



The Religious History of Pretzels – Easter & Lent Pretzels Meaning

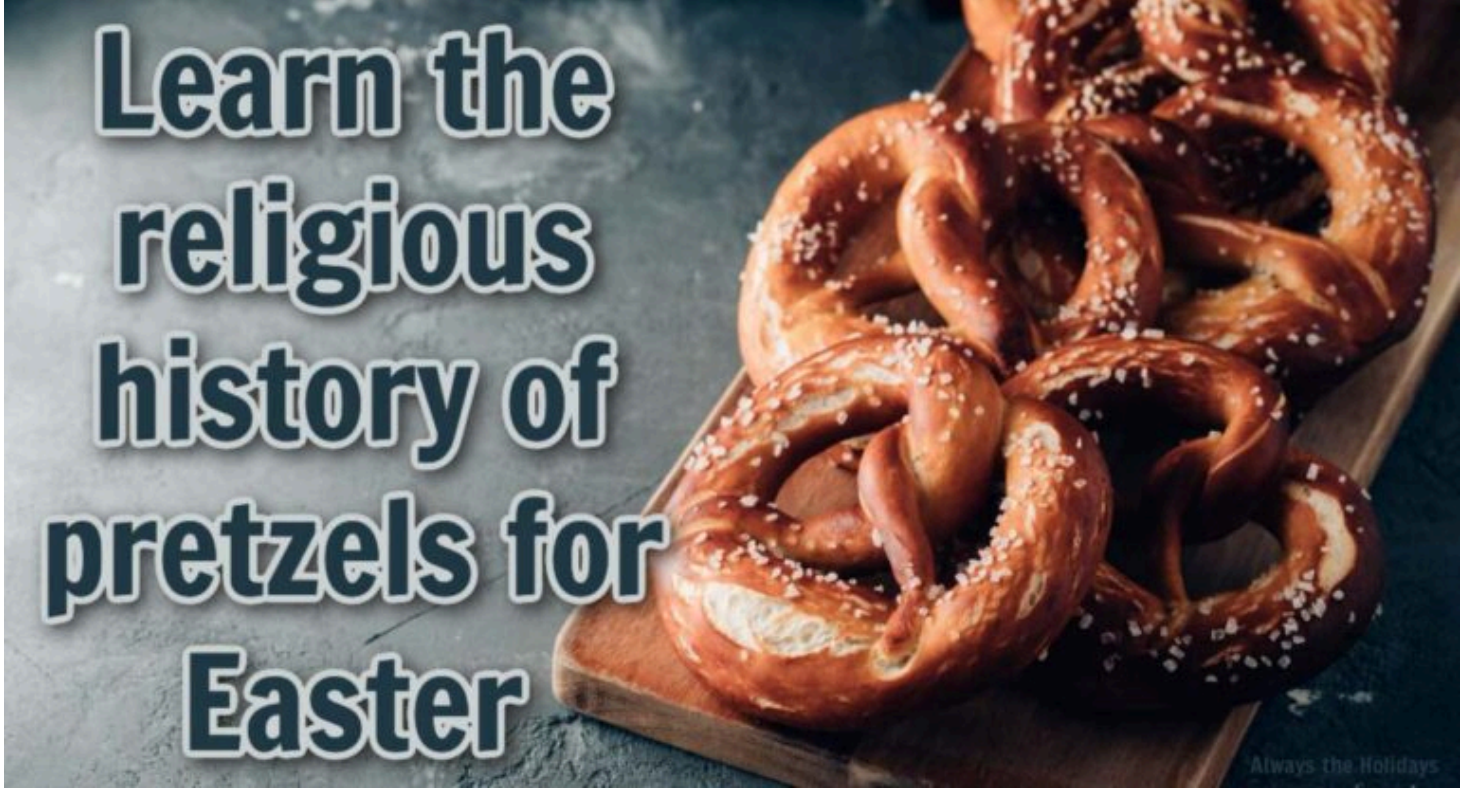
While you might not think much about the **history of pretzels** before consuming them, they have a story worth being told. Not only are pretzels a symbol of several holidays, but they also hold religious meaning.

Even though you can find pretzels year round, you'll see them with even more frequency during Lent and Easter. This is because pretzels are one of the symbols of Easter along with Easter eggs, [dogwood trees](#) and [Easter lilies](#).

Pretzels are also celebrated in the [fall](#) during Oktoberfest, and in the [spring](#) on [National Pretzel Day](#) on April 26. They are a great [game day treat](#) and a popular food choice during [the Super Bowl](#).

They can be sweet like these [homemade cinnamon sugar pretzels](#), or savory like these [beer cheese stuffed pretzels](#). If you want to make your own pretzels, you can find an easy soft pretzel recipe at the bottom of this page.

Keep reading to learn about the religious pretzel history and why this bread is important during Lent and Easter.



