



IT'S OFFICIAL!

Pretzels are a yummy snack to be sure. But did you know that the pretzel has its origin as an “official food of Lent”? The first pretzels were made using only flour, water and salt. Milk, eggs and butter were not included in pretzel recipes because these foods were typically not eaten during the Lenten fast. Today, we *abstain* (go without) meat on Fridays during Lent. And on two days in Lent — Ash Wednesday and Good Friday — we *fast* (eat less food) as well.

Tradition tells of a young Italian monk in the early 600s, who wanted to prepare a special Lenten bread of water, flour and salt to remind his brother monks that Lent was a time of prayer. Once he created the dough he rolled it into thin strips and shaped each in the form of crossed arms to resemble a person praying. The finished product was called *bracellae*, the Latin word for “little arms.” From this word, came the German translation, *bretzel* which has since been changed to the familiar word pretzel.

Source: <http://www.catholiceducation.org>

A PRETZEL PRAYER

Dear God, we ask You to bless these pretzels which we are about to eat.

Each time we eat them, may we be reminded, especially in this Season of Lent, of our brother and sisters in mission countries.

Help us to remember to pray for those who need our prayers each day.

Keep Your loving arms around us, O God, to protect us.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

Adapted from “Pretzel Prayer,” A Time of Hope: Family Celebrations and Activities for Lent and Easter, Morehouse-Barlow Co., Inc., 1979 (out of print).

TRY IT!

Feeling adventurous? Try making your own pretzels. Be sure to ask an adult for help. Then, before “breaking bread” with friends or family, recite the special prayer below.

- 1 1/4 cups hot water (85°)
- 1 tablespoon dry yeast
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 4 1/2 cups flour
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 to 2 teaspoons water or milk
- Coarse salt

Let yeast and sugar dissolve in water for one hour. Add flour to yeast mixture and beat until smooth. Knead mixture for seven to eight minutes. Place in a greased, covered bowl and let the dough rise until double in size. Divide the dough in half; then divide each half into smaller pieces of equal size. Roll each piece in your hands to make pencil shapes 12 to 15 inches long. Shape each length of dough into pretzels (ask an adult to help you search for an Internet picture as a guide). Place on a greased baking sheet. Brush with egg yolk and water or milk mixture. Sprinkle with coarse salt. Bake at 325 degrees until lightly browned on top.