



ECMC's 8th Annual Motorcycle Weekend Nears!

While every year might be our last year for this fantastic event, we're excited that this year is still a "go" for our annual Finger-Lakes Ride and stay-over! Where can you find long-weekend accommodations and six meals for \$40? Not many places. The cut-off rapidly approaches and once the date is reached or the event is full, we can not accept any more registrations!

What's Cooking? How to Make Ballpark Pretzels

Spring is here, and so is the baseball season, and with these atmospheric and athletic shifts, my thoughts are turning to warm evenings spent at the stadium with a cold beverage in one hand, and a big pretzel — with a soft inside and a crisp brown crust — in the other.

Happily, however, one need not live out this picturesque scene only on game days: you can in fact make delicious ballpark pretzels right at home.

These are admittedly a little bit involved, so it's not a great project for the newbie baker. But if you're a seasoned pro, or if all you've ever made are simple loaves of bread, soft pretzels are a good way to take your skills up a notch if you have a few hours to kill on a weekend afternoon.

Ingredients

- 3 3/4 cups bread flour (450 grams if using a scale)
- 4 tsp salt (Plus about 2 tsp more for dusting pretzels at the time of baking. You want to use a salt on top of the pretzels with a bigger flake/"grain" that will hold up on the crust; if it's too fine — like regular table salt — it'll just get absorbed into the dough. I used Diamond Crystal Kosher Salt for both mixing into the dough and as a topping, which worked fine; you can also use special pretzel salt.)
- 2 tsp instant yeast
- 1 1/2 cups water, room temperature
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 1/4 cup baking soda

Note: it's easier if you have a stand mixer, but it's certainly not a must.

Directions

Step 1: Mix Ingredients

In a mixing bowl, whisk together flour, salt, and yeast. In a large measuring cup, whisk water, oil, and brown sugar together until sugar is dissolved.



Step 2: Mix Wet and Dry Ingredients

Using the dough hook on low speed (if using a stand mixer), slowly pour in the wet mixture, increasing the speed to medium until a cohesive and elastic dough forms and clears the sides of the bowl. Should take a few minutes.

Step 3: Knead Dough and Let Rise

Transfer dough to a lightly floured counter (or baking mat) and knead until a smooth ball forms. Will just take a minute or two. Place into a lightly greased bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and let rise until doubled, 1 1/2 to 2 hours. The magic of yeast!

Step 4: Flatten the Dough and Cut Into Strips

After doubled, transfer dough to counter or baking mat. Deflate and press into a large rectangle roughly 12 x 6 inches. Using a pizza cutter, cut the dough into 12 one-inch strips.

A baking mat not only preserves your counter and makes clean-up a breeze, it also gives you handy measuring assistance.

Step 5: Form Dough "Ropes" Into Pretzels

Time to form the pretzels. Work with one strip of dough at a time, and start by rolling/stretching it into a long rope, about 20 inches long (doesn't have to be exact). Getting the rope to be as uniform in thickness as you can will be helpful, just for the sake of evenly shaped pretzels.

Next, form a large U with the rope, about 2 inches wide at the bottom.

Cross the right side over the left, and then cross the right over the left once more.

Now bring the top part down to form that classic pretzel shape, and press the ends into the bottom.

Arrange them on two greased baking sheets (or on one, and working in 2 batches). Let rise about 15 minutes, until they're puffy.

While the pretzels are rising, preheat the oven to 425.

