

## MIMI'S MAGIC MAC 'N CHEESE

By Terri White

Bright-eyed, six-year-old Adrian awakened on a cheery Sunday morning at Mimi and Popsy's house. His cousin Jace bounced into the room ready to play. Soon they were absorbed in playing restaurant, complete with play money and food.

"I would like to buy some ice cream for dessert," Jace announced.

"Here you go! I squirted some mustard on the top for you," grinned Adrian.

Disgusted, Jace replied, "Mustard on ice cream! Yuck!"

"What? You don't like mustard on your ice cream?" queried Adrian with a gleam in his eyes. Ahhh, the delightful imaginations of young children.

Soon, however, after all those play food exchanges, their tummies rumbled, reminding them of the breakfast aromas wafting into the playroom. "I'm ready for your famous pancakes, Mimi," called Jace.

"Mimi, I want macaroni and cheese!" piped Adrian. No surprise there. In fact, that is nearly all Adrian will eat at my house. And bacon. He won't even sample my famed banana bread or homemade chocolate chip cookies. Neither will he eat cake – anywhere.

At school, however, he will eat a store-bought chocolate chip cookie or even a cupcake. "Adrian, did you know that cupcakes are cake?"

"No, Mimi, cupcakes are cupcakes," he insisted. Go figure. But I'm Mimi, doing my Mimi-thing. I already raised my three kids, who, by the way, were and are stellar eaters.

Back in the day, I was a "crunchy mom" before "crunchy mom" was a thing. But then, in the 70s, we hippies revived organic foods – even though contemporary parents seem unaware of that. They think they invented it. Ha! They also think they invented home births, but that's another essay.

But mac 'n cheese. Growing up, my mom served stovetop homemade using Velveeta cheese and milk. We never heard of the boxed version. In fact, the only prepacked food we ever ate was Chef Boyardee pizza and chow mien. No pizza joints or Chinese buffets in our town in those days. You couldn't pay me to eat those today, though.

Recently, my daughter, Adrian's mom, texted me, "I hit a sale, so I have several boxes of magic Mimi mac 'n cheese."

As I mentioned earlier, I'm doing my Mimi-thing. I serve it to Adrian – every time. He's only six. Maybe he'll end up eating seaweed like my brother when he finally grew out of his fussing eating habits. There's always hope.