Learn the religious history of pretzels for Easter

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Lent pretzels meaning

The history of pretzels begins with a pretzel that is similar to what we would refer to as 'soft pretzels', and were made from flour, water and salt.

Historically, during Lent (which begins the day after [Mardi Gras](#), and ends on [Easter](#)) most Christian religious groups gave up certain foods like meat, dairy and eggs, to mirror the sacrifice Jesus made while resisting the temptations of the devil.

Since these early pretzels didn't contain any dairy they were a popular choice of food to eat during Lent, and approved of by the Catholic Church.

In addition to pretzels, there are also other [traditional Easter breads](#) with their own religious symbolism like [King cake](#) which is eaten on [Fat Tuesday](#), and [hot cross buns](#) which are eaten on Easter Sunday.

Religious history of pretzels

In the history of the pretzel, there is some discrepancy its first appearance, but most credit it to a monk from 610 C.E. who lived in a monastery in either Northern Italy or Southern France.

As this story in pretzel history says, he took leftover dough that was available to him, and twisted it into the shape we see pretzels in today. He thought it resembled arms crossed in prayer.



The monk named these early pretzels "*pretiolas*", which translates from Latin to mean "little reward", and handed them out as treats to children who learned their prayers.

Some theorize that the etymology of the word pretzel points to early pretzels being named "*bracchiola*", which is the Latin word for little arms.

From there, it was believed that the Germans took that name and changed it to "*brezel*". Brezel translated from German to English leaves us with "*pretzel*".

Pretzel shape meaning

In addition to the pretzel looking like arms crossed in prayer, the pretzel shape also has other religious meaning. The three holes in pretzels are believed to represent the holy trinity (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

Since the holy trinity is a significant religious concept in Christianity, it's not surprising that the pretzel is not the only holiday symbol to represent this trio.



During St. Patrick's Day, the [Shamrocks](#) also represent the holy trinity. The three leaves represent the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

When [Saint Patrick](#) came to Ireland he used shamrocks as a teaching tool to evangelize the Irish, and this plant became a [symbol of St. Patrick's Day](#).

More pretzel meanings

In addition to the meanings in regard to Christianity, pretzels have symbolized other ideas throughout history.

Pretzel history in the middle ages indicates that pretzels were handed out to the poor, and they became a symbol of good fortune and prosperity.

The middle ages isn't the only time that considers pretzels a good luck. In Germany, pretzels are eaten as a [lucky food](#) during the [New Year](#) to bring in prosperity and good fortune for the coming year.



Pretzels also rumored to have played a part in the 1510 Siege of Vienna. Legend says that pretzel bakers working underground heard the Ottoman Turks trying to tunnel under Vienna, and notified officials who stopped the attempt.

As a reward for the baker's help, the Austrian Emperor gave the bakers their own coat of arms which depicts an upside down pretzel with a crown on top, flanked by two lions. This coat of arms is a piece of pretzel history can be seen in modern times over some bakery doors.

Pretzels are not the only baked good thought to have helped save Vienna. One of the [origin stories of the croissant](#) also involves bakers protecting the city by stopping the Ottoman Turks invasion during The Battle of Vienna in 1683.

