

# TRADITIONAL BRITISH CRUMPETS

*Crumpets are the quintessential, [afternoon tea](#) treat, served warm with lots of butter. There are many ready-made brands out there but it is so much fun to make your own - just plan ahead as the batter needs a few hours to rise. Once ready simply serve the crumpets warm with butter, or a little jam as well for an extra special treat.*

*This recipe yields 24 crumpets*

**Prep Time:** 10 mins - **Cook Time:** 20 mins - **To foam the batter :** 2 hrs

## Ingredients:

- 12 fl oz/350ml semi-skimmed milk, warmed but not boiling
- 1 lb/450g all purpose or plain flour
- 1/8 oz/5g dried yeast
- 2 tsp sugar
- 12 fl oz/350ml finger-warm water (approx)
- 1 tsp Salt
- 1 tsp baking powder
- Vegetable oil for cooking

## Preparation:

1. Whisk together the milk, flour, yeast and sugar. Once combined add half the water and beat into the batter, continue to add more water until the batter is thick and smooth. Stop adding water once it reaches the consistency of thick cream. Cover with cling film and leave in a warm draft free place until foaming - about 1, up to 2 hours.
2. Whisk the salt and baking powder into the batter then heat a heavy based frying pan on the stove to hot but not smoking.
3. Dampen kitchen paper with a little oil and grease the base of the pan and a crumpet (or pastry) rings measuring 3"x 1 ½" (8 X 3.75cm) approx. If you don't have any pastry or crumpet rings then use a small, washed food can to the same measurements.
4. Place one ring in the heated pan, add enough batter to fill just below the top of the ring. Cook for five minutes when there should be many tiny holes on the surface and the crumpet is setting. Flip the crumpet over and cook for another two - three minutes.
5. Repeat with the remaining batter until used up. Rest the crumpets on a wire rack until cool and reheat in a toaster or under the grill before serving. Serve with lots of butter and/or jam.

**NOTE:** *If the batter seeps from under the ring it is too thin, whisk in more flour. If the crumpet is heavy and without holes, the batter is too thick, add more water.*

# The English Crumpet

This essentially English comfort food has been around for at least a few hundred years, though the actual timing is a little uncertain...



Over that time, the crumpet has gathered to itself a whole spectrum of meanings and associations in British culture: coziness, warmth, home and hearthside, the tea table loaded down with nice things... because where crumpets are, tea is usually not far behind. Toasted on one side under the grill or in the toaster or toaster oven, slathered with butter that seeps into all those lovely little holes... a crumpet is something

special.

(Harry Potter readers, take note: where the US editions of the earlier HP books say "English muffin", they really mean crumpet. [The US editors, then nervous about introducing too many British cultural references](#), substituted the closest North American breakfast breadstuff they could find -- but the texture and flavor of the crumpet are completely different from those of the English muffin.)

The *Oxford English Dictionary* tells us when the word first turned up in print, as a variant of the much older phrase "crompid cake":

*[1694:Westmacott] They make Cakes of it (Buck Wheat)...as they do oat-cakes, and call it Crumpit. Crumpet...A soft cake made of flour, beaten egg, milk, and barm or baking powder, mixed into batter, and baked on an iron plate...Now usually a soft, round, doughy cake made with flour and yeast, cooked on a griddle or the like and usually eaten toasted with butter. [1769:Raffald] To make tea crumpets..."*

The recipe may possibly have originated in the English Midlands as a variant of the older pancakes and griddle breads that were already commonplace. (There seem to be connections with the Welsh pancake called *cremog* and the Breton buckwheat *krampoch*.)

Naturally in the UK you can buy them in stores: but storebought crumpets can't really compare with the real thing made fresh just minutes before you eat it. The problem is that at first glance, it seems like a lot of work in that you wind up needing griddles, crumpet rings and so forth. But making crumpets is nowhere near as much work as it sounds like, and really rewards the effort. What's important is to find the right recipe.... and we've got it.

The basic concept hasn't changed much in the last few hundred years. Elizabeth Raffald's recipe from 1769 looks like this:

*To make tea crumpets Beat two eggs very well, put them to a quart of warm milk and water, and a large spoonful of barm: beat in as much fine flour as will make them rather thicker than a common batter pudding, then make your bakestone very hot, and rub it with a little butter wrapped in a clean linen cloth, then pour a large spoonful of batter upon your stone, and let it run to the size of a tea-saucer; turn it, and when you want to use them roast them very crisp, and butter them.*

This recipe was later improved by the addition of the crumpet ring, which made for a taller, more breadlike crumpet. While you can buy crumpet rings, they tend to be expensive: you

can do just as well with the standard-sized flat tuna or salmon can -- just take the tops and bottoms off them.

