



## *Homemade Soft Pretzels*



### **Ingredients:**

- 1 ½ cups warm water (lukewarm– no need to take temperature)
- 1 packet active dry or instant yeast (2 and ¼ teaspoons)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 Tablespoon granulated sugar
- 1 Tablespoon unsalted butter, melted and slightly cool
- 3 and ¾ - 4 cups all-purpose flour (spoon & leveled), plus more for work surface
- Coarse sea salt for sprinkling

### **Ingredients, Baking Soda Bath:**

- ½ cup baking soda
- 9 cups water

### **Ingredients, spicy nacho cheese sauce:**

- ¼ cup unsalted butter
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour (spoon & leveled)
- 2 cups whole milk
- 2 cups sharp cheddar cheese, grated
- 2 Tablespoons hot sauce
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Salt + pepper to taste

### **Method, Pretzels:**

1. Whisk the yeast into warm water. Allow to sit for 1 minute. Whisk in salt, brown sugar, and melted butter. Slowly add 3 cups of flour, 1 cup at a time. Mix with a wooden spoon (or dough hook attached to stand mixer) until dough is thick. Add ¾ cup more flour until the dough is no longer sticky. If it is still sticky, add ¼ – ½ cup more, as needed. Poke the dough with your finger – if it bounces back, it is ready to knead.
2. Turn the dough out onto a floured surface. Knead the dough for 3 minutes and shape into a ball. Cover lightly with a towel and allow to rest for 10 minutes.



3. Meanwhile, prepare the water and baking soda bath by bringing the baking soda and 9 cups of water to a boil in a large pot.
4. Preheat oven to 400°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Silicone baking mats are highly recommended over parchment paper. If using parchment paper, lightly spray with nonstick spray or grease with butter. Set aside.
5. With a sharp knife or pizza cutter, cut dough into 1/3 cup sections.
6. Roll the dough into a 20-22 inch rope. Take the ends and draw them together so the dough forms a circle. Twist the ends, then bring them towards yourself and press them down into a pretzel shape.
7. Drop 1-2 pretzels into the boiling water for 20-30 seconds. Any more than that and your pretzels will have a metallic taste. Using a slotted spatula, lift the pretzel out of the water and allow as much of the excess water to drip off. Place pretzel onto prepared baking sheet. Sprinkle each with coarse sea salt. Repeat with remaining pretzels. If desired, you can cover and refrigerate the boiled/unbaked pretzels for up to 24 hours before baking.
8. Bake for 12-15 minutes or until golden brown.
9. Remove from the oven and serve warm with spicy nacho cheese sauce. Pretzels may be stored in an airtight container or zipped top bag for up to 3 days (they lose a little softness).

**Make Ahead & Freezing Instructions:** Baked and cooled pretzels freeze well, up to 2 months. To reheat, bake-frozen pretzels at 350°F for 20 minutes or until warmed through or microwave until warm. The prepared pretzel dough can be refrigerated for up to one day or frozen in an airtight container for 2-3 months. Thaw frozen dough in the refrigerator overnight. Refrigerated dough can be shaped into pretzels while still cold, but allow some extra time for the pretzels to puff up before the baking soda bath and baking.

**NOTE:** If skipping the baking soda bath, brush the shaped and unbaked pretzels with an egg wash of 1 beaten egg + 1 Tablespoon of dairy milk. Sprinkle the brushed pretzels with salt. The egg wash will help the salt stick. If you do not have an egg, simply brush with 2 Tablespoons of dairy or nondairy milk.

#### **Method, Spicy Nacho Cheese Sauce:**

1. Melt the butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Sprinkle the flour over the top, stirring constantly until a thick paste forms, 1 to 2 minutes.
2. Slowly add the milk to the flour/butter paste in a steady stream, whisking constantly. Continue cooking, whisking constantly until the mixture thickens, about 5 minutes. It should be thick but still pourable. Add the cheese, whisking constantly until it is melted. Add the hot sauce and cayenne. Taste, then add salt and pepper to taste. Add more cayenne and/or hot sauce if preferred.
3. The sauce will thicken upon cooling. Store leftovers covered tightly in the refrigerator for up to 5 days. Heat over stovetop or in the microwave before serving again.