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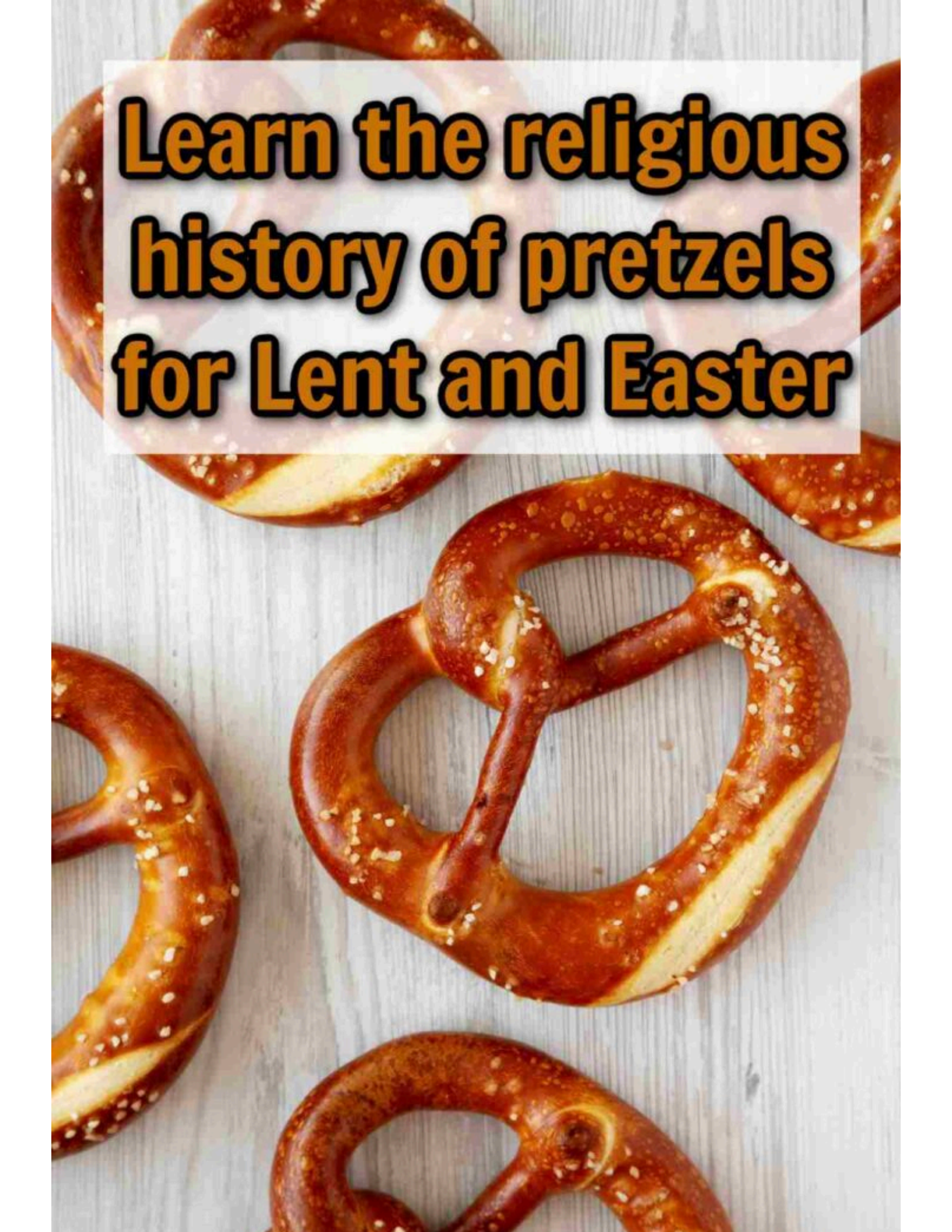
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Learn about the religious history of pretzels to celebrate this tasty treat which is a symbol of Easter. 🥨 😊 #PretzelHistory #HistoryOfPretzels

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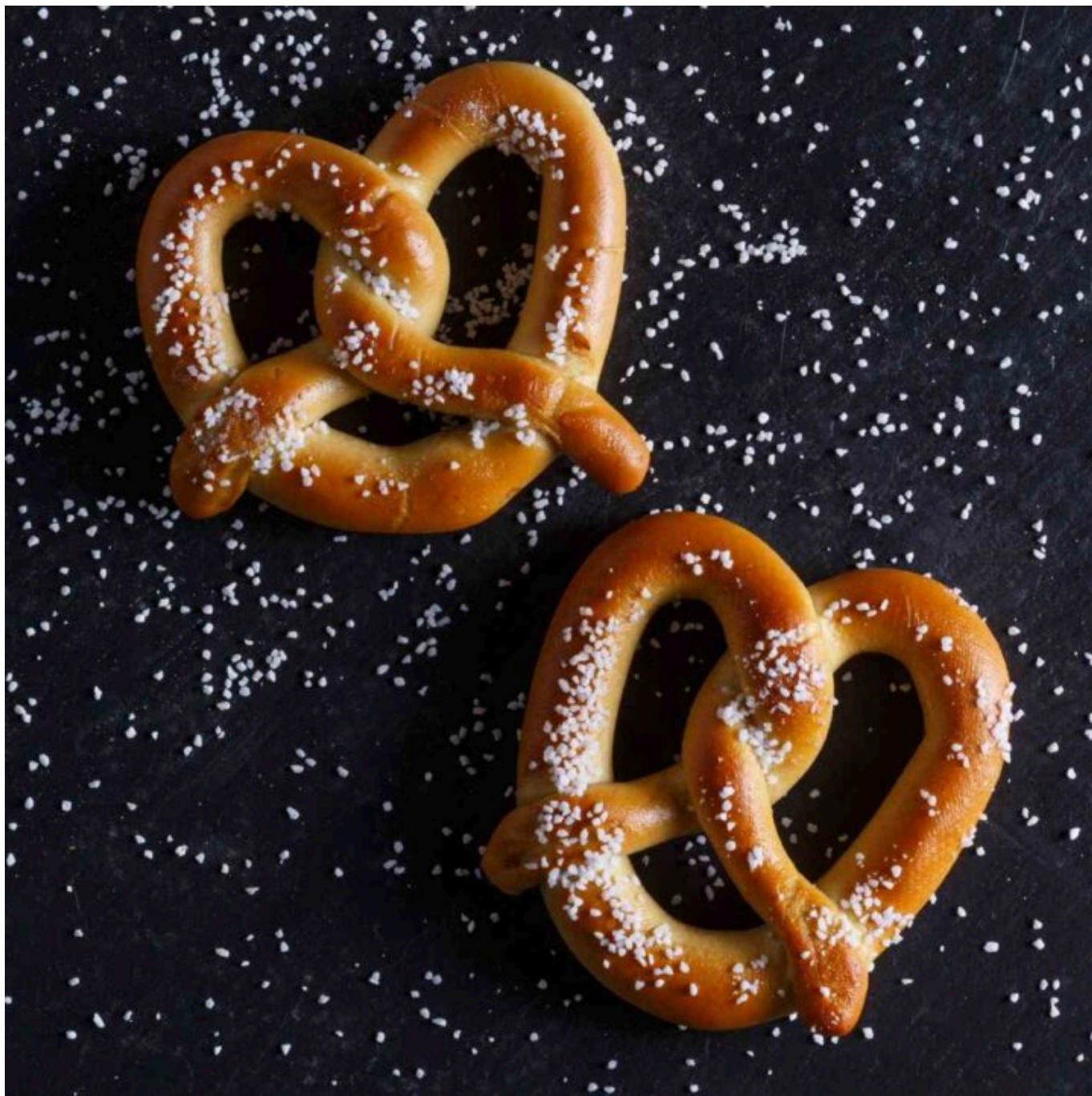
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**Learn the religious
history of pretzels
for Lent and Easter**

