

## Bagels

To make sixteen Bagels:

1 cup milk, boiling

1/4 cup ( 1/2 stick) butter

2 tablespoons superfine sugar

1/2 ounce fresh yeast or 2 teaspoons dried

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 egg, separated

3 cups (14 ounces) all-purpose flour

poppy or sesame seeds, or coarse sea salt, optional



Pour the milk into a mixing bowl, stir in the butter and sugar and cool the mixture to lukewarm. Sprinkle in the yeast and leave it to stand — five minutes for fresh yeast and 15 minutes for dried. Stir in the salt and egg white and gradually beat in the flour to make a soft dough. Turn the dough on to a floured work surface and knead it until it is smooth. Return it to the bowl, cover it and leave it in a warm place for 1 hour or until it has doubled in size.

Knead the dough again and divide it into sixteen even-sized pieces. Form each one into a round. With one round on the work surface, flour your forefinger and gently press it through the middle of the round. Then gently work it round in a circle to make a hole. Make the hole bigger by twirling the bagel round and round, until it makes up about one third of the diameter. When all the bagels are done, cover them with a clean cloth e and leave them for 10 minutes.

For bagels, which are wet, you really need to grease your baking sheets to prevent them from sticking. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Bring a large pan of water to a boil and turn the heat to simmer so that the water is just trembling. Gently drop the bagels in the water, a few at a time so that there is no danger of their touching each other. Leave them in the water for about 15 seconds or until they begin to swell. Lift the bagels out with a wide, perforated spoon and place them on the prepared baking sheets.

Bake the bagels for 20 minutes, or until they are golden-brown Transfer them to wire racks to cool.