Prep Time: 15 minutes
Cook Time: 25 minutes
Total Time: 40 minutes
Difficulty: Easy
Intensity Level: Low to Moderate (stovetop stirring and oven baking)

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Introduction

Keto Cauliflower Mac and Cheese is a rich, creamy, low-carb twist on the classic comfort food. Tender cauliflower florets stand in for pasta, while a velvety cheese sauce made with heavy cream and sharp cheddar delivers all the indulgent flavor you crave—without the carbs. Finished with a crispy almond flour topping, this dish is satisfying enough to serve as a main course or a hearty side. Whether you're following a ketogenic lifestyle or simply looking for a lighter take on mac and cheese, this recipe is sure to become a weeknight favorite.

Ingredients

For the Cauliflower

- 1 large head cauliflower (about 2 pounds / 900 g), cut into small florets
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper

For the Cheese Sauce

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter

- ½ cup heavy whipping cream
- ¼ cup unsweetened almond milk (or additional heavy cream)
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon dry mustard powder (optional, for depth of flavor)
- ¼ teaspoon salt, or to taste
- Pinch of black pepper
- 1½ cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese (about 6 oz / 170 g)
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 oz cream cheese, softened (optional, for extra creaminess)

For the Topping

- ⅓ cup almond flour

- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon melted butter
- Pinch of salt and pepper

Optional Garnish

- Chopped fresh chives or parsley
- Extra pinch of paprika

Equipment Needed

- Large pot with steamer basket (or a large saucepan)
- Colander
- 9×9-inch (23×23 cm) baking dish or a medium oven-safe skillet
- Medium saucepan

- Whisk
- Small mixing bowl
- Wooden spoon or spatula

Instructions

Step 1: Preheat and Prep (Time: 5 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C). Lightly grease a 9×9-inch baking dish with butter or nonstick spray. Rinse and cut the cauliflower into small, bite-sized florets so they cook evenly and mimic the texture of macaroni.

Step 2: Steam the Cauliflower (Time: 6–8 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Bring about an inch of water to a boil in a large pot fitted with a steamer basket. Add the cauliflower florets, cover, and steam for 6–8 minutes, until fork-tender but not mushy. Alternatively, boil the florets in salted water for 5–6 minutes. Drain thoroughly and pat dry with paper towels to remove excess moisture—this prevents a watery sauce.

Step 3: Make the Cheese Sauce (Time: 7–8 minutes | Intensity: Moderate)

While the cauliflower steams, melt 2 tablespoons of butter in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat. Pour in the heavy cream and almond milk, then whisk in the garlic powder, onion powder, mustard powder, salt, and pepper. Bring to a gentle simmer—do not boil—and

cook for 2–3 minutes. Reduce the heat to low and gradually add the shredded cheddar, Parmesan, and cream cheese (if using), stirring constantly in a figure-eight motion until the sauce is smooth and glossy, about 3–4 minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning. Keep the sauce warm over the lowest heat, stirring occasionally.

Intensity Note: Moderate—constant stirring is needed to prevent the cheese from clumping or scorching.

Step 4: Combine Cauliflower and Sauce (Time: 3 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Transfer the drained cauliflower to the prepared baking dish (or back into the pot, then into the dish). Pour the warm cheese sauce over the top and gently fold with a spatula until every floret is evenly coated. Spread the mixture into an even layer.

Step 5: Prepare the Topping (Time: 3 minutes | Intensity: Low)

In a small bowl, combine the almond flour, Parmesan, melted butter, salt, and pepper. Stir with a fork until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs.

Step 6: Bake (Time: 15–18 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Sprinkle the almond flour topping evenly over the cauliflower mixture. Bake uncovered at 375°F (190°C) for 15–18 minutes, until the sauce is bubbly at the edges and the topping is golden brown. If the topping browns too quickly, tent loosely with foil for the final 5 minutes.

Step 7: Rest and Serve (Time: 3–5 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Remove from the oven and let rest for 3–5 minutes to allow the sauce to set. Garnish with chopped chives or parsley and a pinch of paprika, if desired. Serve hot.

Recipe Timing Summary

Stage	Time	Intensity
Preheat & prep	5 min	Low
Steam cauliflower	6–8 min	Low
Make cheese sauce	7–8 min	Moderate
Combine ingredients	3 min	Low
Prepare topping	3 min	Low
Bake	15–18 min	Low
Rest & serve	3–5 min	Low
Total	~40 min	Low–Moderate

Tips for Success

- Dry the cauliflower well. Excess water will thin out the cheese sauce. Pat florets dry after steaming.
- Shred your own cheese. Pre-shredded cheese contains anti-caking starches that can make the sauce grainy.
- Keep the heat low when melting cheese. High heat causes cheese to break and become oily.
- Don’t overcook the cauliflower. It should hold its shape; mushy florets turn the dish into a casserole.
- Make it ahead. Assemble through Step 5, cover, and refrigerate up to 24 hours. Add 5–8

minutes to the bake time if starting from cold.

- Storage: Keep leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Reheat gently in the oven at 325°F (165°C) or in the microwave, adding a splash of cream to loosen the sauce.

Nutrition Information (Per Serving)

Based on 4 servings. Values are estimates and will vary with specific brands and ingredient amounts.

Nutrient	Amount per Serving
Calories	~430 kcal
Total Fat	~35 g
Saturated Fat	~20 g
Cholesterol	~95 mg
Sodium	~650 mg
Total Carbohydrates	~9 g
Dietary Fiber	~3 g
Net Carbs	~6 g
Sugars	~3 g
Protein	~17 g