YIELD: 4 PRETZELS

Easy Soft Pretzel Recipe



[PRINT](#)

Soft pretzels are not only a great game day snack, but they're also an appropriate snack for several holidays too.

You can make the homemade soft pretzel recipe below for holidays like Oktoberfest, Easter, Lent and National Pretzel Day.

This easy pretzel recipe has only four ingredients, but still tastes delicious!

PREP TIME	COOK TIME	TOTAL TIME
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15 minutes

15 minutes

30 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 can (13.8 oz) Pillsbury® refrigerated classic pizza crust
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup baking soda
- 1 teaspoon coarse sea salt

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Line a large cookie sheet with parchment paper.
3. Open the can of dough, and place on a work surface that has been lightly floured.
4. Roll the dough into a 12 inch by 14 inch rectangle.
5. Cut the dough lengthwise into four equal strips, using a sharp knife.
6. Roll the strips of dough into cylindrical rope shapes and gently stretch each dough rope until it is 24 inches long.
7. To form a pretzel shape, arrange the ropes in a U shape.
8. Twist the ends together twice.
9. Using your finger, press down slightly on the dough where it overlaps in an "X" shape.
10. Pick the twisted ends and fold them back over the other side of the dough so they rest over the U shape.
11. In small bowl, whisk the egg and set aside.
12. In large microwavable bowl, heat water on high in the microwave for about a minute and a half until it is hot.
13. Slowly add the baking soda and stir until it has dissolved.
14. Dip each pretzel into the water and baking soda mixture.
15. Remove each pretzel with a large slotted spoon and place on a baking rack.
16. Let the pretzels stand at room temperature for five minutes.
17. Brush the pretzels with egg mixture, and sprinkle with coarse salt.
18. Transfer to cookie sheet and bake for 11 to 15 minutes or until tops of pretzels are golden brown.

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[Ultra Cuisine Heavy Duty Cooling Rack for Cooking and Baking - 100% Stainless Steel Baking Rack & Wire Cooling Rack - Cookie Cooling Racks for Baking - Food Safe - Fits Half Sheet Pans - 11.5" x 16.5"](#)
[Pretzel Salt for Soft Pretzels, Food Grade Salt for Pretzels and Bagels, Heat Resistant Coarse Sea Salt for Soft Pretzel Dough \(5 oz Bag\) - Sea Salt Superstore](#)
[Nordic Ware Natural Aluminum Commercial Baker's Half Sheet, 2 Count \(Pack of 1\), Silver](#)

Nutrition Information: YIELD: 4 SERVING SIZE: 1

Amount Per Serving: CALORIES: 371 TOTAL FAT: 9g SATURATED FAT: 1g TRANS FAT: 0g
UNSATURATED FAT: 7g CHOLESTEROL: 47mg SODIUM: 4916mg CARBOHYDRATES: 61g FIBER: 3g
SUGAR: 1g PROTEIN: 10g

Nutritional information is approximate due to natural variation in ingredients and the cook-at-home nature of our meals.

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CUISINE: German / **CATEGORY:** Appetizers



About the author

Since graduating from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Jess has been living and working in Los Angeles, CA. She is a freelance writer, specializing in content related to fashion, food and drink and film industry topics. [Find out more about Jess here.](#)

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By Jess

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Easter, Food Recipes, Fun Facts, Holidays, snacks



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Here you'll find recipes and craft projects to make your holidays even more special.

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