

PRETZELS

Active time: 30-45 min; **Total time:** 2 hr 15- 2hr 30 min (a bit longer if making extra toppings)

Ingredients:

1 tsp instant yeast

1 1/2 cups warm water for proofing 10 cups for boiling 1 teaspoon for egg wash

1 tablespoon of sugar

2 teaspoons of salt

4 1/2 cups All Purpose, non-bleached flour

2/3 of a cup of baking soda

4 tablespoons of butter

1 egg

Kosher salt for topping

There are many forms of proofing in baking, this type of proofing just makes sure the yeast is active and ready to do its job!

Stir:

1 tsp of active dry yeast (not rapid rise or 'bread machine' yeast)

1 tablespoon of sugar

2 tsp of salt

with

1 and 1/2 cups of warm water (110 degrees F, at the temperature of a comfortable bath. Any hotter and you risk killing the yeast), stir to dissolve.

Rest:

Let the mixture sit for five to ten minutes. The yeast is active when

the mixture is foamy and smells a bit like bread.

Combine:

4 1/2 cups of all purpose flour
4 tablespoon's of melted butter
add in yeast and water mixture

I started with a non-stick spatula and then moved onto my hands, but you can start with your hands if you want, but a mixer or food processor is NOT recommended. Mix the ingredients just enough to create a shaggy dough.

Flour a clean work surface and roll the dough onto it. Keep your flour nearby!

Knead for 5 minutes. If the dough sticks, re-flour your surface just enough to stop it from sticking.

Another kind of **proofing** in baking bread is where you let the dough rest and rise before baking.

Oil a large bowl with a thick coating of vegetable oil. You can use liquid or spray. Place the dough inside, cover with plastic wrap and **let rise for about an hour** or until it has doubled in size.

About a half hour into the rise, **pre-heat** your oven to 450 F

Again, flour a clean work surface.

Take the dough out of the bowl and **knead** again for about 5 min. Once kneaded, **divide the dough** (or cut with a dough divider/scrapper) into 8-12 equal size pieces.

I tend to make a few pieces smaller than the others if I am making pretzels as just a snack--that way if you just want a small snack you have it!

Next, **roll** the pieces out until they are about 2 ft long and thick as the diameter of your thumb. Then:

- Form each piece into a U shape
- Twist them around and roll corners towards the center
- Twist the ends over each other once
- Flatten ends down to the top of the bottom of the dough to make a pretzel shape

Place the pretzels on a baking sheet until you have them all formed.

Cut parchment paper to match the size of your baking sheets then **oil** the sheets well. Spray oil works best here.

Meanwhile bring 10 cups of water and 2/3 of a cup of baking soda to a **boil** in a dutch oven.

Once fully boiling, place pretzels in 1 at a time for 30 seconds. This is where a bagel bagel strainer comes in handy, but a slotted spatula will work as well. You can place 3 or 4 in at a time depending on the size of the pretzels.

Remove and then set aside on the oiled parchment sheet on a baking tray.

Beat 1 egg yolk with a tablespoon of water for egg wash **brush** the pretzels with egg mixture and add sprinkle on your toppings.

Topping Options...

Traditional:

Kosher Salt

For garlic cheese pretzels:

Combine 1/2 cup finely grated Parmesan (don't use grated Parmesan cheese in plastic can if you can at all help it)
1 teaspoon garlic powder

For cinnamon pretzels:

1/2 cup powdered sugar
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
1/4 cup honey

In a small bowl, combine the powdered sugar and cinnamon with 2 tablespoons water, just enough to make a glaze and not be soupy.

Instead of brushing the pretzels with the egg wash, brush with honey. Once they have come out of the oven, brush with cinnamon-sugar glaze.

Bake the pretzels at 450 F 12-14 minutes. Rotate the baking sheets once half way through to ensure even baking. If you're only making one sheet, just bake in the middle rack.