

Pretzel Bites

<http://userealbutter.com/2016/02/03/pretzel-bites-recipe/>
from *Two Peas and Their Pod*

1 1/2 cups warm water (about 100°F)
2 tbsps light brown sugar
1 packet or 2 1/4 tps active dry yeast
6 tbsps unsalted butter, melted
2 1/2 tps kosher salt
4 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
vegetable oil
10 cups + 1 tbsp water
2/3 cup baking soda
1 egg, beaten
sea salt or pretzel salt

garlic butter (optional)

6 tbsps unsalted butter, melted
2 cloves garlic, minced

Stir together 1 1/2 cups of warm water, the brown sugar, yeast, and melted butter in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook. Let sit for 5 minutes. In a separate bowl, combine the kosher salt and the flour. Add the flour mixture to the wet mixture and mix on low until just combined. Increase the mixing speed to medium and let mix for 3 minutes until the dough begins to pull away from the sides of the bowl. Knead the dough for another minute. Grease a large bowl with vegetable oil. Place the dough in the bowl, then turn it over to coat the entire dough ball in oil. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let it rise for an hour in a warm place.

Preheat oven to 425°F. Whisk the egg and 1 tablespoon of water together to make the egg wash. Set aside. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Combine the 10 cups of water and the baking soda in a large pot and bring to a boil over high heat. While the water heats, divide the pretzel dough into 8 equal size pieces. Roll each eighth into a 22-inch long rope. Cut each rope into 1-inch pieces. Boil the pieces in batches for 30-45 seconds, then remove them from the water with a strainer. Set the pieces on the parchment-lined baking sheets making sure the pretzels don't touch each other. Brush the tops of the pretzels with the egg wash, sprinkle with salt, and bake for 12-13 minutes until they are golden brown. Cool on a baking rack. Serve with mustard. Makes 176 pretzel bites.

Garlic pretzel bites (variation): Bring the butter and garlic to a simmer in a small saucepan over medium-low heat. Continue to simmer until fragrant. Remove from heat and brush the garlic butter over the warm pretzel bites.