**LE CREUSET STONEWARE**

**26cm Heritage Rectangular Dish**

**Mac ‘n’ Cheese with Fresh Crab, Dill, Lemon and Black Pepper**

**Serves 4-6**

Fresh brown crab is one of my all-time favourite things to eat, although I tend to save it for special occasions, that way it remains a proper treat. Usually, I like it prepared simply. Some good toast, a spoonful of garlic mayonnaise and a glass of chilled white wine is all you need on a bright summer’s day. Later on in the autumn, I look for warmer, richer and more comforting ways to serve it. Cue this crab mac ‘n’ cheese!

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 25-30 minutes

**INGREDIENTS**

400g macaroni

50g butter, plus extra for greasing

1 small garlic clove, finely chopped

50g plain flour

500ml whole milk

200ml of double cream

50g mature cheddar

50g Parmesan or Pecorino

1 small bunch of dill, finely chopped

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 lemon, zest

200g of fresh crab meat (white and brown meat)

A handful of coarse white breadcrumbs

1 tablespoon olive oil

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

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**METHOD**

1. Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil and add the macaroni. Cook until just tender. Drain, refresh and set aside.
2. Meanwhile, melt the butter in a pan, and when it’s bubbling add the garlic and cook for a few seconds. Then add the flour and stir well.
3. Stir occasionally while it’s cooking, then gradually whisk in the milk until you have a smooth white sauce. Continue to cook the sauce, stirring for a few minutes until it thickens.
4. Now stir in the cream, the cheddar cheese and half the Parmesan. Stir well until it’s all melted.
5. Now add the dill, mustard, lemon zest, crab meat and plenty of salt and black pepper to taste. Remove the sauce from the heat.
6. Combine the cooked macaroni with the crab and dill sauce and tip into a lightly buttered deep 26cm rectangular dish.
7. Place the breadcrumbs in a bowl with the remaining Parmesan, the olive oil and a little salt and pepper and tumble together.
8. Scatter the topping over the macaroni and place under a preheated grill to bake for 6-10 minutes or until the pasta is piping hot in the middle, bubbling around the edges and golden on top.

**Cook’s Notes**

* When it comes to the crab I like to use two thirds delicate white meat, which tends to be found in the legs, and one third rich brown meat, which can be found in the body. Sometimes, I like to pick the crab myself, it’s a rewarding, slow paced process, but a good fishmonger should be able to get hold of freshly picked crab meat for you if time is in short supply.
* Make sure your macaroni is cooked properly – if you drain it while it is too al dente, it has a tendency to take up all the sauce as it’s finishing cooking under the grill.
* If crab isn’t your thing – don’t worry! You can make an equally delicious variation on this recipe using steamed leeks and sautéed mushrooms instead. They both go wonderfully with fresh dill.