



HOMEMADE HAMBURGER HELPER

WITH CHEESE AND GHERKINS

DIFFICULTY: Easy | SERVES: 4 | READY IN: 30 minutes

Hamburger helper is a popular boxed pasta in the US. Think cheeseburger meets macaroni cheese. This homemade version is made quickly in just one pot, and is the perfect kid-friendly comfort food.



HAMBURGER HELPER

- 5 gherkins, divided
- 2 carrots
- 2 celery stalks
- 1 brown onion
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 300g prime beef mince (10.6oz)
- 2 1/2 tsp ground paprika
- 2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 2 Tbsp tomato paste
- 400g can crushed and sieved tomatoes (14oz)
- 2 beef stock cubes dissolved in 2 1/4 cups boiling water (560ml)
- 1 cup milk (250ml)
- 1 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 Tbsp sugar
- 400g can brown lentils (14oz)
- 250g dried macaroni (8.8oz)
- 1 2/3 cups grated Colby or cheddar cheese (167g)

1. PREPARE INGREDIENTS

Finely dice gherkins. Set aside one third for topping the pasta with. Finely dice carrots, celery and onion. Crush garlic.

2. Heat oil in a large non-stick pot on medium-high. Add gherkins (not the ones set aside), carrots, celery, onion and garlic. Cook, stirring occasionally, until veggies have softened, about 5 minutes.

3. Add mince and cook, breaking up, until browned all over. Stir in paprika, oregano, cumin, garlic powder and tomato paste. Cook for 30 seconds. Add canned tomatoes, beef stock mixture, milk, Worcestershire sauce and sugar. Drain and rinse lentils, then add these too.

4. Bring mixture to a simmer, then stir in macaroni, place a lid on and reduce heat to medium. Cook for 10-12 minutes, stirring occasionally, until macaroni is cooked. You can add a little extra water if the sauce thickens too much.

5. Stir in 1 1/3 cups of the cheese and season to taste with salt and pepper.

6. SERVE

Divide hamburger helper between warmed serving bowls. Sprinkle with remaining cheese and top with gherkins set aside in step 1. Chopped Italian parsley also makes a nice garnish, if you have some on hand.



WINE MATCH: A fruity Pinot Noir.

HOMEMADE HAMBURGER HELPER RECIPE NOTES

GLUTEN-FREE OPTION: Use gluten-free stock cubes and make sure you choose gluten-free Worcestershire sauce. Substitute macaroni for a small gluten-free pasta (monitor closely while cooking, as gluten-free pasta can become mushy easily).

INGREDIENT SWAPS / NOTES: Feel free to omit the gherkins if you don't like them. You can skip the lentils and increase the mince to 550g / 1lb 3oz instead. Either steamed broccoli or a green salad make a nice addition, if you wanted to add some greens on the side.

STORING AND REHEATING: Store individual portions in containers in the fridge and reheat in the microwave.