 tablespoons [Fustini's Garlic olive oil](#)
- 3 1/2 cups water
- 3/4 cup whole milk
- 3-4 cups shredded Irish cheddar (or sharp cheddar cheese)
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper

## Sharon's Hint

For more heat, substitute a Fustini's spice-infused olive oil. Adapted from [halfbakedharvest.com](http://halfbakedharvest.com)

## Directions

### Step 1.

Cook the bacon in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat until crisp, about 5 minutes. Transfer the bacon to a paper towel-lined plate. If there is an excess amount of bacon grease, remove all but 1 tablespoon of grease.

### Step 2.

To the pot, add the brussels sprouts and season with salt and pepper. Cook 1 minute. Add the pasta, olive oil and water. Bring to a boil over high heat. Boil for 7-8 minutes, stirring often until the pasta is just al dente. If the pasta needs more time, add a splash of water and continue cooking for 1-2 additional minutes.

### Step 3.

Remove from the heat and stir in the milk, cheddar, garlic powder, and cayenne, stirring until the cheese is fully melted about 1-2 minutes. Taste, adding salt if needed. Serve immediately, topped with crispy bacon.