# Nancy Leson's One-Hour Bagels

(with variations)

"Years ago, my pal Mike — a real Mercer Island mensch — invited me to his house for bagels and lox, then showed me how to make this quick and easy bagel recipe. I managed to pull my jaw off my chest long enough to say, That's it! I'm never buying supermarket bagels again! (I haven't.) But as much as I love this 1-hour recipe (which ignores one of the more important tenets of 'authentic' bagel-baking by leaving out the overnight fermentation process), I've also come to recognize that Stein was rrrr-rrrrrr-right: These bagels taste even better if you refrigerate the shaped rounds overnight, then boil and bake them the following day (see: variations)." – Nancy



Makes 12 bagels
Total preparation time: about 1 hour

## Basic Recipe:

- 3 2/3 cups (550 grams) bread flour (see note)
- 2 ½ teaspoons active dry yeast
- 2 ½ teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon canola (or vegetable) oil
- 10 to 12 ounces (1 ¼ to 1 ½ cups) warm water (110° F)
- 2 tablespoons baking soda (for boiling the bagels)
- Optional garnish: poppy seeds, sesame seeds, Maldon or other coarse sea salt, etc.

## Equipment:

- Stand mixer (or a large bowl and a sturdy spoon)
- Whisk
- 2 rimmed baking sheets: one fitted with a wire rack, the other with parchment paper (or silicone mat)
- Large soup pot for boiling water
- Perforated ladle or wire skimmer

## For the dough:

**If using a stand mixer:** Fit the mixer with a dough hook. To the bowl of the mixer, add the flour, yeast, salt and sugar. Whisk the dried ingredients together. Turn the mixer onto its lowest speed. Add the oil, then drizzle ONLY 10 ounces of the warm water down the side of the bowl. Watch until the flour is completely incorporated, using the additional 2 ounces of water only if you need it to create a "clean" bowl. The dough will climb the hook. Kick the mixer up to its next speed and continue to mix for 7 minutes.

**To mix by hand:** In a large bowl add the flour, yeast, salt and sugar then whisk the dried ingredients together. Stir in the oil and ONLY 10 ounces of the warm water. Stir until the flour is completely incorporated, eventually trading the spoon for your hands. Use the additional 2 ounces of water only if you need it to create a "clean" bowl. Once you can gather the dough into a ball, remove it to a flat surface and knead until smooth for at least 10 minutes.

Shape the dough into a round, put it back into the mixing bowl and cover tightly.

Let dough rest/rise for 20 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 425° F and bring a large pot of water to a boil with 2 tablespoons baking soda.

**To shape the bagels:** Once risen, knead the dough briefly on an un-floured board, then roll the dough - which should feel springy to your touch - into a 16-inch log. Cut the log in half then cut each half into 6 pieces. Roll each piece into an 8-inch "log" then form a bagel by overlapping the ends by an inch or so, putting 4 fingers through the hole and gently rolling the overlap to create a circle. Conversely, you can poke your thumb through the middle of the dough, gently stretch the dough, then spin it on your index fingers for a few seconds to form the bagel: Your call!

**To boil and bake:** If you plan to seed your bagels, place a generous amount of seeds on a small plate and have this at the ready.

Boil in 3 batches (4 bagels each). They should float immediately. Boil for 15 seconds, flip and boil for another 15 seconds (for a total of 30 seconds), then using the ladle/skimmer, remove to the wire rack to briefly drip dry. This is when you'll do the (optional) seeding: As soon as you can stand to handle the hot/wet bagels, swiftly press each side (or one side, you decide!) into the seeds.

Place bagels on the parchment-covered baking sheet and bake until golden-brown (20 to 25 minutes). Cool before serving.

**Note:** This recipe specifically calls for bread flour which (depending on the brand) has a protein content of 12-14%. I regularly get great results with Bob's Red Mill Artisan Bread Flour. That said: if you can get your hands on high protein flours such as King Arthur Sir Lancelot (14% protein) by all means use them!

*See notes for variations on the following page!*



## Nancy's Variations :

**Whole-Wheat Bagel Variation:** Prepare the basic recipe as stated above, using half the amount of bread flour and an equal amount of whole wheat flour (13.5 ounces or 225 grams each).

**Cinnamon-Raisin Variation:** Prepare the basic recipe as stated above, but to the dry mixture add: 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon and 1 additional tablespoon of sugar (for a total of 2 tablespoons sugar). During the last 2 minutes of mixing (or kneading) add ¾ cup of raisins, making certain they're well-incorporated.

**Overnight Fermentation Variation:** Prepare the basic recipe or its whole-wheat or cinnamon-raisin variation, but DO NOT boil and bake them — yet. Instead, once shaped and placed on the sheet-pan, cover loosely but completely with lightly oiled plastic wrap (or mist the bagels directly with cooking spray, then cover with plastic wrap) and refrigerate overnight — or up to two days. Then boil and bake as directed above. Take the bagels directly from the fridge once the water's boiling; no need to bring them to room temperature.

## Tips and tricks:



During the roll-and-shape process, work with half the dough at a time. While you're shaping the first six rounds, keep the "extra" dough covered (I like to use a large bowl turned upside-down).

Want a bigger bagel? Divide the dough into 10 pieces rather than 12. I've made mini-bagels with this recipe, prepping 20 small bagels (and brought them schmeared and loxed to a potluck!). If you make minis, keep a close eye on the browning as they bake: they'll bake up a bit faster.

The baking soda dissolved in the boiling water helps give the bagels their classic shine, and I swear by it. You, however, may substitute a heaping tablespoon of honey, barley malt syrup or molasses.

Toppings: Feel free to be creative. I like to seed both sides of the bagel copiously (hence my directive to press-on-a-plate). You may like just a sprinkling on top. If I'm making plain or half-seeded bagels, I like to sprinkle semolina flour on the sheet-pan before placing the just-boiled bagels on it. You may substitute fine cornmeal.

When making cinnamon-raisin bagels, consider upping the amount of cinnamon (to 1 tablespoon) and raisins (to as much as a cup) to suit your taste. (My amounts are relatively restrained.)

All bagels taste best the day they're baked. Once you've eaten your fill, slice the bagels horizontally, freeze in a zip-top bag (for up to a month) then pop them in the toaster. Do not thaw first.

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