

FOOD

Kraft Heinz sued by Florida woman claiming Velveeta Shells & Cheese 'ready' time is misleading



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USA TODAY

Published 3:23 p.m. ET Nov. 27, 2022

A Florida woman has filed a class action lawsuit against Kraft Heinz Foods Company, alleging its Velveeta Shells & Cheese takes longer than advertised to prepare.

Amanda Ramirez of Hialeah, Florida is listed as the plaintiff of the \$5 million suit filed on Nov. 18 in the U.S. District Court Southern District of Florida. The suit alleges that Velveeta Shells & Cheese assertion that the product is “ready in 3 1/2 minutes” is “false and misleading,” according to court documents.

In addition to the \$5 million in damages, the plaintiffs are also seeking statutory and/or punitive damages from Kraft Heinz Foods Company.

“We are aware of this frivolous lawsuit and will strongly defend against the allegations in the complaint,” the company said in a statement to USA TODAY.

The box for the shells list four simple steps, from removing the lid and cheese sauce pouch, adding water, microwaving, then stirring.

While the step of microwaving the product says to microwave the product for 3 1/2 minutes, the suit alleges the time listed could be interpreted as the total amount of time to make it, including the mixing of water and cheese sauce.

“Consumers seeing 'ready in 3 1/2 minutes' will believe it represents the total amount of time it takes to prepare the product, meaning from the moment it is unopened to the moment it is ready for consumption,” the suit reads. “Three-and-a-half minutes is just the length of time to complete one of several steps.”

The correct or assumed time to make the product is not listed.

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The suit also alleges the product is sold for the "premium price" of \$10.99 for eight cups and is a result of false and misleading representations. Ramirez is also described as someone who seeks to "stretch their money as far as possible" when buying groceries and "looks to bold statements of value when quickly selecting groceries." Ramirez said they would not have bought the product or paid less if the total time was listed.

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