11 Arrange the pretzels on the prepared pans. They will expand as they proof; give them enough space so they will not come in contact with each other.

12 Proof the dough following the times and temperatures in the General Directions table (see page 219). Test for proof using the fingertip test (see page 3-223). While the dough is proofing and while wearing gloves and protective eyewear, dissolve the lye in the water in a saucepot using an immersion blender or a whisk. When the lye is dissolved, the mixture will get warm.

13 Bake the dough according to the Pretzel Baking Times and Temperatures table (see next page).

14 Allow them to cool down completely. While they cool down, line a sheet pan with a wire rack and spray it with a coat of cooking oil.

15 Wearing gloves and protective eyewear, dip the top of the cool pretzels in the lye solution. Don’t submerge them completely—just float them.

16 Place the pretzels on the oiled cooling rack, and sprinkle pretzel salt on top of them.

17 Return the pretzels to the oven at the same temperature, but open the vent (or crack open the door if your oven does not vent) and bake for 5 min, or until they are a deep amber brown.

18 Remove the pretzels from the oven, and immediately but carefully lift them from the wire rack using an offset spatula. Transfer to a sheet pan lined with parchment paper, and allow the pretzels to cool to room temperature.

19 Consume within 1 d, or freeze for up to 2 mo.