

— AMERICA'S —
TEST KITCHEN

Southern Cheese Straws

YIELD Makes about 48 cheese straws

TIME 1 hour, plus 20 minutes cooling

Why This Recipe Works

These delicate, crumbly, cheesy, buttery crackers have a cult following in the South. To make a version that mimicked their signature straw shape without using a cookie press, we rolled out the dough into a square and then cut it into strips before baking. Using a food processor to buzz the grated cheese, chilled butter, flour, and baking powder together resulted in crackers with a short, extra-tender texture. A generous helping of extra-sharp cheddar provided bold flavor while a little cayenne added a pleasant heat—just enough to make our cheese straws irresistible alongside a glass of sweet tea.



Gather Your Ingredients

- ☐ **8 ounces (227 grams)**
extra-sharp cheddar
cheese, shredded (2
cups)
- ☐ **1½ cups (7½ ounces/213
grams)** all-purpose flour

Before You Begin

- * Flour the counter and the top of the dough as needed to prevent sticking. Be sure to use unsalted butter here.

Instructions

- ☐ **8** tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 8 pieces and chilled
- ☐ $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- ☐ $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon paprika
- ☐ $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking powder
- ☐ $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ☐ **3** tablespoons ice water

- 1.** Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Line rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Process cheddar, flour, butter, salt, paprika, baking powder, and cayenne in food processor until mixture resembles wet sand, about 20 seconds. Add ice water and process until dough ball starts to form, about 25 seconds.
- 2.** Turn out dough onto lightly floured counter. Knead briefly until dough fully comes together, 2 to 3 turns. Using your hands, pat dough into rough 4-inch square. Roll dough into 10-inch square, about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick, flouring counter as needed to prevent sticking.
- 3.** Position dough so 1 edge is parallel to edge of counter. Using rounded side of fork, drag tines across entire surface of dough to make decorative lines.
- 4.** Using pizza cutter or chef's knife, trim away and discard outer $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of dough to make neat square. Cut dough into 3 equal pieces perpendicular to decorative lines. Working with 1 section of dough at a time, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-wide strips in direction of lines.
- 5.** Evenly space cheese straws on prepared sheet, about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch apart. Bake until edges of straws are light golden brown, 30 to 35 minutes, rotating sheet halfway through baking. Let straws cool completely on sheet. Serve. (Straws can be stored in airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week.)