

Diet

Food favorites in the traditional African American diet tend to be high in fats and carbohydrates, but can be modified into healthy dishes. Favorite entrees include fried or barbecued chicken, fried perch and catfish, pork chops, barbecued ribs, and jambalaya. Favorite side dishes include collard greens, potato salad, grits, candied sweet potatoes, biscuits, macaroni and cheese, green beans, okra, spinach, cornbread, and lima beans. There has been a movement in recent years to adapt many of the recipes to reduce fat, carbs, and sodium. This macaroni and cheese recipe (below) is one example.

Healthy recipe

Adapted mac & cheese (serves 4-8)

Ingredients

2 cups macaroni
2 tsp. olive oil, or as needed
1 large onion, chopped
2 cups evaporated fat-free milk
1 egg, beaten
¼ tsp. black or cayenne pepper
1¼ cups low-fat cheddar cheese, finely shredded

Directions

1. Cook macaroni according to pkg. directions. Drain and set aside.
2. Spread 1 tsp. of the olive oil on bottom and sides of casserole dish.
3. Preheat oven to 350 F.
4. Grease saucepan with remainder of olive oil. Add onions to saucepan and saute for about 3 minutes or until translucent.
5. In mixing bowl, combine macaroni, onions, and the rest of the ingredients and mix thoroughly.
6. Transfer mixture into casserole dish.
7. Bake for 25 minutes or until bubbly. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving. Serve with collard greens or spinach.
8. An interesting variation of this classic recipe is to add a drained can of stewed tomatoes to the top of the casserole dish when the macaroni and cheese mixture is bubbly, and then bake 5-8 more minutes.