

The heavenly pretzel bun

Dish goes well with sausage

BY DAVID CAMPICHE

A successful grilled hamburger or sausage isn't just about the meat. No matter how good the meat is, without a good bun, the effort is compromised.

This holds true of sausage. I love to grind my own. The effort is significant, but with a good grinder, one can produce a large variety of good burgers or sausages without preservatives. One can also adapt the seasoning to be spicy, mild or herbaceous. Sausage can be crafted with pork, lamb or beef — or a bit of all three.

On a warm day with a small bonfire to roast sausages, my wife, Laurie Anderson, prepared homemade pretzel buns. I prepared a vegetarian chili and Laurie also put together a salad of garden greens with feta and olives. Even served outside on paper plates, the meal was splendid. A chocolate stout from Fort George completed the perfect summer fete.

This recipe is one of Laurie's favorites.

Pretzel Buns

Ingredients

- 1 cup of milk
- 8 ½ cup of water
- ¼ cup of light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons of honey
- 1 tablespoon of active dried yeast
- 3 cups of all-purpose flour
- 1 cup of high gluten flour
- ½ teaspoon of salt (and more to taste)
- 2 tablespoons of unsalted butter

- Two cloves of grated garlic
- ½ cup of baking soda

Preparation

Heat the milk, water, brown sugar and honey to 105 degrees Fahrenheit. Sprinkle the active dried yeast over the warm liquid mixture. Allow the mixture to rest for 10 minutes.

Combine the flour and salt in a separate bowl.

Melt the unsalted butter and add the cloves of grated garlic. Set aside to cool.

Add all but a ½ cup of the flour mixture to the liquid in the mixing bowl with the activated yeast. Add the melted butter and garlic mixture. Mix for about 5 minutes using a dough hook. Add the additional flour (only use what is needed) until the dough has come together. The dough should be smooth and elastic, and pull away from the sides of the bowl.

Line a baking sheet with a silicone mat. Turn the dough out onto a highly floured cutting board and form into eight equal pieces, each weighing approximately 130 grams. Form each into a ball and place onto the mat. Cover with a clean towel. Let the dough rest in a warm place for 15 minutes.

Lightly dust your work surface again and roll the balls into 7-inch logs.

Place on the mat again. Cover and allow to rest for another 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Line another baking sheet with a silicone mat.

Bring 8 cups of water to a boil, and then add the baking soda. Place the dough in the gently boiling water one at a time. Cook for 30 seconds on each side.

Using a slotted spatula, remove the logs and place them on the mat. Sprinkle the dough logs with coarsely-grained salt as they come out of the water. Cut three shallow diagonal slits on the top of each log. Bake for 13 to 15 minutes, rotating the pan halfway through the baking period.

Place the logs on a cooling rack and allow to cool.

Additions to consider

We used bratwurst, which was par-boiled. We sliced the tops diagonally like the buns

and then roasted them over our bonfire. Laurie prepared a homemade relish, which we applied to the buns with stone-ground mustard. A bit of shredded cheddar highlighted the preparation.

A simple preparation for a salad dressing is a French combination of one part mustard, two parts vinegar and three parts vegetable oil. I like olive oil but safflower and others do the trick. A bit of honey sweetens and finely chopped herbs are great additions — consider parsley, tarragon or chopped chives.



Photos by David Campiche

Author David Campiche paired his pretzel bun with sausage, salad, vegetarian chili and a stout.



The finished pretzel buns on a cooling rack, ready to be devoured.