

# Bagels from Polish

© 2007 Mark Witt and Bread Technique

If you don't have a bagel shop near you that knows that a real bagel has to be boiled (not steamed) before it's baked then you are really missing something special. I only know two ways to get good bagels. The first is to visit a bagel bakery where quality, care and know how abound. If you can't do that then you'll have to make them yourself. You can with a little assistance from Bagels at Home and a small amount of specialty equipment and ingredients.

## Polish is the First Step

You will have to start at least one day in advance and make a small batch of polish. I always have a bowl or two of polish available to make something unexpected and delicious on relatively short notice. The polish is easy to make. The prep time is about 5 minutes. It will last for two to three days. If you don't get around to using it and have to throw it out you have wasted less than twenty five cents worth of raw materials (See basic polish in the recipe box at lower right).

Place the room temperature polish in the stand mixer bowl and add the last four ingredients.

Using the flat beater on the lowest setting bring the ingredients together into a sticky mass. It will not resemble dough at this stage.

Clean the flat beater with a bowl scraper or spatula. Replace the flat beater with the dough hook.

Switch the mixer to the speed indicated in your mixer manual for kneading bread. On the Kitchen Aid series this is usually 2. Let the mixer run for about four minutes, then stop.

## Autolyse

Let the dough and the mixer rest for 10 or 20 minutes. The dough is hydrating - water is moving into place in the gluten strands. The technical term for this is 'autolyse'

The mixer is also cooling down. This step is good for both dough and mixer. After the resting period turn the mixer back on to the kneading speed. After an additional few minutes the dough should be clearing the sides and



the bottom of the mixer bowl. If it isn't, add additional flour a tablespoon at a time waiting thirty seconds between each additional tablespoon. Stop adding flour when the dough begins to clear the bottom of the bowl. Dust your work surface with flour and remove the dough from the bowl to the surface.

## Final Kneading by Hand

Knead by hand adding small amounts of flour as needed. With each batch you make you will get a better sense of how the dough should feel. Bagel dough is not tacky or sticky when it is properly moisture balanced (hydrated) and kneaded. When the dough has reached a smooth and not tacky state cover it with plastic wrap and let it rest for twenty minutes (minimum).

Portion the dough with the dough scraper into twelve

## Bagels at Home

Place the warmed Polish in the mixer bowl with the last four ingredients.

Use the flat beater to gather the ingredients

Use the hook to knead the dough in 4 minute sessions to prevent overheating and encourage proper hydration

Finish kneading by hand to get the perfect consistency

Rest the dough ball on the counter covered for 20 minutes

Cut the dough into 12 roughly equal portions and allow them to rest a few minutes.

Roll each portion into an 8 inch 'snake' and join the ends (see video)

Proof the shaped bagels in the refrigerator overnight for best flavor or on your counter top for quickest delivery. They must be airy enough to float immediately when placed in water. If they are over proofed (too airy) they will collapse when boiled.

Boil the bagels one minute on a side in three inches of water with baking soda added at the rate of about a teaspoon per quart

Drain on a cooling rack and then place the bagels on parchment paper that was sprinkled with cornmeal

Transfer the parchment paper and bagels on to the baking stone in the oven that was pre-heated for an hour at 550.

Reduce the oven temperature to 425.

After five minutes rotate the bagels 180 degrees

Continue baking for another 6 to 8 minutes till golden brown

Remove to a cooling rack for 10 or 15 minutes and then enjoy!

1 small batch polish at room temperature	750 grams
2 ½ leveled cups bread flour	350 grams
2 teaspoons Salt	14 grams
1 Tablespoon Malt powder	12 grams
1 Teaspoon instant yeast	7 grams

---

portions. Roll each portion into a seven or eight inch 'snake'. Wrap the snake around your hand gathering the loose ends on the palm side and holding them together with your thumb until you can press the 'joint' onto the work surface, rolling the joint back and forth to seal it. This is difficult to imagine until you have seen it (that's why there is a video!)

