

mini Pumpkin + Kale Mac n' Cheese Pot Pie



We are done. The high holidays of 5777 have come to a close. Seriously folks who celebrated, give yourself a hand. That was exhausting, no? I feel like Rosh Hashanah was, like, 5 years ago. I haven't counted the number of meals I cooked this high holiday season but suffice it to say, it was A LOT. I mean, gobs of roast chicken and potatoes, tons of salads and apple-themed desserts and more homemade challah than you can shake a stick at. I need a cleanse (if only I believed in 'cleanses').



Our Teahouse in Topanga Canyon



Epic tree swing

This holiday season we were home save for a quick little jaunt to the cutest little hippie commune we could find that was only 30 minutes from our apartment. I don't know how we stumbled across this little teahouse on Air B n' B but we snatched it up as soon as we saw it. The kitchen is on the porch, there's an epic tree swing in the front yard and a fully-stocked outhouse. We hit 'book' as soon as we saw it. Thank goodness. We needed to get away. We live in a community that is certainly bustling with religiously observant Jews as well as your fair share of non-observant Israelis but all of friends we've made through our synagogue live waaaaay too far away for a family walk for a dinner or a lunch on a high holiday. If you've read this blog before, you'll know that our family is religiously observant, which means that for every Shabbat and holiday, we adhere to the strict, "no energy-usage" rule. This means that we do not operate cars, our phones, the TV or computer or even the coffee maker (that said, Gd did invent the automatic coffee maker and I love her

for it). We have a pretty set routine for our Shabbat observance but these two-day holiday blackouts can get kinda exhausting after a while. I mean, I'm deeply in love with my little family but sometimes, we need a guest in the house to give us a break from each other.



wEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!



I feel like I'm being watched. Hmmm . . .

And so, since we did not have guests over for the first of the Sukkot holidays, we headed out to our little commune in Topanga Canyon for a bit of respite. It was kind of like camping but, like not. The kids slept great. We slept so-so. Husband and I drank copious amounts of coffee and we attempted a 'hike' but the roads were too narrow and not friendly enough for us wandering Jews. So we played board games and explored the other areas of the property and spent a considerable amount of time on that epic tree swing. We were sad to come home and even though we were exhausted, we were completely refreshed. Thank you, Air B n' B.



Siona's turn to play with the camera.



My reality . . . there's always someone at my feet or on my chest.



This baby. She makes me SO DANG happy.



Coffee tastes EVEN better when it's brewed in the French press in an outdoor kitchen.

OK, I'm not a huge pumpkin-eater (cheater, cheater?!), but I was asked by the lovely and talented, Sara Cornelius and Aimee Twigger of Cake Over Steak and Twigg Studios, respectively, who invited me to join in on their virtual pumpkin party! Sadly, the 'party' happened on Monday, Simchat Torah, but hey, isn't there something out there about being late and fashionable!? There are a TON of amazing bloggers involved in this here sweet pumpkin party and you can find them all by searching the hashtag, [#virtualpumpkinparty](#), on Instagram.







a dog, a penguin, a dolphin, a cat.



Close up of dog, cause it's too dang cute.



mini Pumpkin and Kale Mac n' Cheese Pie

Dough Ingredients:

2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon kosher salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 stick) chilled unsalted butter, cut into pieces
1 large egg, beaten to blend
1 tablespoon distilled white vinegar

Pumpkin + Kale Mac n' Cheese Ingredients:

2 cup uncooked elbow macaroni
1 tbsp kosher salt
2 tbsp unsalted butter
2 tbsp all-purpose flour
1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup milk, heavy cream, or half-and-half**
8 oz shredded Monterrey Jack cheese
8 oz extra shredded sharp white Vermont cheddar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of pumpkin puree (read: NOT pumpkin pie filling)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup frozen curly blue kale
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp nutmeg
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp cinnamon
1 tbsp kosher salt

Pie Dough Directions:

Whisk flour and salt in a large bowl. Work in butter with your fingers until only pea-size pieces remain. Combine egg, vinegar, and $\frac{1}{3}$ cup ice water in a small bowl and drizzle over flour mixture; quickly work in with your fingers until a shaggy dough forms.

Turn out dough onto a work surface and press together, working just enough to form a smooth ball with no dry spots. Wrap in plastic and chill until very cold, at least 2 hours.

Pumpkin + Kale Mac n' Cheese Directions:

Fill a large stockpot with water, add your first tablespoon of kosher salt and bring to a boil. Add in the pasta and cook

ONLY 5 – 6 minutes or just before perfect al dente (the pasta will cook more while it's in the oven so you want to leave it a little underdone during the initial cook). Drain pasta over the sink and run cold water over it to stop additional cooking. Set aside.

While the pasta is cooking, melt the butter in a 4-quart sauce pan over medium heat. When the butter has melted and has started to bubble, whisk in the flour; cook for roughly 1 minute, whisking constantly. Gradually whisk in the milk until no lumps remain. Reduce the heat to medium-low and cook milk mixture, whisking frequently, until it thickens and bubbles, about 8 minutes.

Remove sauce pan from the heat and by the handful (SET ASIDE about 1/2 a cup of shredded cheese to be added to the mac n' cheese bowl), stir in the cheeses allowing all of the cheese to melt into the sauce before adding more. Return the pot to the stove and turn the heat to low. Cook for an additional 1 – 2 minutes, stirring constantly, to ensure all cheese is melted. Add in the nutmeg, cinnamon and kosher salt. Taste and adjust seasonings as you see fit.

Add cooked pasta to a large bowl. Pour in sauce, followed by frozen kale, pumpkin and additional shredded cheese. Stir to combine.

Assembly:

Next, divide your pasta amongst your ramekins making sure to fill it to the top (makes up to 8). Divide dough in half. Working with one at a time, roll out to $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick. Cut out 2 rounds about $\frac{1}{2}$ " wider than the diameter of ramekins. Gather up scraps, reroll, and cut out 2 more rounds (for 8 total – you might have leftover mac n' cheese, which, no one ever cried about). □ You do not need to cut a vent into your pie crust at all. I did that for fun but it is not necessary.

Whisk egg, a pinch of kosher salt, and 1 tsp. water in a small

bowl. Brush dough with egg wash; place over ramekins, brushed side down. Press firmly around sides to adhere. Brush tops of dough with egg wash. Set pot pies on a rimmed baking sheet and bake until crusts are golden brown and domed, 25 minutes.