

4. Czech Soft Pretzels 2024

Soft Czech Pretzels

4 large pretzels

Ingredients:

Pretzels:

3 cups of bread flour (or all-purpose flour)

1 TBSP of confectioners' sugar

1 TSP of active dry yeasts

½ TSP of salt

4 TBSP (½ stick) of butter - soft, cut into small pieces (room temperature)

1 egg

1 cup of lukewarm milk - about 90 to 100°F (preheat in the microwave or on the stove)

Brushing mixture:

1 egg

3 TBSP of milk

Sprinkle with:

Salt crystals (do not use if you are going to freeze or refrigerate the pretzels or if you won't eat them soon; it will make them soggy)

Other options for sprinkling:

- Black and/or white sesame seeds
- Crushed pepper flakes
- Poppyseeds
- Sunflower seeds or any other kind of seeds

Tools:

Measuring Spoons & Measuring Cups

Whisk

Kitchen Mixer with Hook Attachment

Measuring Pitcher or Small Glass/Ceramic

Mixing Bowl

Bowl Scraper

Plastic Wrap

2 Medium Size Baking Sheets with Parchment

Paper or Silicone Mat

Silicone Brush or Pastry Brush

Cooling Rack

Already prepared:

Directions:

1. Dough:

1.1. Place into a kitchen mixer with a hook attachment:

3 cups of bread flour
1 TBSP of confectioners' sugar
1 TSP of active dry yeasts
½ TSP of salt

Shortly stir with a hand whisk just enough to combine all ingredients.

1.2. Add:

4 TBSP (½ stick) of butter - soft, cut into small pieces
1 egg
1 cup of lukewarm milk - about 90 to 100°F *

Knead on low speed until all ingredients are partially incorporated (about 1 - 2 minutes).

1.3. Then increase the speed to medium-high and knead until all ingredients are fully combined and the dough is formed (about 3 - 4 minutes).

2. Rising the dough:

2.1. Remove the bowl from the kitchen mixer and cover with plastic wrap.

2.2. Let rise in a warm place until it has about doubled in size (about 1 - 2 ½ hours). *

Start here:

3. Pre-shape the dough into compact balls:

3.1. Place the dough on a **surface without flour** and separate into 4 even pieces using a bowl scraper, about **7.5 OZ** each

Notes:

- Using the scale is optional.
- Total weight of the dough is about 30 OZ

- 3.2. Form each piece of dough into compact dough balls with your hands.
- 3.3. Cover the balls with a dish towel and let them rest for about 10 minutes before the next step.

4. Shape the pretzels:

Before you proceed:

- Shape pretzels one by one on a surface that **does NOT have** flour.
- Make sure that the surface is perfectly clean (no residue of food, ingredients, etc.).
- Since the dough includes butter, it will not stick to the surface. If it occasionally does, use your bowl scraper to release the dough.

- 4.1. Roll each piece into a strand - a long rope shape with a thickness of about $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1" and a length of at least 30".
- 4.2. Take both ends of the strands and bring them close to yourself while creating the round shape.
- 4.3. Then twist both ends (in $\frac{1}{6}$ length from both sides).
- 4.4. Then pinch both ends of the strands close to the center of the strand (but leave at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ " space between) to create the famous pretzel shape.

Important:

Press strands in just enough for them to hold.

- 4.5. Then, place fingers from both hands in the pretzel and gently stretch in all directions.

Tip:

Work gently, but if the pretzel is separated in any way, place it on the countertop, fix the broken connection by pinching it together, and repeat the remaining steps.

- 4.6. Place the pretzels on a baking sheet and form the remaining pretzels.

5. Set oven to preheat at 380°F.

6. Proofing:

- 6.1. Prepare a brushing mixture by briefly hand-whisking **1** egg with **3 TBSP** of milk in a measuring pitcher (for whisking, you can also use a silicone brush) to create a brushing mixture, and then brush all pretzels (keep the rest for the second brushing).
- 6.2. Let it proof on a countertop for about 15 minutes.

7. Final preparation:

- 7.1. Gently brush all pretzels again with the remaining brushing mixture right before baking.
- 7.2. Generously sprinkle with salt crystals or optionally with sesame seeds, crushed pepper flakes, or poppy seeds.

8. Baking:

- 8.1. Bake in a preheated oven until a nice golden color is reached, which means the pretzels are done (usually about 15 -20 minutes).
- 8.2. Rotate the baking sheets in the middle of baking.

9. Serving & storing:

- 9.1. Let cool on a cooling grate (at least partially) before serving.
- 9.2. If you use salt crystals for sprinkling, try to eat the pretzels sooner, as the crystals will tend to melt in just a couple of days.
- 9.3. An older pretzel can be heated in the microwave right before serving – it will give you a sense of freshness.

* Optionally, you can prepare the dough in the morning to bake it in the evening. To do this, use cold milk straight from the refrigerator and allow the dough to rise on the countertop instead of in a warm place. This will slow down the entire process, and your dough should be ready by the evening for the next step.

Mustard Sauce for Soft Pretzels

About 1 **cup**

Ingredients:

½ cup of mayonnaise

½ cup of sour cream

5 TBSP of country Dijon mustard

Optional: **2 TBSP** of yellow mustard (for more mustard flavor)

Juice from **½** lemon

Pinch of salt

Pinch of ground pepper- ideally freshly ground

Tools:

Measuring Spoons & Measuring Cups

Chef's Knife & Cutting Board

Small mixing bowl

Whisk

Optionally: Lemon Squeezer

Silicone Spatula

Directions:

1. Place all ingredients in the small mixing bowl:

½ cup of mayonnaise

½ cup of sour cream

5 TBSP of country Dijon mustard

Optional: **2 TBSP** of yellow mustard

Juice from **½** lemon

Pinch of salt

Pinch of ground pepper- ideally freshly ground

Thoroughly stir with a whisk until nicely combined (about 30 seconds).

2. Taste and add salt and/or pepper if needed.
3. Serve with any soft pretzels.

Spring Sauce for Pretzels

About **1 cup**

Ingredients:

½ cup of mayonnaise

½ cup of Greek yogurt

¼ cup of chives – finely chopped (or 2 TBSP of dry)

2 cloves of garlic – peeled and grated

Juice from **½** lemon

Pinch of salt

Pinch of ground pepper- ideally freshly ground

Tools:

Measuring Spoons & Measuring Cups

Chef's Knife & Cutting Board

Small mixing bowl

Whisk

Small hand grater or garlic press (for garlic)

Optionally: Lemon Squeezer

Silicone Spatula

Directions:

1. Place all ingredients in the small mixing bowl:

½ cup of mayonnaise

½ cup of Greek yogurt

¼ cup of chives – finely chopped

2 cloves of garlic – grated

Juice from **½** lemon

Pinch of salt

Pinch of ground pepper

Thoroughly stir with a whisk until nicely combined (about 30 seconds).

2. Taste and add salt and/or pepper if needed.
3. Serve with any soft pretzels.

Disclaimer:

All steps in this recipe are just suggestions, and the author and/or publisher of this recipe is not responsible for the following:

- outcome of preparation
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