#### **To Retard or Not?**

Place the bagels about 2 inches apart on parchment paper that has been sprayed with cooking spray (no cornmeal yet!). Spray the tops of the bagels lightly with cooking spray and cover with plastic wrap.

At this point you may decide to allow this proofing to happen overnight in the refrigerator. This will result in the best flavor and most consistent blisters (or bird's eyes').

Whether you proof them on your counter immediately or in the refrigerator they should rise until they are about 50% increased in size. When properly proofed they should float immediately when placed in water.

If you don't retard the proofing final proofing will take about forty minutes to an hour on your countertop. If you choose to proof them overnight in the fridge let them warm to and finish proofing at room temperature.

#### **Preheat The Oven**

While the bagels are proofing turn the oven with the baking stone in place to it's highest setting. The oven should preheat for a minimum of forty minutes.

Place 2 1/2 or three inches of water in the widest stock pot or deep skillet that you have. An turkey oval roaster will work too. Add about a teaspoon of baking soda for each quart of water. Cover it and bring to a boil.

Once proofed place the bagels bottom first into the boiling water. If you forgot to spray the parchment you will have a difficult time removing them from the paper. The bagels will expand in the boiling step so don't crowd them. In a fifteen inch skillet you can boil 6 at a time. Cover the pot to get the water back up to boiling. Watch the second hand on a

clock or watch and one minute after the last bagel was placed in the water turn them with a strainer or tongs. You can leave the lid off to finish boiling the second side. One minute after you began turning the bagels begin to remove them to a cooling rack.

#### **Move Quickly to Bake**

As quickly as possible spray a sheet of parchment paper lightly with cooking spray and sprinkle corn meal (or semolina if you have it) and place the bagels on the paper. The cornmeal adds an extra flavor dimension and makes it easy to remove the baked bagel.

Using a baker's peel place the parchment with the bagels on the pre-heated stone.

Immediately reduce the temperature of the oven to 425 degrees.

Five minutes into the baking cycle remove and rotate them 180 degrees and put them back in the oven until golden brown - about 6 or 8 more minutes. Watch them closely.

#### **Don't Rush the Cooling!**

If you don't let them cool for ten or fifteen minutes before you slice into one, shame on you! You will have done a lot of work to get a less than perfect bagel.

The recipe card is a summary only to remind you of the steps, not complete directions. Once you have made bagels a few times you may not need the recipe at all. It's easy to remember.

If you need another copy you can visit the website [www.breadtechnique.com](http://www.breadtechnique.com) and print it. You might ask why would I post the recipe when I sell the video. That's a good question. Let me tell you about the mission of [www.BreadTechnique.com](http://www.BreadTechnique.com).

I started BreadTechnique.com to help people enjoy the pleasure of making bread products. I want to help as many people as I can. The recipe is useless if you can't master the technique. The video helps you see how to portion dough, how to weigh ingredients and much more. For the price of a dozen bagels you get to see how to

make them. I think you'll agree that it's a bargain!

If you can simply download this document and already have the skills to make bagels then the video was never meant for you anyway!

Keep an eye on the website for future offerings and join me on another 'at home' baking session soon.

### **Basic Small Batch Poolish** (makes about 750 grams)

Mix together in a 2 quart bowl to heavy pancake batter consistency:

2 ½ cups (350 grams) bread flour  
pinch of yeast (1/8 tsp or a little less)  
14 ounces of good tasting water (400 ml)

Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and leave on the counter overnight (8-12 hours). In 8-12 hours it will be double in bulk, bubbly and will resemble tapioca pudding.

Move the poolish to the refrigerator to store it there for up to three days.

After three days it will be come more sour and separated, but can be used for bagels or bread.

After six days it is probably best to discard it even for bread use.

© 2007 Bread Technique

[WWW.BREADTECHNIQUE.COM](http://WWW.BREADTECHNIQUE.COM)  
is a website resource supported by the  
sale of DVDs. Visit today for more  
information.

**Mark Witt,**  
**BreadTechnique**