

Southern Fried Okra: Stuffed with Spicy Cheese

Crispy Pepper Jack Cheese Stuffed Fried Okra Pods



OVEN
350°F

TIME
5 min

METHOD
Air fryer

PRINT
Recipe Card

INGREDIENTS

20 large fresh okra pods (choose firm, unblemished pods)

4 oz pepper jack cheese, sliced into thin strips

1 cup buttermilk (or prepare your own: 1 cup milk + 1 tsp white vinegar, let sit 5 minutes)

1 cup cornmeal (fine or medium grind)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup all-purpose flour

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp garlic powder

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp smoked paprika

Salt and black pepper, to taste

Vegetable oil, for frying (canola, peanut, or corn oil work well)

Optional for serving: Ranch, chipotle mayo, or spicy aioli, Fresh lime wedges

Swaps and Notes:

Okra: Using large, fresh okra pods is crucial for easy stuffing. If you can only find smaller pods, you might need to adjust the cheese amount or simply enjoy them as classic fried okra.

Pepper Jack Cheese: The mild spice of pepper jack is perfect here, but you could also use Monterey Jack for a milder flavor, or cheddar if that's what you have on hand.

Buttermilk Substitute: If you don't have buttermilk, create a homemade version by adding 1 teaspoon of white vinegar or lemon juice to regular milk and letting it sit for 5-10 minutes.

Breading Blend: The combination of cornmeal and flour gives the ideal crispy crust. You can add a pinch more cayenne pepper to the breading for extra

heat if you like things spicy.

Oil for Frying: Always use an oil with a high smoke point for frying, and ensure you have enough to submerge the okra at least halfway.

Dipping Sauces: Don't limit yourself to the suggestions! A cool cucumber-dill yogurt dip could also provide a refreshing contrast.

Directions:

Prepare the Okra: Start by giving your fresh okra pods a thorough rinse under cold water, then pat them completely dry with paper towels. With a sharp knife, carefully make a single lengthwise slit down each pod, from the stem almost to the tip, but without cutting all the way through the pod. Gently open each pod and, if necessary, carefully scoop out a few seeds to create a little pocket for the cheese.

Stuff with Cheese: Now, for the delicious filling! Gently take a thin strip of pepper jack cheese and carefully stuff it into the prepared slit in each okra pod. Press the okra closed around the cheese. If you find the okra struggling to stay closed, you can use a toothpick to secure it through the seam (remember to remove these before serving!).

Soak in Buttermilk: Place the cheese-stuffed okra pods in a shallow dish or bowl. Pour the buttermilk over them, ensuring all the pods are coated. Let them soak for about 10-15 minutes while you prepare the breading. This step helps the breading adhere better and adds a subtle tang.

Make the Breading: In a separate shallow bowl (a wide, flat dish works best for dredging), combine the cornmeal, all-purpose flour, garlic powder, smoked paprika, along with salt and black pepper to taste. Whisk everything together thoroughly until well combined.

Coat the Okra: One by one, lift each stuffed okra pod from the buttermilk, allowing any excess liquid to drip off. Immediately dredge the okra pod in the cornmeal mixture, turning and pressing lightly to help the coating stick evenly to all sides. Ensure they are fully coated.

Fry Until Golden: Pour about 2 inches of vegetable oil into a deep pan, a heavy-bottomed skillet, or a Dutch oven. Heat the oil over medium-high heat until it reaches 350°F (175°C). It's highly recommended to use a kitchen thermometer for accurate temperature control. Carefully place the stuffed okra pods into the hot oil in batches. Do not overcrowd the pan, as this will lower the oil temperature and lead to soggy okra. Fry for about 2-3 minutes per side, flipping once, until they turn a beautiful golden brown and are deliciously crispy.

Drain and Serve: Once fried, use a slotted spoon or tongs to remove the golden-brown okra from the oil.

Transfer them to a plate lined with paper towels to drain any excess oil. Immediately sprinkle the hot fried okra with a little extra salt. Serve these delightful bites hot, paired with your favorite dipping sauce (like ranch, chipotle mayo, or a spicy aioli) and a squeeze of fresh lime for that extra zesty kick!

Tips for Success:

Choose Large, Fresh Okra: Larger pods are easier to stuff. Fresh, firm pods are less likely to be slimy.

Don't Overstuff: While tempting, don't overstuff the pods with cheese. Just a thin strip is enough to get that cheesy center without breaking the pod.

Maintain Oil Temperature: Using a thermometer is key. Too low, and the okra gets greasy; too high, and the outside burns before the inside cooks or the cheese melts properly.

Fry in Batches: Crowding the pan drops the oil temperature and leads to less crispy results. Be patient and fry in smaller batches.

Season Immediately: Salt the fried okra as soon as it comes out of the oil. This helps the salt adhere and enhances the flavor.

Remove Toothpicks: If you used toothpicks to secure the okra, remember to remove them before serving!

