



Sourdough Soft Pretzels

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My sourdough soft pretzels are made with active, bubbly sourdough starter and dunked in a lye bath for a classic, old-fashioned flavor. They are so soft and chewy!

Recipe includes a how-to **video!**

Course	Bread, Snack
Cuisine	American
Prep Time	30 minutes
Cook Time	12 minutes
Rising/fermenting time	18 hours
Total Time	18 hours 42 minutes
Servings	10 pretzels
Calories	203kcal
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Equipment

- Stand mixer (strongly recommended, see note)
- 2 qt glass dish or similar size
- Gloves (if using lye)
- Safety goggles (if using lye)
- Stainless steel spoon and slotted spatula
- [Baking sheet](#)
- [Parchment Paper](#)

Ingredients

Pretzel dough

- ⅔ cup (150 g) active, bubbly sourdough starter
- ⅔ cup (160 ml) warm water 90-100F/32-38C
- 3 Tablespoons (63 g) honey (may substitute 3 Tablespoons/40g light brown sugar, firmly packed)
- 2 Tablespoons [unsalted butter](#) melted
- 1 teaspoon table salt
- 2 ½ cups (312 g) bread flour plus more as needed

For finishing pretzels

- 8 cups (1.9 L) water
- ¼ cup (55 g) [lye](#) see note if you prefer to use baking soda
- [Pretzel salt](#) for sprinkling

Instructions

1. **BEFORE BEGINNING: Note that this dough requires 5-7 hours of resting at room temperature followed by a 12+ hour overnight fermentation in the refrigerator. I recommend preparing the dough in the morning or early afternoon and then baking the pretzels the next day.**
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer (see note), combine sourdough starter, water, honey, butter, salt, and approximately half of the flour and stir until well-combined.
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup active, bubbly sourdough starter, $\frac{2}{3}$ cup warm water, 3 Tablespoons honey, 2 Tablespoons unsalted butter, 1 teaspoon table salt, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups bread flour
3. Attach the dough hook attachment to the mixer and begin to stir on low-speed. Add remaining flour as needed until the dough begins to cling to itself and pull away from the sides of the bowl (dough will still be quite sticky, but shouldn't stick to your finger if you touch it).
4. Continue to knead dough with dough hook (medium/low speed) until smooth and elastic (usually 5-10 minutes longer).
5. Transfer dough to a lightly oiled bowl, cover the bowl with plastic wrap, and allow to rise in a warm, draft-free place until nearly doubled in size (usually 5-7 hours).
6. Transfer to refrigerator and allow to rest for 12-18 hours (I let mine sit overnight) before proceeding.

The next day

1. Preheat oven to 400F (205C) and line three baking sheets with parchment paper. Set aside and prepare the lye bath (alternatively, see note for using a baking soda bath instead).
2. **It is important to handle lye safely. Work in a well ventilated area and wear rubber gloves and eye goggles. Do not touch the lye or the lye/water solution and beware that if it splashes it may ruin surfaces. See notes for more information including instructions for disposing of the lye.**
3. **Set up your lye bath (see note if using baking soda instead of lye):** Place a wide, deep glass dish (I use a 2.75qt glass casserole dish or similar) on one of your parchment paper lined baking sheets. Pour water into the dish and then carefully add lye and use a stainless steel spoon to stir until lye is dissolved. Set aside while you prepare your pretzels.
8 cups water, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lye
4. Remove pretzel dough from the fridge and divide into 10 equal pieces (handle the dough immediately, don't let it sit or it will get too soft to use). Roll each into a long thin rope, about 20-24" (50-60cm) long, and twist into a pretzel shape (for assistance with shaping properly, see the how-to section in the post or watch the video tutorial).
5. Use a slotted spatula to lower each pretzel, one at a time, into the lye bath for 30 seconds, then carefully remove. Drain as much water as you can from each pretzel (the wetter they are the more likely they are to stick to the parchment paper and you'll have to peel them off) then place on prepared baking sheet, spacing pretzels at least 2" apart (I do 5 pretzels per baking sheet).
6. Sprinkle with pretzel salt.
Pretzel salt

7. Transfer to center rack of 400F (205C) oven and bake pans 1 at a time for 12 minutes per pan, rotating the pan halfway through and baking until deep golden brown.
8. Remove from oven and cool slightly before serving. If they've stuck to the parchment, simply peel them off.

Notes

Stand mixer

A stand mixer is highly recommended. This dough is and should be very soft and somewhat sticky. Using a stand mixer allows us to keep the dough soft while still kneading it sufficiently. If you were to knead the dough by hand, you would have to add quite a bit more flour than is ideal in order to even be able to manage it, which would result in tougher pretzels.

Lye

This is [the lye that I use](#). Handle lye with care. Work in a well-ventilated space. Rubber gloves and safety glasses are recommended, as well as long sleeves and long pants to minimize risk of splashes. [This is the lye that I use](#). Note that if you are uncomfortable with handling lye you can use a baking soda bath and egg wash instead and the results are still excellent, the pretzels just aren't as golden brown and pretty.

Disposing of lye

To dispose of the lye water, you can neutralize the solution by adding 2 ½ cups of vinegar to the mixture and then (carefully, to avoid splashing) pour it down the sink drain while running cool water at the same time.

Baking soda bath

Instead of a lye bath, you can do a baking soda bath instead, but your pretzels will not be as brown or taste quite as traditional (they're still delicious though!). To do this, bring 8 cups water and ¼ cup (66g) baking soda in a large pot. Gently lower pretzels (only 1 or 2 at a time) into the boiling mixture and boil for 30 seconds per side then use a frying spider to remove and drain and place on parchment-lined baking sheet. Prepare an egg wash (optional, but helps darken the pretzels) by whisking an egg with a Tablespoon of water, gently brush each pretzel with the mixture, sprinkle with pretzel salt, then bake as indicated.

Cinnamon sugar variation

Skip the pretzel salt and bake the pretzels plain. While pretzels are still warm, brush each one with melted salted butter (you'll need about ¼ cup/57g), then sprinkle with [cinnamon sugar](#) or dip in cinnamon sugar.

Storing

Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days (the salt may dissolve as they sit) or tightly wrap and freeze for several months. To reheat from frozen, preheat your oven to 325F (165C) place on a parchment lined baking sheet, brush lightly with water or melted butter, and heat until warmed through (this will just take a few minutes).

Nutrition

Serving: 1pretzel | Calories: 203kcal | Carbohydrates: 34g | Protein: 10g | Fat: 4g | Saturated Fat: 2g | Polyunsaturated Fat: 0.3g | Monounsaturated Fat: 1g | Trans Fat: 0.1g | Cholesterol: 6mg | Sodium:

1073mg | Potassium: 186mg | Fiber: 5g | Sugar: 5g | Vitamin A: 71IU | Vitamin C: 0.1mg | Calcium:
17mg | Iron: 1mg

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