

Search

Web Search
by **YAHOO!**

56° L/RAIN, GAINESVILLE, FL | HOME DELIVERY

Home News Sports Entertainment Living Opinion Blogs Obituaries

ARTICLE REPOSITORY

HOME > NEWS

Pretzel bread twisting up at restaurants, bakeries



AP Photo

Associated Press

In this photo taken Feb. 23, 2010, in Chicago, pretzel bread is whisked fresh from the oven to be made into sandwiches at Hannah's Bretzel. Baking experts say pretzel bread, a cousin of the ubiquitously popular crispy, salted snack, is growing in popularity, popping up on menus and in sandwich orders from California bakeries to New York restaurants.

CARYN ROUSSEAU
Associated Press Writer

Published: Monday, March 8, 2010 at 1:00 p.m.

Last Modified: Monday, March 8, 2010 at 1:00 p.m.

CHICAGO — The smell of freshly baked bread wafts through Hannah's Bretzel, a downtown restaurant where the ovens are lined with rows of pretzel bread loaves that are sold on their own and used to make sandwiches filled with hams, cheeses and other gourmet ingredients.

"It's just soft and salty," says customer Stephanie Klein, who ordered an Italian Parma ham sandwich on the bread during a recent lunch hour and visits about three times a month. "I'm big on a soft, good tasting bread."

Twist this: Baking experts say pretzel bread — a cousin of the ubiquitously popular crispy, salted snack — is growing in popularity, popping up on menus and in sandwich orders from California bakeries to New York restaurants.

The centuries-old chewy German bread with its doughy consistency and salted crust is "almost in that trend phase where you're seeing it almost everywhere," said Tom Vaccaro, senior director of baking and pastries at the Culinary Institute of America, where pretzels are taught in classes.

"It offers a lot of flavor components when you eat it," Vaccaro said. "For a lot of people it's in that comfort food zone, meaning a lot of people as children, as kids went to fairs, went to baseball games, football games, where you had pretzels for sale."

Pretzel bread is featured on the menu at more than 1,000 Blimpie restaurants in the U.S. as part of a turkey, bacon and cheddar sandwich, but customers can request any sandwich on the pretzel bread.

"It has been a raving success," said Kate Unger, vice president of marketing for Blimpie. "We know once we get that product into our customers' hands we can win them over."

Corner Bakery Cafe, a restaurant chain based in Dallas, has had pretzel bread on the menu since the early 1990s and currently serves it as ham and turkey sandwiches, said Ric Scicchitano, the restaurant's senior vice president of food and beverage. He calls it a signature item.

"Anytime you want to grab a bun to make a sandwich, or a hoagie roll, pretzel bread nine times out of 10 is a great option," Scicchitano said.

Pretzel bread also has an appeal for diners looking for something different, said Vaccaro, with the Culinary Institute of America.

"This is one of those breads that has a great crumb and texture and a great flavor," he said.

"It has all the great parts you're looking for when you're looking for a great bread."