

PENNSYLVANIA PRETZELS

Good day everyone...it's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.

The German immigrants of 200 years ago who settled our Berks, Lehigh and Lancaster counties were in their own language "Deutsch". Their neighbors, unable to pronounce German properly called them "Dutch", these people who for generations in the old country, had worked with their hands and developed a high degree of manual dexterity. Their skilled hands enabled them to become expert pretzel rollers. Hand rolled and twisted pretzels have no equal for taste and consistency. There is much less friction and harsh treatment of the dough. Gently handling the dough permits the yeast to achieve full rising power. The tremendous popularity of the pretzel in modern times has made machinery necessary. However, as you have seen, at this year's festivals, many pretzel bakers in Pennsylvania--still hand-roll the dough as did their German ancestors. After these Dutch pretzel-rollers roll and twist the pretzels, they are placed on a board to rise. Then they're cooked for a few seconds in a solution of oat straw and soda ash. That gives them their flavoring and coloring. Salted next, the pretzels are placed in a red hot oven for a "flash" bake--they come out soft on the inside, and have a thin crust on the out. They're then placed in a drying kiln for several hours; the remaining moisture is removed, causing the pretzels to become brittle and crunchy. That's how to make a Pennsylvania pretzel properly--but of course, I haven't given you the dough secret--and that's something you'll have to discover for yourself. Be it known that Pennsylvania has more

pretzel bakeries than any other place in the world--Pretzels from Pennsylvania are world famous--our GI's in far-off places ask for two things most from their folks--one of the two--pretzels. The pretzel was originally invented by a monk in a monastery--a left-over from his baking of the day. He twisted them, light-baked the goodies and gave them to children as a reward for good deeds done. Although there is great competition among our Pennsylvania pretzel bakeries, they'll all admit that nobody--(nowhere) can make pretzels like Pennsylvanians. The taste tells the truth. Pretzel bakers are people who descended from the Dutch of the old country, who knew how to work with their hands--and doing it by hand is still the best way to make a pretzel. Some pretzel bakeries in these Dutch counties can be visited daily as part of your trip into that area. You'll enjoy seeing pretzels made--and the nice people are always generous enough to provide visitors with the product. Pennsylvania's pretzels--the world's best!

This is Pete Wambach. It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.