

Roasted Onion-Poppy Seed Bialys

Makes 8

Bialys are one of the classic Jewish breads, along with bagels, rye bread, and challah, but most people, including a lot of bakers, have never heard of them. Maybe they need a better publicist. These bialys look a little like mini pizzas, thick rimmed and about 5 inches in diameter, though the topping hews to traditional simplicity: roasted onion with a sprinkling of poppy seeds and kosher salt. Fresh from the oven with a pat of butter or chunk of cream cheese melting on top, they make a transcendent anytime nosh. The generally held wisdom is that bialys were named for Bialystok, a town in Poland where they were especially popular among the large pre-World War II Jewish population there. From Bialystok to New York City, bialys remain a Jewish deli specialty best enjoyed fresh from your home oven.

Dough

- 3 cups / 1 pound / 450g bread or high-gluten flour
- 2 tablespoons / 1 ounce / 30g granulated sugar
- 3 teaspoons / ¼ ounce / 10g instant or bread machine yeast (or 1 packet active dry yeast)
- 1 tablespoon / ½ ounce / 15g kosher salt (we use Morton's kosher salt)
- 1 cup / 8 ounces / 225g lukewarm (75°F to 85°F) water
- ½ cup / 5 ounces / 150g Sourdough Starter (page 175)
- Vegetable oil, as needed

To make the dough, in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook attachment, place the flour, sugar, yeast, and salt. (Alternatively, if using active dry yeast, stir it into ½ cup of the lukewarm water to proof for 15 minutes, or until the water begins to bubble or foam.) Combine for a few seconds with a spoon or by hand. Add most of the 1 cup lukewarm water to the dry ingredients, holding back a tablespoon or two. (Alternatively, if using active dry yeast, add all the water in which the yeast was proofing plus the remaining ½ cup lukewarm water to the dry ingredients, holding back a tablespoon or two.) Add the Sourdough Starter. Mix on the

Topping

- 2 medium yellow onions, coarsely chopped
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- Poppy seeds, for sprinkling
- Kosher salt, for sprinkling

lowest speed to incorporate all the ingredients, 1 to 2 minutes. Increase the speed to medium and mix for another 8 to 10 minutes, stopping once or twice to scrape down the side of the mixing bowl, if necessary, and to check the consistency of the dough. The finished dough should be soft, smooth, supple, and slightly tacky but not sticky. If the dough is too dry, add the remaining tablespoon or two of water a little at a time until the proper consistency is achieved. Start the mixer on low speed after each addition of water to avoid splashing before returning to medium speed to complete the mixing time.

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