

Homemade Bagels

Ingredients (makes 8 4-ounce bagels--see below for 12):

- 20 ounces by weight bread flour (about 4 cups, but by weight is better; bread flour will produce better bagels, but you can use all-purpose in a pinch)
- 1 TBSP barley malt syrup (or granulated sugar)
- 1 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1 TBSP extra-virgin olive oil
- 1-1/4- 1-1/2 cups (10-12 oz.) of warm (~105 deg. F) water
- 2 tsp active dry yeast (you can use instant yeast or even bread machine yeast, in which case just heat up the water to ~ 90 degrees)

I use our Kitchenaid stand mixer, but you can do this by hand if you don't have one. I don't think I'd try it with an electric hand mixer.

Put the bowl from your mixer (or your mixing bowl) on your kitchen scale and zero it out. Pour 20 ounces of bread flour (567 grams) into the bowl. Add the rest of the ingredients, putting the water next-to-last and the yeast last.

Tip: I heat a couple cups of water to the right temperature range in the microwave, checking with an instant-read thermometer, and then zero out the scale again and add the water by weight.

If you're using a stand mixer use the regular beater on low just until the dough comes together, then switch to the dough hook and knead for 5 or so minutes, or until the dough is uniform and smooth.

If you don't have a mixer with a dough hook, just after you get the dry flour incorporated into the dough with a mixer or a spoon, plop the dough down onto the counter, and knead with your hands for about ten minutes, or until the dough is uniform and smooth. I use a silicone pastry mat on the counter.

Cut the dough into 8 equal sized balls (use the scale), and let the dough balls rest for 10-20 minutes under a kitchen towel. Preheat your oven to 425 while the dough rests. **Tip:** If you prefer Costco-sized bagels, divide up your dough into six equal balls.

Now, take each of the dough balls and using two flat hands with your thumbs touching, roll it into a little snake on the counter. When the snake is longer than the width of your two hands, wrap it around your dominant rolling hand. The dough rope should be wrapped so the overlapping ends are together at your palm, near the start of your fingers. Now take the two overlapping ends, and use your palm to squish/roll these two ends together. Once the dough is fused, you should have a perfectly (or roughly) circular bagel-to-be. This is the only part of the process that can take a little practice before your bagels will look really professional. Don't get discouraged if they don't look perfect, it just takes practice (and they'll still taste great).

Let your bagels rest on the counter for about 20 minutes covered by a kitchen towel. Meanwhile, bring a big pot of water to boil (I use our 6-qt. stock pot) and then add a heaping TBSP of baking soda to the water (this will brown up the bagels during baking). If you have a silicone baking sheet, put one on a sheet pan. Parchment paper works fine here, too--I put a few dots of oil on the pan first to help hold the parchment paper down. You can try oiling your sheet pan by squirting some oil on it and rubbing it around with your hand, but my bagels still stuck to the pan when I tried this.

After the 20 minute wait, your bagels will start to look puffy, and it's time to get them boiling! Add them as many at a time as you can to your boiling water without crowding them. Boil for 1 minute, turn them over, and boil for another minute. Take them out and let dry for a minute on a cooling rack, and then place them on your baking sheet.

Tip: Turn the bagels over when you put them on the pan, so that the side that was down on the drying rack is now facing up. This allows the water that gathered at the bottom of the bagels to evaporate rather than make them stick to the baking surface.

If you're adding anything to your bagels, like sea salt, or sesame seeds, do it now while the bagels are wet and before baking.

Repeat the boiling and drying process until all the bagels are boiled.

Add the tray to the oven, and after 10 minutes, flip the bagels over, bake for another ten minutes; and they're done!

Let them cool for as long as you can stand it, get the cream cheese and lox ready, and feast!

Freezer bagels:

If you want to freeze bagel dough to make later, follow the directions until they're O-shaped. Then put the unrisen bagels on a silicone mat or parchment paper covered baking sheet in your freezer (or on top of a gallon freezer bag on a plate if your freezer's too small for a baking sheet). After 20 minutes to an hour the bagels should be hard enough to put in a freezer bag and stick back in the freezer.

When you want to make bagels, just take them out of the freezer and put them about 2 inches apart on a silpat-covered baking sheet, covered with a kitchen towel, for an hour or so. They'll thaw out and start to get puffy. Start your water boiling and pre-heat your oven, and follow the directions from there (don't forget to add the baking soda to the boiling water).

Ratio for 1 dozen bagels:

- 30 ounces bread flour
- 1 1/2 TBSP barley malt syrup (or granulated sugar)
- 2 1/4 tsp kosher salt
- 1 1/2 TBSP extra-virgin olive oil
- 15 to 16 ounces 105 degree F water
- Shy TBSP of yeast (~2.5 tsp)