



# THE MAKING OF A BAGEL

Birmingham, Alabama's Crestline Bagel knows the best bagels are homemade and handcrafted. That's why their bakers arrive at 1:30 a.m. to make sure warm bagels await customers when their doors open each morning.

BY AVERY DRIGGERS  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAC JAMIESON

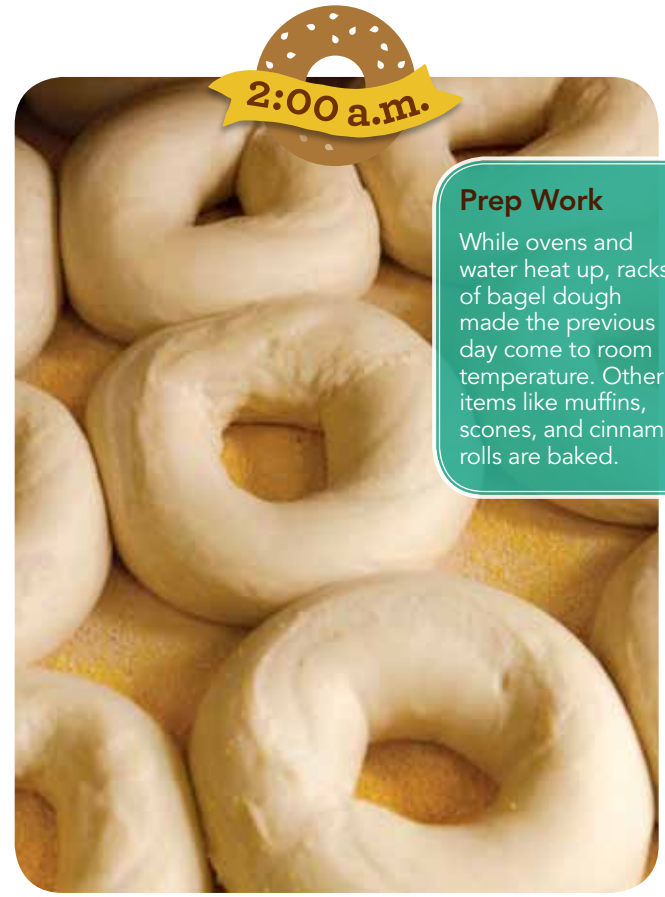


Bagels are baked on burlap strips placed on baking trays to keep dough from sticking. The burlap strips are sprinkled with toppings before the bagels are laid down.



1:30 a.m.

**Bakers Arrive**  
It takes about 45 minutes to an hour for the ovens to reach 525° and for the water to come to a rolling boil.



2:00 a.m.

**Prep Work**  
While ovens and water heat up, racks of bagel dough made the previous day come to room temperature. Other items like muffins, scones, and cinnamon rolls are baked.





3:00 a.m.

**Boil**

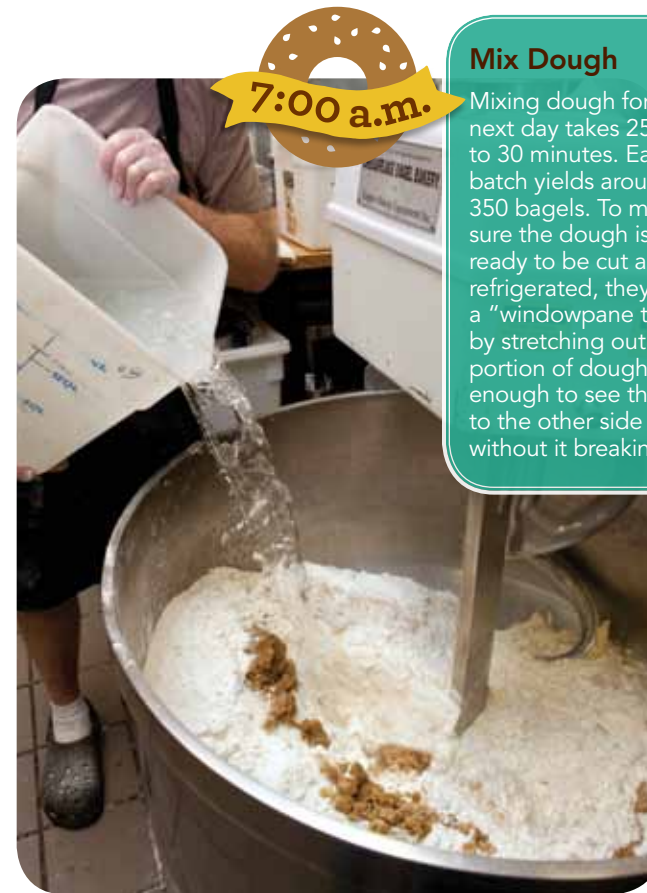
Bagels boil from 20 to 60 seconds, depending on the dough flavor, wheat, and time of year. They are removed only when they're clamoring out of the pot. Boiling gives them the "skin" and shine associated with New York-style bagels.



4:30 a.m.

