



## A Special Lenten Food

Perhaps the easiest and most significant Lenten food custom is to serve a small pretzel to each family member with meals during Lent. The pretzel is a symbol of prayer and fasting.

The pretzel was the Christian Lenten bread as far back as the fifth century. In the Roman Empire, the faithful Christians kept a strict fast all through Lent: no milk, butter, eggs, cheese, cream, or meat. They ate bread made of water, flour, and salt.

To remind themselves that Lent was a time of prayer, they shaped the bread into the form of arms crossed in prayer (in those days they crossed their arms over their chests while praying). They called the bread “little arms” (bracellae).

Today in many European places, pretzels are served only from Ash Wednesday to Easter, thus keeping the ancient symbolism alive.

### **Soft Pretzel Recipe – makes 4 pretzels**

1 package of yeast  
1 1/2 cup water  
1 tablespoon sugar  
1 tablespoon salt  
4 cups flour

Mix your yeast, water, sugar and salt in bowl. Stir in the flour, and knead until dough is smooth. Divide dough into 4 sections. Shape each section into the form of arms crossed in prayer and place on greased foil pan. Brush dough with a beaten egg to give it a shiny finish. Sprinkle the top with salt. Write your names on notecard and put with your pretzels to be baked. Bake in an oven preheated to 425 degrees for 15 minutes.