Crumpets are not widely available in Ireland (where EuroCuisineLady presently resides) and therefore mostly have to be made at home. We've spent some years trying out different recipes, and this is the best one we've found.

The problem for a lot of would-be crumpet bakers has been that there are a lot of crumpet recipes out there that don't work. Either the batters come out too thick -- so the bubbles can't break and leave the necessary holes on top -- or they're too sloppy, and the bubbles either come out too small to let the melted butter in, or break too soon, so that again you wind up with a "blind" bake with no holes. This batter works perfectly, though.

EuroCuisineLady sometimes alters this recipe by using two packages of yeast instead of one. It seems to improve the flavor. Also, you don't really need the two kinds of flour for this recipe -- they're preferable, but not absolutely necessary. Just make sure you beat the batter the full two minutes the first time. You want to make sure the gluten develops enough.

The only even slightly tricky part of the actual crumpet-making is that you have to remember to butter the crumpet rings (or tuna cans or whatever) very well inside and on the edges between each batch. When you're ready to turn the crumpets, though the recipe suggests using tongs, it's just as easy to use a flat knife to nudge the rings up and off the crumpets as soon as the outsides are solid. That way you can set them aside to cool so you can handle them as soon as the crumpets presently in the pan or on the griddle or bakestone are done.

When you toast these, do it under the grill / broiler, or in a toaster oven that lets you do just one side. Then slather on that butter...

# TRADITIONAL BRITISH CRUMPETS

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups (230g) unbleached white bread flour
- 1 2/3 cups (230g) unbleached all purpose flour
- 3/4 tsp cream of tartar
- 1 0.6oz cake fresh yeast (15g) or 1 envelope active dry yeast (2 1/4 tsps) plus 1/2 tsp sugar
- 2 1/4 cups (510ml) lukewarm water
- 3 1/2 tsps (10g) coarse sea salt, crushed or ground (use about half this if you're not grinding your own coarse sea salt. If you're measuring by weight instead of volume, you're fine.)
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 2/3 cup (140ml) lukewarm milk

And to prepare the crumpets, you'll need:

- a griddle or cast-iron frying pan
- 4 crumpet rings, about 3 1/2 inches diameter, greased

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sift together the flours and cream of tartar into a large bowl. If using dry yeast, mix the granules and the sugar with 3/4 cup lukewarm water and let stand until foamy, 5 to 10 minutes. Stir in the remaining lukewarm water.
2. Mix the yeast mixture into the flour to make a very thick, but smooth batter, beating vigorously with your hand or a wooden spoon for two minutes. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let stand in a warm spot until the batter rises and then falls, about 1 hour.
3. Add the salt and beat the batter for about 1 minute. Then cover the bowl and let stand in a warm spot for 15 to 20 minutes, so the batter can rest.
4. Dissolve the baking soda in the lukewarm milk. Then gently stir it into the batter. The batter should not be too stiff or your crumpets will be "blind" -- without holes -- so it is best to test one before cooking the whole batch.
5. Heat a clean griddle or frying pan over moderately low heat for about 3 minutes until very hot. Put a well-greased crumpet ring on the griddle. Spoon or pour 1/3 cup of the batter into the ring. The amount of batter will depend on the size of your crumpet ring.
6. As soon as the batter is poured into the ring, it should begin to form holes. If holes do not form, add a little more lukewarm water, a TBSP at a time, to the batter in the bowl and try again. If the batter is too thin and runs out under the ring, gently work in a little more all-purpose flour and try again. Once the batter is the proper consistency, continue with the remaining batter, cooking the crumpets in batches, three or four at a time. As soon as the top surface is set and covered with holes, 7 to 8 minutes, the crumpet is ready to flip over.
7. To flip the crumpet, remove the ring with a towel or tongs, then turn the crumpet carefully with a spatula. The top, cooked side should be chestnut brown. Cook the second, holey side of the crumpet for 2 to 3 minutes, or until pale golden. The crumpet should be about 3/4 inch thick. Remove the crumpet from the griddle. Grease the crumpet rings well after each use.

