

*Yield 5-6 rolls or 4 pretzel knots*

*Prep time 1-2 hours*

*Bake time 20-25 minutes*

*Ingredients -*

1 and 1/2 Cups of Tepid Water

2 and 1/4 tsp Dry Instant Yeast

2 tsp Granulated sugar

4 and 1/4 cups of Strong Bread Flour

2 tsp Salt

4 tbsp Melted Unsalted Butter

1/4 cup of Baking Soda

1 Beaten Egg

Rock salt - optional for sprinkling

*Method -*

1. To a stand mixer add the yeast, tepid water and sugar to the bowl. Allow the yeast to do its work and bloom; it will start to foam and bubble, this should take roughly 15-20 minutes.

2. Once the yeast has bloomed add the melted butter, salt, and flour.
3. With a dough hook attachment, begin kneading the mixture on low speed until it starts to come together, then ramp up the speed to medium and knead the dough for about 5 minutes to develop the gluten.
4. The dough should now look soft and smooth and have a little stretch and bounce to it. Remove the dough from the stand mixer bowl and place into a lightly greased clean bowl. You can use any neutral tasting cooking oil - its to stop the dough from sticking.
5. Cover the bowl with either a tea towel or plastic wrap and let this baby grow. The yeast will continue its work, and the fermentation process will start, this is what gives the bread those little pockets of air and "rise." You need to leave the dough to prove/rise in a warm place or proving drawer for at least an hour and doubled in size.
6. Uncover the dough and admire its magnificence! Turn out the dough on to a floured surface and "knock it back," in other words, push some of the air out and give it another little knead before shaping into a ball.
7. Divide the ball into equal portions, however many buns, rolls or knots you what to make. In this case, I made buns, so what you want to do is roll into a ball at the same time folding and tucking the bottom of the ball under itself. At this point, you should end up with a smooth exterior with no creases.
8. Place the dough balls on a lined baking sheet with either parchment paper or a silicone mat and once again cover and leave to prove for a second time for rough 30 minutes.
9. While the dough is proving, put roughly 9 cups of water on to boil. Once the water has boiled, turn down the heat a little and slowly add the baking soda - if you add it all at once you will end up recreating what resembles a preschool science experiment.
10. Pre-heat your oven to 200°C/400°F. Your dough balls will have risen a second time - place as many as you can fit into the simmering baking soda water with space to spare for 20 seconds a side. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain off the water. This process is what gives the pretzels its "chewy" texture as the outer layer is cooked in the baking soda water and then cooked again when you bake it.
11. Place the rolls on the lined baking sheet and with a serrated knife cut the top of the bun in whatever fashion you like, I like to do a cross cut about 1/2 cm deep. Brush

lightly with beaten egg and place into the preheated oven for 20-25 minutes until deep golden brown.

12. Remove from the oven and allow to cool.

Notes -

- These rolls can be kept in a ziplock bag or airtight container for up to 3-4 days before going stale.
- You can also freeze the baked rolls and refresh them in the oven from frozen for 5-10 minutes.
- You can freeze the dough for up to 3 months - but be sure to sufficiently wrap or store in an airtight container to avoid freezer burn.
- You need to thaw frozen dough in the refrigerator overnight. Bring to room temperature, then allow to rise before following from step 9.