

# Noodling Around



## *A childhood standard revamped*

Chefs Brian McCracken and Dana Tough are in tune with your needs. While writing the menu for the newly opened [The Coterie Room](#) in Seattle, they focused on crave-worthy dishes, striving to make a lasting impression on their diners. Enter the restaurant's stepped-up macaroni and cheese. The base of the dish is *soubise*, or onion sauce, made using the classic French technique of caramelizing sweet onions and blending them into a smooth purée. The addition of three cheeses and whole milk creates a smooth sauce for orecchiette. Crisp, flash-fried shallots are sprinkled on top of the dish before it's served, which ensures an addictive crunch in each bite.

## Sweet Onion Mac and Cheese

*Recipe adapted from Brian McCracken and Dana Tough, The Coterie Room, Seattle, WA*

**Yield:** 6 to 8 servings

**Cook Time:** 1 hour

### • INGREDIENTS

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| 4 cups dried orecchiette                             | 1 cup all-purpose flour                      |
| 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil                 | 5 cups whole milk                            |
| 1 tablespoon canola oil, plus more for frying        | ½ cup shredded Fontina cheese                |
| 2 sticks plus 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided | 3 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese |
| 1 large sweet onion, coarsely chopped                | ½ cup grated sharp white cheddar cheese      |
| Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper          | 1 teaspoon chives, finely chopped            |
| 1 medium shallot, thinly sliced                      | 1 teaspoon flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped |
| ¼ cup rice flour                                     |  |

### DIRECTIONS

1. Bring a stockpot full of salted water to a boil, add the orecchiette and cook until just al dente, about 10 minutes. Strain the pasta, toss with the olive oil and set aside.
2. In large saucepan set over medium heat, add the tablespoon of canola oil, 2 tablespoons of the butter and the onion. Cook until the onion is golden brown, about 10 minutes. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Place the onions in a blender and purée until smooth. Set aside.
3. In a medium bowl, toss the shallot slices with the rice flour. Shake the excess rice flour out of the bowl. In a medium saucepan, add enough canola oil to come 2 inches up the side. Heat the oil to 320°. Add the shallot slices to the oil and fry until they're a light golden brown, about 1 to 2 minutes. Strain the shallots on a paper-towel-lined sheet pan and season with salt and pepper.
4. Make the cheese sauce: In a large saucepan or Dutch oven set over medium heat, melt the remaining 2 sticks of butter. Add the all-purpose flour. Cook, whisking constantly, until smooth and light brown in color, about 10 minutes. Gradually whisk in the milk and continue whisking until the sauce is thick, about 20 minutes. Add the Fontina, Parmesan, cheddar and reserved onion purée. Whisk until incorporated. Season with salt and pepper. Fold in the pasta, chives and parsley. Garnish with the fried shallots and serve immediately.