Cheese straws

NIBBLEDISH CONTRIBUTOR

Ingredients

100g butter, plus extra for greasing
150g mature cheddar cheese, or a mixture of cheddar and Parmesan
100g plain flour, plus extra for dusting the work surface
cayenne pepper
freshly ground black pepper
1 free-range egg yolk

Instructions

1. Heat oven to 220C/425F/Gas 7. Lightly grease a large baking sheet with butter and cover it with a piece of baking parchment.
2. Finely grate the cheese into a mixing bowl. Sift in the flour and add a sprinkling of cayenne pepper (remember it can be very spicy). Add some freshly ground black pepper and mix.
3. Cut the butter into little cubes and rub them into the mixture with your fingertips. When the butter has almost disappeared into the flour and you have a crumbly mixture, stir in the egg yolk with a butter knife.
4. Gather the pastry into a ball of dough (it should come together very easily). Dust the work surface with plenty of flour. Carefully roll out the cheese dough into a rough square. It should be about 5mm thick. Neaten the edges with the side of your hand.
5. With a sharp knife, cut the square into strips, then each strip into fingers. Gently lift them on to the lined baking sheet, leaving a little space between each one.
6. Wearing oven gloves, place the baking sheet in the oven and bake for about eight minutes, but check after five or six minutes, as oven temperatures vary. The cheese straws should be a very pale golden brown. They are fragile when they come out of the oven, so leave them to sit for five minutes before you try to move them. Then carefully

lift up the baking parchment and transfer everything to a wire rack to cool for a few more minutes.