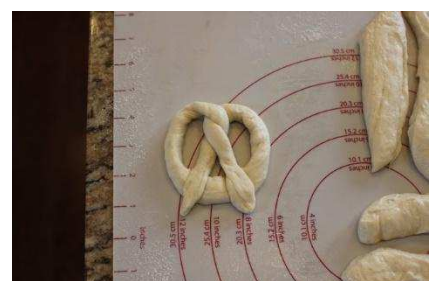
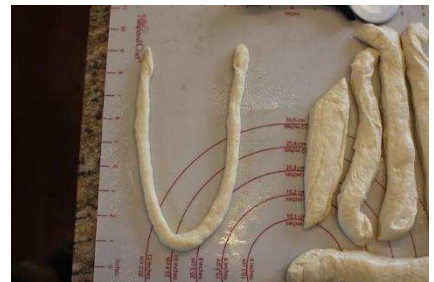
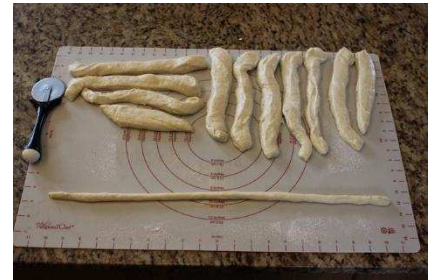
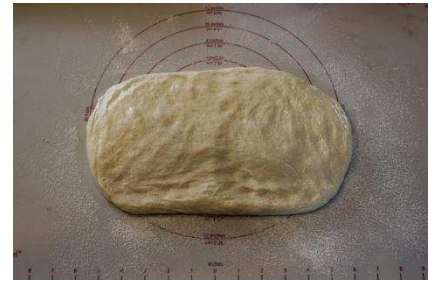
Step 6: Boil the Pretzels

Dissolve the baking soda in 4 cups of water in a large Dutch oven (or large pot) and bring to a boil. The baking soda will make it very bubbly, and this "bath" is what gives the pretzel its deep brown colour and crisp exterior "skin."

Using a spatula, transfer 2-3 risen pretzels, knot side down, to the boiling water. Cook for 15 seconds, then flip the pretzels and cook for another 15 seconds or so. Those don't have to be exact times, but close. Then transfer back to a cooling rack and let them rest 5 minutes. Repeat until all pretzels are done. (A slotted spatula works really well for this step if you have one — often called a fish turner, the thing is worth its weight in gold and is used all the time in our household.)

Step 7: Salt and Bake Pretzels

Grease the baking sheet(s) and dust with about a teaspoon of salt. Place 6 pretzels on a sheet, and dust the tops with another teaspoon or so of salt.



Bake pretzels for 15 minutes, until they're a dark golden brown. If using two baking sheets they can be cooked together, but I did them in two batches. When done, transfer to cooling rack and let rest about 15 minutes.

Step 8: Enjoy!

Serve with warmed cheese (or another favourite dip) and devour!



SNAFU (Situation Normal: All Fucked Up)

Every five years, Empire City MC celebrates our anniversary in a big way – there are typically four events: Our bike blessing/biker picnic weekend, a week-long road trip to somewhere cool, our in-town anniversary weekend in October and our Toy Drive in December. This year, things are not going to plan very well.

Although our Bike Blessing/Biker Picnic and Toy Drive are a staple every year, our week-long trip (this year to Provincetown, MA) hit a snag in that the hotel we wanted to rent was jerking our chain so much and for so long that it was obvious they didn't want our business so we pretty much told them to fuck off. We're going to look for another location; however, chances are it will probably be better that everyone "fend for themselves" and find their own place to stay. Of course, there will be more on this as it develops.

The other major event is our Anniversary Weekend, which is Columbus Day Weekend in October. We normally host the AMCC meeting once every five years, which helps assure us that we can make the required minimum to host a dinner cruise aboard a yacht that goes around the New York Harbour. Sadly, this year we were not chosen to host the AMCC meeting, and since the meeting will be one week prior to our Anniversary Weekend, we're doubting we will be able to meet our contract obligations. There is a good chance that we will not host a dinner cruise for our 55th Anniversary now.

We have plenty of events to celebrate our 55th, but much of this is "in the air" until we determine what we are going to do.



United 93 / Three Rivers & Arktos Bear Run Ride

Last year we went to the Arktos Bear Run in New London, Ohio and had a great time – we said we'd come back in 2019, and we're planning to do just that; however, this time, we're going to break the trip to the run up into two journeys and add two destinations along the way: A stop-over on Thursday 1st August at the United 93 Memorial site just outside of Pittsburgh, PA and staying the night t Pittsburgh, PA to visit our friends from the Three Rivers MC!

