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### **Cheese Straws**

Makes 2 dozen 12-inch straws, or 72 4-inch straws

#### **INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 lb. mild cheddar cheese, shredded, room temperature
- 1/2 cup butter, room temperature
- 2-3 drops Tabasco sauce (optional)
- 2-1/2 cups flour
- 1/4 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. Kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper (for less spiciness, use less)
- 1/4 tsp. finely ground black pepper
- 1/8 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/8 tsp. ground mustard

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F. Prepare a cookie sheet by greasing lightly, lining with a sheet of parchment paper, or lining with a silicone baking mat.
2. Mix the shredded cheese and butter together well with a stand mixer or hand mixer. Add a few drops of Tabasco sauce if desired. Begin on slow speed and gradually increase to medium speed. Mix until very well blended and smooth.
3. In a separate bowl, mix the dry ingredients together: flour, baking powder, salt, cayenne, black pepper, garlic powder, and ground mustard.
4. Add the dry ingredients to the cheese-butter mixture in three batches and mix until combined.
5. Transfer the dough to a cookie press outfitted with the a zig-zag plate. Press lines of dough directly onto the prepared baking sheet in long 12-inch lengths. Leave a little space between the pieces for slight expansion during baking. Chill the cookie sheet with the pressed straws in the freezer for 15 minutes, or refrigerator for 30 minutes before baking.
6. Bake the cheese straws for 14-15 minutes or until the edges just begin to turn golden brown. Allow the straws to cool for 3-4 minutes on the baking sheet, then transfer them to a cooling rack to finish cooling completely.

**STORE:** Humidity is not a friend to any baked shortbread, sweet or savory. To store baked cheese straws, place in an airtight container, or freeze by wrapping well in two layers of wrap.