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Return on investment: If you're making improvements, in anticipation of selling; where to focus, and where to pass.

By Chris Busby, KW Realtor®

- 1. Fix what's broken, dated, or obviously worn:** That includes things like doors, knobs, light fixtures, windows, appliances and leaks.
- 2. Fresh Coat of Paint:** Fill cracks and nail holes. These details matter. Even though they seem small, they contribute to a good aesthetic and makes a good impression.
- 3. Deep Clean!** No buyer is impressed by a dirty or cluttered home. Your offers are going to be partially based on first impressions.
- 4. Update Appliances:** If your appliances are more than 15 years old, or close, consider replacing them with new, on-trend appliances. This investment will likely yield return better than the cost of the investment.
- 5. Systems Tune-up:** If you don't do this already, have the furnace, a/c, water softener, humidifier and any other systems tuned and cleaned. The inspector will notice and this will give your buyer confidence that things are in good working order even if they aren't new systems.
- 6. Structural Integrity & Improvements:** Beyond adding more square footage, one way to get better offers, is to make sure that the structure of the home is up-to-date. If windows, siding, roof and foundation are showing their age, consider updating them. Return on investment is often 50%-75% but severely delapidated windows, siding, roofing, or foundation can actually pull your value down too.
- 7. Kitchens and Baths:** These are the most expensive rooms of the home to update, but if you are going to update any part of the home, this is the area to invest in. Typical return on investment here is between 60%-120% depending on the features, quality, function, aesthetic and your home's location.
- 8. Upgrades:** Adding more usable space, like finishing a basement or converting unused space into an additional bathroom or bedroom, adds value. Just ensure it is done well and is permitted. Average return on investment is around 50%-60%.

The real advice is, don't over commit yourself. You can get the house ready to list without a full overhaul. If you have any questions, I would be happy to help guide you.

LOCAL POSTAL
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Hello I am Chris Busby, a Realtor® right here in your neighborhood. In addition to real estate, I have a culinary background and enjoy creating pottery in my free time. Please keep me in mind if you or someone close to you is looking for a Realtor® in the future. In the meantime, I would like to share another of my favorite recipes with you. This one is a show stopper!

Why I love this recipe

I love macaroni and cheese, full stop. I grew up on it and I barely know anyone else that didn't. I never buy the orange stuff in a box, but I wouldn't turn my nose up at it if offered. This is a really simple twenty-minute recipe that I can execute with just a few ingredients. In fact this is one of the few recipes that I have in my toolbox that uses evaporated milk. Everything else is staples I tend to keep around my house.



Stovetop Mac & Cheese

By: Chris Busby, KW-Realtor®, Culinary Artist, Potter

INGREDIENTS/SHOPPING LIST

BREAD-CRUMB TOPPING

3 slices high-quality white sandwich bread, torn into quarters
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
Salt to taste

MACARONI AND CHEESE

2 large Eggs
1 (12oz) can evaporated milk
2 teaspoons table salt
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon dry mustard, dissolved in 1 tsp water
¼ teaspoon hot sauce
8 ounces elbow macaroni (about 2 cups)
4 tablespoons (½ stick) unsalted butter
12 ounces sharp cheddar, American, or Monterey Jack cheese, shredded (about 3 cups)

SPECIAL NOTE

When I made this recipe last, I used medium shells instead of elbow macaroni. As the recipe was coming together I actually thought to myself that 8 oz of pasta wasn't enough, though in the end it still tasted delicious and the proportions made more sense as the sauce tightened up. Feel free to use whatever pasta you want to want. It's macaroni and cheese, it's going to be delicious!

DIRECTIONS

1. For the Bread Crumbs: Pulse the bread in a food processor until coarsely ground, 10-15 pulses. Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the bread crumbs and cook, tossing to coat with the butter, until the crumbs just begin to color, about 10 minutes. Season with salt to taste, set aside.
2. For the Macaroni and Cheese: Mix the eggs, 1 cup of the evaporated milk, 1/2 teaspoon of the salt, the pepper, mustard mixture, and hot sauce in a small bowl; set aside.
3. Meanwhile, bring 2 quarts water to a boil in a large heavy-bottomed saucepan or Dutch oven. Add the remaining 1 1/2 teaspoons salt and the macaroni; cook until almost tender but still a little firm to the bite. Drain and return to the pan over low heat. Add the butter; toss to melt.
4. Pour the egg mixture over the buttered noodles along with three-quarters of the cheese; stir until thoroughly combined and cheese starts to melt. Gradually add the remaining 1/2 cup milk and the remaining cheese, stirring constantly, until the mixture is hot and creamy, about 5 minutes. Serve immediately, topped with the toasted bread crumbs