Whether you're from New York, Pittsburgh or along the way, if you're interested in coming along with us on this trip (bikes or not), we have pre-paid a fantastic cabin at the campground with air conditioning, refrigerator, microwave and beds for eight men! The reservation has been pre-paid for by Chaz of ECMC, so please reach out to him at ChazAntonelli@gmail.com to reserve your spot in the bunkhouse! Please note: The run fee is a separate fee and needs to be paid to Arktos directly by any attendees.

UPCOMING EVENTS & RIDES

Sun 28th April: RIDE: Hogs 4 Hope, a benefit for Ronald McDonald House. A police-escorted ride, pig roast BBQ with live music and raffle prizes. If you cannot make the ride, you are welcome to purchase a ticket for the BBQ only! ALL MAKES/MODEL BIKES WELCOME! See: <https://www.rmh-newyork.org/events/hog-for-hope> or the advertisement in this newsletter!

Wed 1st May 20:00 – 21:00: Empire City MC's Open General Meeting, held 8pm-9pm on the first Wednesday of each month at "The Centre" 208 W 13th St, New York, NY 10011. All interested men and prospective members are welcome to attend. Always check with the front desk/schedule to see which room we're booked into.

Fri 24th – Mon 27th May: RIDE: Empire City's 8th Annual Motorcycle Weekend in the fingerlakes! (admission by motorcycle only!) This event is filling up – please register soon or risk being left out.

Fri 31st May – Sun 2nd Jun: RIDE: 2nd Annual LGBT Motorcycle Weekend at Rainbow Mountain in the Pocono Mountains

Wed 5th Jun 20:00 – 21:00: Empire City MC's Open General Meeting, held 8pm-9pm on the first Wednesday of each month at "The Centre" 208 W 13th St, New York, NY 10011. All interested men and prospective members are welcome to attend. Always check with the front desk/schedule to see which room we're booked into.

Sun 9th June 11:00-17:00: RIDE: 31st Annual Philadelphia Gay Pride March 2019. Meet-up at 13th & Spruce St, Philadelphia, PA

Fri 21st June 18:00-21:00: EVENT: ECMC's 55th Annual *FREE* Bike Blessing at Ty's Bar

Sat 22nd June 09:00-17:00: RIDE: ECMC's 55th Annual *FREE* Biker Picnic (admission by motorcycle only!)

Sun 23rd June 18:00-21:00: EVENT: Folsom Street East, 22nd Anniversary

Sun 30th June 12:00-16:00: RIDE: NYC Gay Pride March / World Pride / 50th Anniversary of Stonewall

Wed 3rd Jul Jun 20:00 – 21:00: Empire City MC's Open General Meeting, held 8pm-9pm on the first Wednesday of each month at "The Centre" 208 W 13th St, New York, NY 10011. All interested men and prospective members are welcome to attend. Always check with the front desk/schedule to see which room we're booked into.

Thu 1st – Sun 4th August: RIDE: Visiting the United 93 Memorial, overnight in Philadelphia and seeing the Three Rivers MC, then on to the Arktos Bear Run in New London, OH. See the article in this newsletter for more information!

Fri 16th – Mon 19th August: RIDE: Montréal Gay Pride Weekend! Speak to any ECMC member for details on this fantastic trip!

Sat 7th – Sun 15th September: RIDE: Empire City's Week-Long Anniversary Ride to Provincetown, MA!

Fri 11th – Mon 14th October: EVENT: Empire City MC's 55th Anniversary In-Town Run and Dinner Cruise!

REMEMBER: There are plenty of other events and rides added to our official calendar on a regular basis, especially day rides! Bookmark our official calendar at calendar.EmpireCityMC.com and come along with us on some great rides!

Our physical mailing address is:

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New York, NY 10011-6821



Empire City MC is a proud member of the Atlantic Motorcycle Coordinating Council. For more information about membership with Empire City MC, [click here](#) to view/download our constitution, bylaws and membership application.

We're on facebook at <http://facebook.EmpireCityMC.com>

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