

Cauliflower Cheese Bake

Ingredients

- 1 large head cauliflower, about 2 to 2½ pounds or about 8 cups florets, cut into bite sized pieces
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons all purpose flour
- 1¾ cups half and half
- 4 ounces Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
- 1 to 2 teaspoons chicken bouillon or Better Than Bouillon, optional
- 8 ounces cheddar cheese, shredded
- Salt, to taste
- Black pepper, to taste

Instructions

1. Cut the cauliflower into bite sized florets. For a firmer texture, use the cauliflower raw. For a softer texture and shorter bake time, lightly steam the florets first, then drain well.
2. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Lightly grease a medium baking dish and set aside.
3. Melt the butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Whisk in the flour and cook for about 1 minute, stirring constantly.
4. Slowly pour in the half and half while whisking continuously. Cook for several minutes, stirring often, until the sauce begins to thicken.
5. Stir in about ¾ of the combined Monterey Jack and cheddar cheese until melted and smooth. Season with salt and black pepper to taste. If you want a deeper savory flavor, stir in 1 to 2 teaspoons of chicken bouillon or Better Than Bouillon after the cheese sauce is finished.
6. Place the cauliflower in the prepared baking dish and pour the cheese sauce evenly over the top. Gently stir so the florets are well coated.
7. Sprinkle the reserved ¼ of the shredded cheese evenly over the cauliflower.
8. If using raw cauliflower, bake for about 35 to 45 minutes, or until the cauliflower reaches your preferred texture and the cheese is bubbling. If using lightly steamed cauliflower, bake for about 20 to 30 minutes, or until heated through and the top is golden.
9. Broil for about 2 minutes at the end, watching closely so the cheese does not burn. Let the bake rest for a few minutes before serving.

Note & Storage

- Half and half gives the sauce a creamy texture, but heavy cream can be used for a richer sauce.
- Add the cheese gradually and stir until smooth so the sauce stays creamy.
- For extra savory flavor, stir in 1 to 2 teaspoons of chicken bouillon or Better Than Bouillon after the cheese sauce is finished.
- Broil only briefly at the end and watch closely, since the cheese can brown quickly.
- Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.
- Reheat in the oven or microwave until hot throughout.
- The sauce may thicken after chilling, but it will loosen again as it warms.
- Freezing is not recommended.