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# DELIGHTS & PREJUDICES

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## Beard Bites

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## [The Bookshelf: Marion Cunningham's Empty Plate Mac & Cheese](#)



Recently inducted into our [Who's Who of Food and Beverage in America](#), Clark Wolf learned many things from his friend James Beard, but perhaps the best lesson was this: "Food is the most important thing." We couldn't agree more.

Wolf's new book *American Cheeses: The Best Regional, Artisan, and Farmhouse Cheeses, Who Makes Them, and Where to Find Them* includes information about how cheese is made, how to store it, and how to serve it. He also traveled all over the country meeting cheesemakers and tasting an absurd amount of cheese. Rough life!

At Wednesday's [Beard on Books](#), where Wolf dished about American cheese, he left us with these final words of advice, "Live a life worth living, with lots of cheese." A sentiment Beard surely would have seconded.

*American Cheeses* contains some fantastic recipes. One of our favorites? Marion Cunningham's Empty Plate Mac & Cheese. In his head note, Wolf writes, "This recipe is one that always gets raves. We actually named it ourselves from the unstaged, ravaged-plate photo from our tasting." Go ahead and try it for yourself.

Marion Cunningham's Empty Plate Mac & Cheese

2 to 3 cups elbow macaroni

5 tablespoons melted butter

1 cup sour cream

2 cups grated sharp cheddar cheese

1 ¼ cups dry white bread crumbs

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Bring 2 quarts water to a boil in a large saucepan; add a little salt. Add the macaroni and cook, stirring often, until just tender, about 7 minutes. Don't overcook.

Drain the noodles and transfer them to a baking dish. Add 3 tablespoons of the melted butter, the sour cream, and cheddar. Toss the mixture with a

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large spoon until the ingredients are well integrated. Taste for salt and add if needed.

Bake for about 15 minutes, until bubbling and lightly browned. Toss the bread crumbs with the remaining 2 tablespoons melted butter. Sprinkle over the top and serve hot.

Want to learn more about American cheeses and the artisanal producers Wolf loves? Pick up a [copy of his book](#) today!



by [JBF Editors](#) on Jul 17, 2009 at 10:38am, under [Recipes](#), [The Bookshelf](#)

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