# *Homemade Soft Pretzels*

FROM ALTON BROWN

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups warm (110 to 115 degrees F) water
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 package active dry yeast
- 22 ounces all-purpose flour, approximately 4 1/2 cups
- 2 ounces unsalted butter, melted
- Vegetable oil, for pan
- 10 cups water
- 2/3 cup baking soda
- 1 large egg yolk beaten with 1 tablespoon water
- Pretzel salt (or kosher)

## PREPARATION

1. Combine the water, sugar and kosher salt in the bowl of a stand mixer and sprinkle the yeast on top. Allow to sit for 5 minutes or until the mixture begins to foam. Add the flour and butter and, using the dough hook attachment, mix on low speed until well combined. Change to medium speed and knead until the dough is smooth and pulls away from the side of the bowl, approximately 4 to 5 minutes. Remove the dough from the bowl, clean the bowl and then oil it well with vegetable oil. Return the dough to the bowl, cover with plastic wrap and sit in a warm place for approximately 50 to 55 minutes or until the dough has doubled in size.
2. Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F. Line 2 half-sheet pans with parchment paper and lightly brush with the vegetable oil. Set aside.
3. Bring the 10 cups of water and the baking soda to a rolling boil in an 8-quart saucepan or roasting pan.
4. In the meantime, turn the dough out onto a slightly oiled work surface and divide into 8 equal pieces. Roll out each piece of dough into a 24-inch rope. Make a U-shape with the rope, holding the ends of the rope, cross them over each other and press onto the bottom of the U in order to form the shape of a pretzel. Place onto the parchment-lined half sheet pan.
5. Place the pretzels into the boiling water, 1 by 1, for 30 seconds. Remove them from the water using a large flat spatula. Return to the half sheet pan, brush the top of each pretzel with the beaten egg yolk and water mixture and sprinkle with the pretzel salt. Bake until dark golden brown in color, approximately 12 to 14 minutes. Transfer to a cooling rack for at least 5 minutes before serving.

# New York Style Bagels

*From the cookbook Ultimate Bread by Eric Treuille and Ursula Ferrigno*

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 teaspoons of active dry yeast
- 1 ½ tablespoons of granulated sugar
- 1 ¼ cups of warm water (you may need  $\pm$  ¼ cup more, I know I did)
- 3 ½ cups (500g) of bread flour or high gluten flour (plus need extra for kneading)
- 1 ½ teaspoons of salt
- **OPTIONAL TOPPINGS:** Caraway seeds, coarse salt, minced fresh garlic, minced fresh onion, poppy seeds, or sesame seeds. (Everyone in my house prefers plain bagels, but I have no preference, so I just went with the plain, so no one could complain.)

## PREPARATION

1. In ½ cup of the warm water, pour in the sugar and yeast. **Do not stir.** Let it sit for five minutes, and then stir the yeast and sugar mixture, until it all dissolves in the water.
2. Mix the flour and salt in a large bowl. Make a well in the middle and pour in the yeast and sugar mixture. NEXT, pour half of the remaining warm water into the well. Mix and stir in the rest of the water as needed. Depending on where you live, you may need to add anywhere from a couple tablespoons to about ¼ cup of water. You want the result to be a moist and firm dough after you have mixed it.
3. On a floured countertop, knead the dough for about 10 minutes until it is smooth and elastic. **Try working in as much flour as possible to form a firm and stiff dough.**
4. Lightly brush a large bowl with oil and turn the dough to coat. Cover the bowl with a damp dish towel. Let rise in a warm place for 1 hour, until the dough has doubled in size. Punch the dough down, and let it rest for another 10 minutes.
5. Carefully divide the dough into 8 equal pieces. Shape each piece into a round. Now, take a dough ball, and press it gently against the countertop moving your hand and the ball in a circular motion pulling the dough into itself while reducing the pressure on top of the dough slightly until a perfect dough ball forms (as pictured below). Repeat with 7 other dough rounds.
6. Coat a finger in flour, and gently press your finger into the center of each dough ball to form a ring. Stretch the ring to about ⅓ the diameter of the bagel and place on a lightly oiled cookie sheet. Repeat the same step with the remaining dough.
7. After shaping the dough rounds and placing them on the cookie sheet, cover with a damp kitchen towel and allow to rest for 10 minutes. **Preheat your oven to 425°F**
8. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Reduce the heat. Use a slotted spoon or skimmer to lower the bagels into the water. Boil as many as you are comfortable with boiling. Once the bagels are in, it shouldn't take too long for them to float to the top (a couple seconds). Let them sit there for 1 minute, and then flip them over to boil for another minute. Extend the boiling times to 2 minutes each, if you'd prefer a chewier bagel (results will give you a more New York Style bagel with this option).
9. If you want to top your bagels with stuff, do so as you take them out of the water, You will need to use an egg wash to get the toppings to stick before putting the bagels into the oven.
10. Once all the bagels have boiled (and have been topped with your choice of toppings), transfer them to a lightly oiled baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes, until golden brown. Cool on a wire rack.