

Bite Spoon

Cheddar Sour Cream Macaroni Salad Recipe

20 min Prep time	**10 min** Cook time	**30 min** Total time
8 Servings	**Easy** Difficulty	**American** Cuisine

Ingredients

For the Salad

- [ ] 1 lb elbow macaroni
- [ ] 1 cup finely diced celery (about 2 stalks)
- [ ] 1/2 cup finely diced red onion (about 1/2 small onion)
- [ ] 2 cups (8 oz) sharp cheddar cheese, coarsely grated

For the Creamy Dressing

- [ ] 1 1/2 cups full-fat mayonnaise
- [ ] 1/2 cup full-fat sour cream
- [ ] 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- [ ] 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- [ ] 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
- [ ] 1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- [ ] 1/2 teaspoon black pepper, or to taste

Instructions

1. First, let's cook our pasta. Bring a large pot of generously salted water to a rolling boil. It's so important to salt the water well, as it's your only chance to season the pasta itself. Pour in the elbow macaroni and give it a good stir to prevent it from sticking. Cook according to the package directions until it's al dente—tender with a slight chew. Once it's ready, drain the pasta in a colander and immediately rinse it under cold running water until it's completely cool. This stops the cooking process and is key for a great salad texture.

2. While the pasta is cooking, you can get your other components ready. This is my favorite quiet moment in the kitchen. Finely dice your celery and red onion. You want the pieces to be small enough to blend in nicely, providing a subtle crunch rather than a huge chunk. Then, take your block of sharp cheddar and grate it on the coarse side of a box grater. Doing this yourself makes such a difference in the final texture. Place all of these lovely prepped ingredients into your largest mixing bowl.

3. Now, let's whisk together that beautiful, creamy dressing. In a separate medium-sized bowl, combine the mayonnaise, sour cream, apple cider vinegar, Dijon mustard, sugar, salt, and pepper. Use a whisk to mix everything together until it's completely smooth and wonderfully creamy. This is the moment to taste it! Dip a spoon in and see if it needs anything else—maybe a pinch more salt or a little more pepper. Adjust it now until you love the way it tastes. This is an easy one-pot pasta step that makes all the difference.

4 It's time for the final assembly! Add the cooled macaroni to the large bowl with your chopped veggies and grated cheese. Pour that luscious dressing all over the top. Using a large rubber spatula, gently fold everything together until every single piece of pasta, cheese, and veggie is evenly coated in the dressing. Cover the bowl tightly with plastic wrap or a lid and place it in the refrigerator to chill for at least one hour, though a few hours is even better. This allows the flavors to meld together into something truly special. Give it one last gentle stir before serving.

Nutrition per serving

450 kcal	12 g	35 g	30 g
Calories	Protein	Carbs	Fat

Tips & notes

- Feel free to experiment with other pasta shapes! Small shells or rotini are fantastic because their little crevices are perfect for catching all that creamy dressing. Just be sure to cook whatever shape you choose to a nice al dente.
- Letting the salad rest is so important. I know it's tempting to dig right in, but chilling for at least an hour allows the flavors to marry and deepen. The pasta absorbs some of the dressing, and it just becomes so much more flavorful. It's a bit like the anticipation for a viral TikTok spaghetti; the wait is part of the experience.
- Don't be afraid to add more veggies if you like! Finely diced red or green bell peppers add a lovely sweetness and color. Some people even add shredded carrots or sweet peas. This is your salad, so make it just the way you like it.