

GUASTELLO'S VILLAGE MARKET

Soft Beer Pretzels

Makes 8 pretzels

Ingredients

1 bottle (12 ounces) amber beer or nonalcoholic beer
1 package (1/4 ounce) active dry yeast
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
2 tablespoons sugar
1-1/2 teaspoons salt
4 to 4-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
10 cups water
2/3 cup baking soda
TOPPING:
1 large egg yolk
1 tablespoon water
Coarse salt, optional

In a small saucepan, heat beer to 110°-115°; remove from heat. Stir in yeast until dissolved. In a large bowl, combine butter, sugar, 1-1/2 teaspoons salt, yeast mixture and 3 cups flour; beat on medium speed until smooth. Stir in enough remaining flour to form a soft dough (dough will be sticky).

Turn dough onto a floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic, about 6-8 minutes. Place in a greased bowl, turning once to grease the top. Cover with plastic wrap and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 425°. Punch dough down. Turn onto a lightly floured surface; divide and shape into eight balls. Roll each into a 24-in. rope. Curve ends of each rope to form a circle; twist ends once and lay over opposite side of circle, pinching ends to seal.

In a Dutch oven, bring water and baking soda to a boil. Drop pretzels, two at a time, into boiling water. Cook 30 seconds. Remove with a slotted spoon; drain well on paper towels.

Place 2 in. apart on greased baking sheets. In a small bowl, whisk egg yolk and water; brush over pretzels. Sprinkle with coarse salt if desired. Bake 10-12 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from pans to a wire rack to cool. Freeze option: Freeze cooled pretzels in resealable plastic freezer bags. To use, thaw at room temperature or, if desired, microwave each pretzel on high 20-30 seconds or until heated through.

To Make Pretzel Rolls: Divide and shape dough into eight balls; roll each into a 14-in. rope. Starting at one end of each rope, loosely wrap dough around itself to form a coil. Boil, top and bake as directed. Yield: 8 pretzels. To Make Pretzel Bites: Divide and shape into eight balls; roll each into a 12-in. rope. Cut each rope into 1-in. pieces. Boil and top as directed; bake at 400° for 6-8 minutes or until golden brown.

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Yield: 8 dozen.

Credit: Taste of Home