



## **BACON MAC N CHEESE BURGER**

Yield: makes 4

Time: 45 minutes (plus mac n cheese prep time)

- 4 brioche hamburger buns
- 28 ounces ground beef, 80/20 blend, divided into four even balls
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 5 to 6 turns fresh ground black pepper
- 8 slices cheddar cheese
- 3 tablespoons melted roasted garlic butter, (see page XX)
- ¼ cup thinly sliced sweet onion
- 1 Kosher dill pickle, thinly sliced
- 1 large red heirloom tomato, thinly sliced
- ½ head iceberg lettuce, finely shredded

### **CRISPY ONION STRAWS:**

- 1 large sweet onion
- 1 egg
- ½ cup milk
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 3 teaspoons Kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon fresh ground pepper
- Canola oil for frying

### **BACON MAC N CHEESE**

- 8 ounces small elbow pasta, cooked al dente
- 16 slices applewood smoked bacon, diced ¼-inch pieces
- 1/2 stick unsalted butter
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 6 cups whole milk
- 1 bay leaf

3 ounces grated sharp white cheddar cheese  
2 ounces grated Fontina cheese  
2 ounces grated smoked Gouda cheese  
3 tablespoons yellow mustard  
2-3 grates fresh nutmeg  
2 teaspoons Kosher salt  
5-6 turns freshly ground black pepper

Begin by preparing bacon mac n cheese (this can be done a day or two ahead of time): In a large pot over medium-high heat, add the bacon and cook until crispy and the fat has rendered, about 6 to 8 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, remove the cooked bacon from the pot and set aside. Reduce heat to medium then add butter to the bacon grease. Gradually add in the flour while whisking to make a roux. Cook until the mixture turns a light, golden color and is the consistency of wet sand, about 1-2 minutes. Slowly add milk while continuing to whisk to incorporate and avoid lumps. Bring to a simmer then add bay leaf and cheeses. Whisk until cheeses have melted. Season with yellow mustard, nutmeg, salt and pepper then add cooked pasta, bacon bits, and mix together. Set aside to cool.

Prepare onion straws (these can be made a few hours ahead of time, if cooled and stored in an airtight container). In a deep cast iron skillet heat 2-3 inches of canola oil to 350 degrees F. In a medium bowl add egg and milk then whisk to combine. In a separate, large bowl combine the flour, cayenne pepper, paprika, garlic powder, 2 teaspoons salt and pepper. Separate the layers of the sliced onion then place in the milk mixture to soak for 10-12 minutes. Remove the onions from the milk mixture, shake off excess and dredge in the flour mixture. Working in small batches, fry the onions in hot oil until golden brown, about 2 minutes. Remove from oil and drain on paper towel. Season with remaining teaspoon of salt.

Preheat cast iron griddle to high heat. Season the burger balls all over with salt then place on hot griddle about 3-4 inches apart. Cook for 90 seconds without moving to develop a crust then using a heavy spatula, smash the burger so it flattens to ¼-inch thickness. Allow to cook until blood starts to come to the surface of the burger. Flip to another part of the griddle (so it's hot) and cook on the second side for 2-3 more minutes. Top each of the burgers with two heaping tablespoons of bacon mac n cheese. Place two slices of cheddar cheese over the top to cover the mac n cheese. Cover with a dome, and place 2 tablespoons of water under the lid to steam the burgers and melt the cheese. Cook under dome for 60 seconds. Remove the burgers to a platter to rest. Brush the cut sides of the brioche buns lightly with the roasted garlic butter. Toast the bun halves on the griddle until golden and crisp, about 10-15 seconds per side.

Assemble the Bacon Mac n Cheese Burger: Smear donkey sauce on each cut half of the bun. Cover the bottom buns with three slices of pickle and onion, top with the bacon mac n cheese covered burger, two tomato slices, shredded

lettuce and some Maui onion straws. Place the bun lid on top of the onion straws and secure with a long pick.