**Top & Bake**

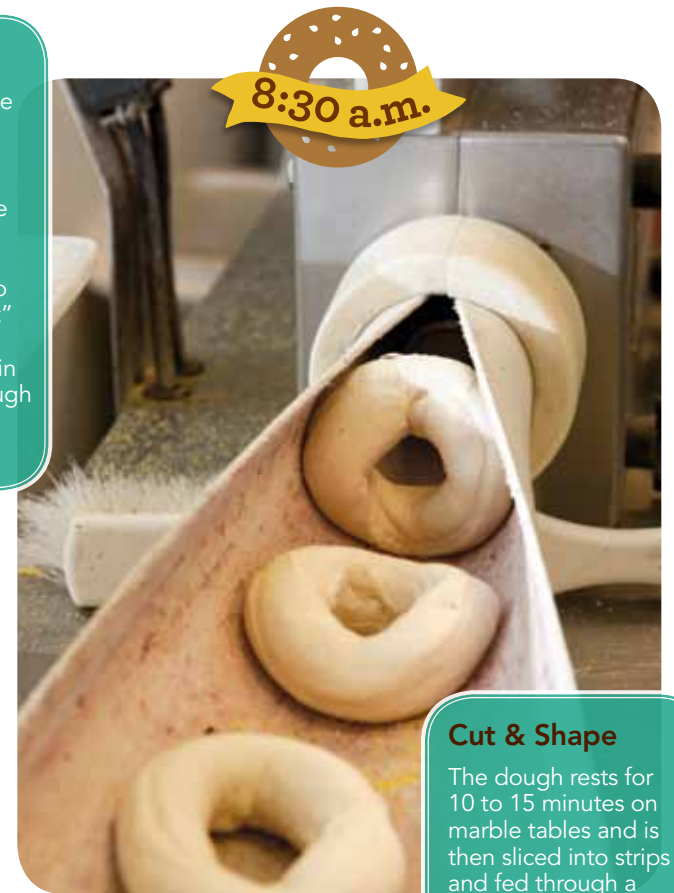
Bagels get topped after boiling so the ingredients adhere to the wet dough. Then, they are placed on burlap strips laid over metal baking trays and baked for 30 minutes at 525° to allow the yeast to properly activate.



7:00 a.m.

**Mix Dough**

Mixing dough for the next day takes 25 to 30 minutes. Each batch yields around 350 bagels. To make sure the dough is ready to be cut and refrigerated, they do a "windowpane test" by stretching out a portion of dough thin enough to see through to the other side without it breaking.



8:30 a.m.

**Cut & Shape**

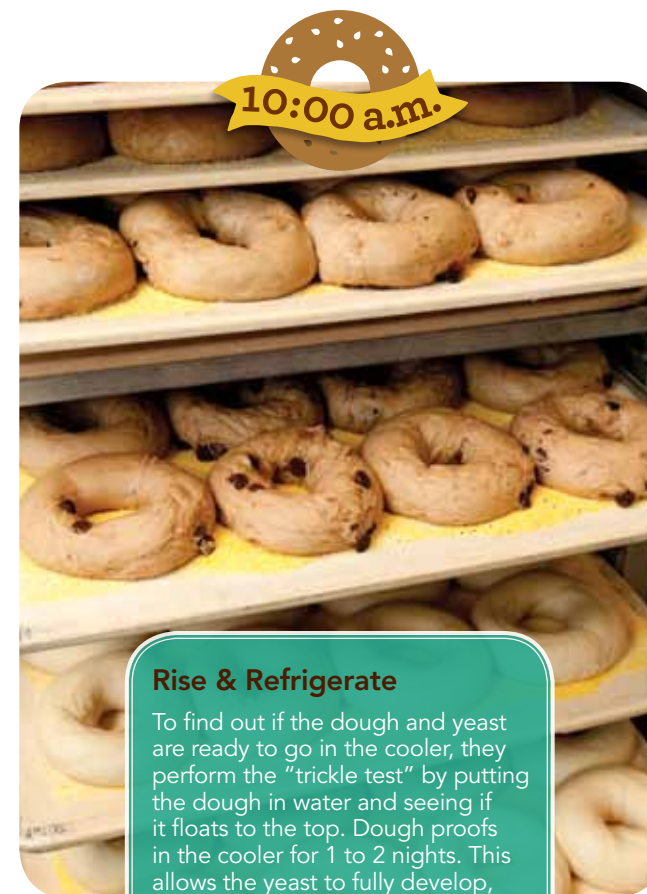
The dough rests for 10 to 15 minutes on marble tables and is then sliced into strips and fed through a machine that cuts and forms the bagels.



6:00 a.m.

**Open for Business**

Bagels are served hot from the oven at 6:00 a.m. Owner Jennifer Yarbrough says eating a hot bagel versus a room-temperature bagel is like eating cold pizza instead of pizza straight from the oven.



10:00 a.m.

**Rise & Refrigerate**

To find out if the dough and yeast are ready to go in the cooler, they perform the "trickle test" by putting the dough in water and seeing if it floats to the top. Dough proofs in the cooler for 1 to 2 nights. This allows the yeast to fully develop, giving bagels their distinct flavor.



**A clean label makes a better bagel.**

Crestline Bagel is a "clean label" company, meaning no preservatives or artificial ingredients are used. They are also the only kosher bakery in Alabama, blessed by Rabbi Posner and Rabbi Friedman every morning.

*Crestline Bagel is located at 66 Church Street in Mountain Brook, Alabama. You can purchase their bagels in Birmingham at Whole Foods, Winn-Dixie, Western Supermarkets, Piggly Wiggly, and Freshfully. You can also order online at [crestlinebagel.com](http://crestlinebagel.com).*