

Baked Penne

with Farmhouse Cheddar and Leeks

Stephanie Collins

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| ¼ cup (½ stick) butter | 1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard |
| 5 cups chopped leeks | 1 tsp. hot pepper sauce |
| ¼ cup all-purpose flour | 2 large eggs |
| 3 ½ cups whole milk | 1 lb. penne pasta (can use
whole wheat if desired) |
| 1 lb. extra-sharp Cheddar
cheese, coarsely grated
(about 4 cups) | |

Lightly butter 15x10x2-inch baking dish. Melt ¼ cup butter in large saucepan over medium heat. Add leeks; stir to coat. Cover saucepan and cook until leeks are tender, stirring occasionally, about 12 minutes (do not brown). Uncover saucepan; add flour. Stir 2 minutes. Add milk; bring to simmer, stirring often. Add cheese, mustard, and pepper sauce. Stir until cheese melts. Remove from heat. Season cheese sauce with salt and pepper to taste.

Whisk eggs in medium bowl. Gradually whisk in 1 cup cheese sauce. Stir egg mixture into cheese sauce in saucepan.

Meanwhile, cook pasta in large pot of boiling salted water until just tender but still firm to bite, stirring occasionally. Drain. Return to pot. Stir cheese sauce into pasta in pot. Transfer to prepared baking dish. Can be made 2 hours ahead of time. Let stand at room temperature.

Preheat oven to 400°. Bake pasta until cheese sauce is bubbling around edges and some ends of pasta are golden brown, about 25 to 30 minutes. Let stand 15 minutes before serving.

Note: Be careful when adding the hot cheese sauce to the eggs; you'll need to whisk the sauce in slowly so that the eggs don't curdle.