

Soft Pretzels

- 1 1/2 cups warm (not hot) water
- 2 Tbsp brown sugar
- 1 pkg dry yeast
- 3 oz unsalted butter, melted
- 2 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 5 cups all-purpose flour (1/2 cup reserved)
- Vegetable oil
- Water
- 3/4 cup baking soda
- Egg wash (1 egg + 1 Tbsp water, beaten well)
- Coarse sea salt

Line two large baking pans with parchment paper

Note: **Use parchment paper here. This last time, in the interest of saving my precious parchment paper, I used aluminum foil... YOUR PRETZELS WILL STICK. They come off fine once they've cooled, but who wants to eat a cold pretzel!?*

For the Dough...

1. Combine the water, sugar, yeast, and melted butter in the bowl of a stand mixer, let sit until mixture is nice and foamy (appx 5 minutes).
2. Mix 4 ½ cups flour and the 2 ½ tsp salt in a separate bowl. Add ½ cup flour mixture to the bowl of the mixer and mix on low with dough hook until just incorporated. Add remaining flour mixture and mix on low until incorporated. Increase the speed to medium and continue kneading until the dough is smooth and begins to pull away from the side of the bowl, about 3-4 minutes. If the dough is too sticky, add reserved flour, 1 tablespoon at a time.
3. Pour dough onto flat surface and knead into a ball. It doesn't require a lot of kneading, since the dough hook has already done most of the work. You just want it to be in a nice, smooth ball shape.
4. Put about a tablespoon or two of oil into a bowl and work it up the sides, add the dough and turn to. Cover until the dough doubles in size, about 1 hour.
5. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F to prepare for baking, and put pot of water on the stove to bring to a boil

****This part is tricky**** Every time I make these, I forget about this part, and my entire stovetop becomes a horrible, white mess. Two things are of vital importance here: 1- Baking soda is very bubbly. 2- Added to rapidly-boiling water, it will volcano out of your pot and cover your entire stovetop, and you'll be left with a terrible, white mess and half the amount of water you originally had. This last time, I *FINALLY* nailed it without boiling over (but it did take a bit more time)

1. Bring the water to a boil in a large pot. (This will happen faster if you leave the lid on while you're heating it). Once boiling, pull it off of the stove and (if you have a big enough sink, it's probably not a bad idea to just place the pot in there—just in case) ^_^ gently sprinkle baking soda into the water, a little at a time, until all $\frac{3}{4}$ cup has been used.
2. Place the pot back on the hot burner, cover with the lid slightly ajar (to speed up boiling—be careful it can still overflow if you're not paying attention) and bring it back to a rapid boil.

To shape the pretzels:

1. Place dough ball onto a flat surface & divide into about 8 equal pieces. I use my handy scraper or a knife & cut it like a pie into 8 wedges. Roll each piece into a long rope 20-22 inches and shape into a pretzel
2. To shape them, I grab each end (so the dough rope is now a "U"-shape), place the majority of the bottom of the "U" and twist the ends of the rope together, crossing twice. You know what a pretzel looks like, right? Next time I'll have a helper take pictures for me, promise.
3. Boil the pretzels in the water solution, 1 or 2 at a time for 30 seconds, splashing the tops, and remove with a [spider](#). On each baking sheet, put 4 pretzels, brush lightly with egg wash and season with desired amount of salt. Bake for 15 to 18 minutes until pretzels are golden brown & your house smells delicious. If you're worried about doneness, tap the center twist- if it sounds hollow it's cooked through.
4. Cool on a wire rack for a few minutes before eating.

**If you aren't going to eat all eight at once, feel free to freeze some. Once cooled completely, place them into a freezer-safe bag (or wrap individually in foil and place in a regular Ziploc bag)*

**To reheat, microwave for about a minute, check doneness and continue to microwave in 30 second intervals... or microwave for 30 seconds & put into a 425-450F oven for about 5 minutes, until the outside is nicely toasted.*

**If you're not freezing them, store them like you would store a bagel—in a paper bag or in an airtight container. If you store them in a plastic bag they won't be as tasty the next day.*