Serving Suggestions and Pairings:

Creamy Ranch Dressing

Smoky Chipotle Mayo

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Prepare the : Okra:** Start by giving your fresh okra pods a thorough rinse under cold water, then pat them completely dry with paper towels. With a sharp knife, carefully make a single lengthwise slit down each pod, from the stem almost to the tip, but without cutting all the way through the pod. Gently open each pod and, if necessary, carefully scoop out a few seeds to create a little pocket for the cheese.
- 2. Stuff with : Cheese:** Now, for the delicious filling! Gently take a thin strip of pepper jack cheese and carefully stuff it into the prepared slit in each okra pod. Press the okra closed around the cheese. If you find the okra struggling to stay closed, you can use a toothpick to secure it through the seam (remember to remove these before serving!).
- 3. Soak in : Buttermilk:** Place the cheese-stuffed okra pods in a shallow dish or bowl. Pour the buttermilk over them, ensuring all the pods are coated. Let them soak for about 10-15 minutes while you prepare the breading. This step helps the breading adhere better and adds a subtle tang.
- 4. Make the : Breading:** In a separate shallow bowl (a wide, flat dish works best for dredging), combine the cornmeal, all-purpose flour, garlic powder, smoked paprika, along with salt and black pepper to taste. Whisk everything together thoroughly until well combined.
- 5. Coat the : Okra:** One by one, lift each stuffed okra pod from the buttermilk, allowing any excess liquid to drip off. Immediately dredge the okra pod in the cornmeal mixture, turning and pressing lightly to help the coating stick evenly to all sides. Ensure they are fully coated.
- 6. Fry : Until Golden:** Pour about 2 inches of vegetable

oil into a deep pan, a heavy-bottomed skillet, or a Dutch oven. Heat the oil over medium-high heat until it reaches 350°F (175°C). It's highly recommended to use a kitchen thermometer for accurate temperature control. Carefully place the stuffed okra pods into the hot oil in batches. Do not overcrowd the pan, as this will lower the oil temperature and lead to soggy okra. Fry for about 2-3 minutes per side, flipping once, until they turn a beautiful golden brown and are deliciously crispy.

7. Drain and : Serve: Once fried, use a slotted spoon or tongs to remove the golden-brown okra from the oil. Transfer them to a plate lined with paper towels to drain any excess oil. Immediately sprinkle the hot fried okra with a little extra salt. Serve these delightful bites hot, paired with your favorite dipping sauce (like ranch, chipotle mayo, or a spicy aioli) and a squeeze of fresh lime for that extra zesty kick!
8. Tips for Success: Choose Large, Fresh Okra: Larger pods are easier to stuff. Fresh, firm pods are less likely to be slimy.
9. Don't : Overstuff: While tempting, don't overstuff the pods with cheese. Just a thin strip is enough to get that cheesy center without breaking the pod.
10. Maintain : Oil Temperature: Using a thermometer is key. Too low, and the okra gets greasy; too high, and the outside burns before the inside cooks or the cheese melts properly.
11. Fry in : Batches: Crowding the pan drops the oil temperature and leads to less crispy results. Be patient and fry in smaller batches.
12. Season : Immediately: Salt the fried okra as soon as it comes out of the oil. This helps the salt adhere and enhances the flavor.
13. Remove : Toothpicks: If you used toothpicks to secure the okra, remember to remove them before serving!
14. Serving Suggestions and Pairings: These Pepper Jack Cheese Stuffed Fried Okra Pods are a fantastic standalone appetizer or a show-stopping side dish. They're perfect for game day, backyard barbecues, or any casual gathering. Serve them with a variety of dips for guests to choose from:
15. Creamy : Ranch Dressing
16. Smoky : Chipotle Mayo
17. Zesty : Spicy Aioli (you can use the recipe from my classic Fried Okra post [\[here\]](#)(link to previous fried okra recipe if applicable))
18. A side of fresh lime wedges for a bright, tangy squeeze
19. For other delicious : Southern-inspired meals, consider serving these alongside:
20. My This : Tomato Skillet with Okra and Sausage is My Favorite Quick Dinner Packed with Southern Flavor
21. A comforting bowl of : This Cajun Chicken Sausage Gumbo is My Favorite Bowl of Southern Comfort
22. Storage and Leftover Tips: Like most fried foods, these Pepper Jack Cheese Stuffed Fried Okra Pods are best enjoyed fresh and hot. However, if you have leftovers, store them in an airtight container in the

refrigerator for up to 2 days. To reheat, avoid the microwave, as it will make them soggy. Instead, arrange them in a single layer on a baking sheet and reheat in a preheated oven or air fryer at 375°F (190°C) for 5-8 minutes, or until crispy and heated through.

23. **More Recipes You Will Love:** If you enjoyed the comforting flavors and satisfying crunch of these stuffed okra pods, you'll definitely want to explore some of these other delicious recipes:
24. For another comforting meat dish, check out : These *Easy Turkey Wings are My Favorite Comfort Food for Lazy Sundays*.
25. If you're a fan of cheesy dips that disappear in minutes, my *This Beer Cheese Dip is My Favorite Party Starter That Disappears in Minutes* is always a crowd-pleaser.

SWAPS & NOTES

Okra: Using large, fresh okra pods is crucial for easy stuffing.

If you can only find smaller pods, you might need to adjust the cheese amount or simply enjoy them as classic fried okra.

Pepper Jack Cheese: The mild spice of pepper jack is perfect here, but you could also use Monterey Jack for a milder flavor, or cheddar if that's what you have on hand.

Buttermilk Substitute: If you don't have buttermilk, create a homemade version by adding 1 teaspoon of white vinegar or lemon juice to regular milk and letting it sit for 5-10 minutes.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Choose Large, Fresh Okra: Larger pods are easier to stuff.

Fresh, firm pods are less likely to be slimy.

Don't Overstuff: While tempting, don't overstuff the pods with cheese.

Just a thin strip is enough to get that cheesy center without breaking the pod.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/southern-fried-okra-stuffed-with-spicy-cheese/>