

*April 30, 2014*

## SOFT SALTED PRETZELS

*Makes 16 Pretzels*

- 2 cups warm water
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon active dry yeast
- 6 tablespoons melted butter, cooled, plus more for buttering work bowl
- 5 - 6 cups all purpose flour, plus more for kneading and shaping
- 1 tablespoon sea salt, plus more for sprinkling
- 1 bottle beer
- 2 tablespoons baking soda
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

Combine water, sugar and yeast in a large mixing bowl. Let stand until yeast is foamy, about 10 minutes. Add melted butter.

Add one cup flour and salt, kneading with hands. Add remaining flour, one cup at a time, to form a soft silky dough. Remove from bowl and knead on well floured board or work surface. Dough should have satisfying spring to it. Transfer dough to a clean bowl, rubbed with soft butter. Tightly wrap bowl in plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

Remove bowl from refrigerator and let dough stand 1 hour before working. Heat oven to 450. Line baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside. Punch down dough and transfer to a lightly floured work surface. Knead dough, divide into 16 equal pieces.

Roll one piece of dough at a time into an long strip, about 18 inches long. Twist dough into pretzel shape and place on baking sheet. 8 pretzels should fit on each baking sheet. Cover with towel again and let rest about 15 minutes.

Fill a large shallow pot with 2 inches of water. Add bottle of beer and bring to a boil. Add baking soda. Reduce to a simmer. Using slotted spoon, transfer 3 - 4 pretzels at a time to water. Poach 1 minute. Remove from water and transfer to baking sheet. Continue until all pretzels are poached.

Brush pretzels with olive oil and sprinkle with salt. Bake until golden brown, about 20 minutes. Let cool slightly but make sure to sample warm.