

LADIES' FINGERS

24 blanched almonds,

10 sugar

10 mL active dry yeast

750 mL all-purpose flour, plus more for work surface

7 mL salt

15 mL baking soda

1 large egg

Dried rosemary (optional), or Sea salt

Vegetable-oil cooking spray

1. Pour 250 mL warm water (110°) into the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the dough-hook attachment. Add sugar; stir to dissolve. Sprinkle with yeast, and let stand until yeast begins to bubble, about 5 minutes.
2. Beat 125 mL flour into yeast on low speed until combined. Beat in salt; add 375 mL flour until combined. Beat until dough pulls away from bowl, 1 to 2 minutes. Reduce speed to low; 125 mL. Knead 1 minute more. If dough is sticky, add up to 125 mL more flour. Transfer to a lightly floured surface; knead until smooth, 1 minute.
3. Coat a large bowl with cooking spray. Transfer dough to bowl, turning dough to coat with oil. Cover with plastic wrap; let rest in a warm spot to rise until doubled in size, about 1 hour.
4. Heat oven to 450°. Heat (1/2 pot) to boil in a large straight-sided saucepan over high heat; reduce to a simmer. Add baking soda. Lightly coat two baking sheets with cooking spray. Divide dough into quarters. Work with one quarter at a time, and cover remaining dough with plastic wrap. Divide the first quarter into 6 pieces. On a lightly floured work surface, roll each piece back and forth with your palm into a long finger shape, about 3 to 4 inches. Pinch dough in two places to form knuckles. When all six fingers are formed, transfer to simmering water. Poach for 1 minute. Using a slotted spoon, transfer fingers to baking sheet. Repeat with remaining dough, blanching each set of 6 fingers before making more.
5. Beat egg with 1 tablespoon water. Brush pretzel fingers with egg wash. Using a sharp knife, lightly score each knuckle about three times. Sprinkle with salt and rosemary, if using. Position almond nails; push into dough to attach. Bake until golden brown, 12 to 15 minutes. Let cool on wire rack. Fingers are best eaten the same day.