

## Pastry Cheese Straws

*Makes 5 to 10 servings*

**Time:** 30 minutes

This is more complicated than the preceding recipe, but it makes a superior cheese straw, one that resembles puff pastry in its flakiness.

- 1 recipe Generous Pie Shell, page 686 (See Step 1)
- 1½ cups freshly grated Parmesan cheese

1 Make the pastry, incorporating about ½ cup grated cheese into it. Roll it out until it is about ¼ inch thick, then sprinkle it with another ½ cup cheese. Fold the dough in half and press the edges together. Sprinkle with half the remaining cheese, then repeat the rolling folding process; press the edges together again. Repeat, using the remaining cheese.

(You may prepare the recipe in advance up to this point; wrap well in plastic and refrigerate for up to 2 days before proceeding.)

2 Finally, roll out into a rectangle about ¼ inch thick. Cut into strips as long as you like and about ½ inch wide. Place on a lightly buttered (or oiled) baking sheet and, if time allows, chill for 1 hour.

3 Preheat the oven to 450°F. Bake the straws until golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes. Serve warm (they cool off almost instantly), or at room temperature.

## Flaky Pie Crust

*For any single-crust pie, 8 to 10 inches in diameter*

**Time:** About 45 minutes, including resting time

I like to add a little sugar to any pie shell that will contain a sweet filling, which essentially means any dessert pie shell. Many crusts are bland and tasteless, and sugar changes that. In addition, it aids in browning. I also add a scant amount of flour initially, which gives you the leeway to add flour liberally during rolling.

- 1 $\frac{1}{8}$  cups (about 5 ounces) all-purpose flour, plus some for dusting work surface
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) cold unsalted butter, cut into about 8 pieces
- About 3 tablespoons ice water, plus more if necessary

1 Combine the flour, salt, and sugar in the container of a food processor; pulse once or twice. Add the butter and turn on the machine; process until the butter and flour are blended and the mixture looks like cornmeal, about 10 seconds.

2 Place the mixture in a bowl and sprinkle 3 tablespoons of water over it. Use a wooden spoon or a rubber spatula to gradually gather the mixture into a ball; if the mixture seems dry, add another  $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoon ice water. When you can make the mixture into a ball with your hands, do so. Wrap in plastic, flatten into a small disk, and freeze the dough for 10 minutes (or refrigerate for 30 minutes); this will ease rolling. (You

can also refrigerate the dough for a day or two, or freeze it almost indefinitely.)

3 You can roll the dough between two sheets of plastic wrap, usually quite successfully; sprinkle both sides of it with a little more flour, then proceed. Or sprinkle a countertop or large board with flour. Unwrap the dough and place it on the work surface; sprinkle its top with flour. If the dough is hard, let it rest for a few minutes; it should give a little when you press your fingers into it.

4 Roll with light pressure, from the center out. (If the dough seems very sticky at first, add flour liberally; but if it becomes sticky only after you roll it for a few minutes, return it to the refrigerator for 10 minutes before proceeding.) Continue to roll, adding small amounts of flour as necessary, rotating the dough occasionally, and turning it over once or twice during the process. (Use ragged edges of dough to repair any tears, adding a drop of water while you press the patch into place.) When the dough is about 10 inches in diameter (it will be less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick), place your pie plate upside down over it to check the size.

5 Move the dough into the pie plate by draping it over the rolling pin or by folding it into quarters, then moving it into the plate and unfolding it. When the dough is in the plate, press it firmly into the bottom, sides, and junction of bottom and sides. Trim the excess dough to about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch all around, then tuck it under itself around the edge of the plate. Decorate the edges with a fork or your fingers, using any of the methods illustrated on page 686. Freeze the dough for 10 minutes (or refrigerate it for 30 minutes).

6 When you're ready to bake, prick it all over with a fork.

**Generous Pie Shell for a 10-Inch or Larger Pie, or a Deep-Dish Pie:** Increase flour to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  cups, salt to  $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon, sugar to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons, butter to 10 tablespoons, water to 4 tablespoons.