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Transcript

How to Make Kosher Challah

Hi, I'm Rachel Edelman for About.com Food. Today I'm going to show you how to make homemade kosher challah.

Kosher Challah Ingredients

- 4 1/2 cups sifted flour
- 1 package dry yeast
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1/4 cup lukewarm water plus 1 cup
- 2 teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 1 egg yolk

Combine the Ingredients

In a small bowl, combine the yeast, sugar, and 1/4 cup of lukewarm water. Let it stand for five minutes so the yeast can activate.

In a large bowl, combine the flour and salt. In the middle, create a well for the liquids. Pour in the eggs, oil, 1 cup of water, and the yeast mixture. Use your hands to mix all of the ingredients together. Knead the bread with both hands.

Cover and Divide the Dough

Once you have a ball of dough, cover it with an oiled plastic wrap. Let the dough sit in a warm place to rise for about an hour. Punch down the dough a few times, and then let it rise for about an hour. The dough should be about double its original size.

Lightly flour a rolling surface. Put down the dough and split it into four sections. Three of these will go towards a six-braided challah, and the fourth piece will be for a three-braided challah.

Make a Six-Braided Challah

To make a six-braided challah, divide the three parts in half so you have six balls of dough. With your hands, roll the dough into long pieces about 12 inches long. Now you have six strands to braid.

Lay them out in a row and attach them to each other at the top. There are two right pieces, two middle pieces and two left pieces.

There are two sections to the braiding. First, pick up the left center strand and pull it to the top so it's over the other strands. Second, hold the center right strand and the inner left strand together. Then, pull the outer left strand under those other two.

Now we switch the two center pieces, up and down. Next, take the center right strand and the inner right strand in one hand. Then, pull the outer right strand under.

Continue switching the centers and pulling in the outside strand under until you run out of dough. At the end, bring the strands together and tuck them under the challah.

Make a Three-Braided Challah

For a three-strand braid, divide the dough into three pieces. Roll out the pieces into long strands and attach them at the top.

To braid, take the right strand and bring it over the middle one. Then, take the left strand and bring that over

the middle. Continue to do this, outside over middle, until you reach the end. Bring the strands together and tuck them under.

Bake the Challah

Once the dough is braided, place them on a greased cookie sheet or loaf pan. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees, and let the bread rise one last time.

Finally, beat the egg and completely paint the dough with the egg. This will bring a nice golden color to the finished bread.

Place the sheets into the oven and cook for 50 minutes. Let the loaves cool on a wire rack, and enjoy!

Thanks for watching. To learn more, visit us on the Web at food.about.com.

2nd Challah Recipe (note the use of honey and other tips – use in first recipe)

1/2 cup oil

1/2 cup honey

1 tablespoon salt

3 eggs

2 cups warm water

50 grams yeast, or 2 Fleishman's yeast cakes, or 3 packages Fleishman's dried yeast

8 to 9 cups flour (whole wheat and white). A combination of both flours makes the best challahs.

Mix the ingredients - putting the oil into the bowl first and then measure and add the honey - using the same measuring cup that you measured the oil in. This little trick allows the honey to run smoothly out of the measuring cup. Add the remaining ingredients in the order given.

In Israel the yeast can be purchased in two forms. One is a measured bag of 50 grams in a solid form, and the other is a bag of yeast granules. I use the yeast granules and these dissolve well, mixed into the recipe just before the flour is added. If you use the American yeast, I dissolve it in 1 cup of the warm water before putting it into the bowl.

When making my challah in an electric mixer, I let it knead for 3 minutes and then do a little hand-kneading as I transfer the dough into an oiled bowl. If it is kneaded by hand, it is necessary to knead the dough for 10 minutes.

Let the dough rise in a large bowl that has been coated with oil. When transferring the dough into the oiled bowl, be sure to turn it on all sides so that it gets a thin coating of oil. Place the bowl in a warm place until the dough is double in size -- then punch down and knead a bit more.

Place the dough back in the bowl and let it rise a second time. This should take about one hour. Punch down and cut into sizes desired. For very special occasions, I make one large challah using all of the dough. When the breads are shaped, brush them generously with egg yolk and sprinkle with either poppy seeds or sesame seeds.

Bake in 350-degree oven for approximately 25-30 minutes, or until the challah sounds hollow when tapped.

Good Jerusalem URLs:

City of David Org: http://www.cityofdavid.org.il/hp_eng.asp

Aish Western Wall Tunnel Virtual tour: <http://www.aish.com/seminars/tunneltours/>

Prayer Shawls: <http://scheinerman.net/judaism/tallit/>

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Shabbat Shalom:

http://www.aish.com/shabbathowto/fridaynight/Friday_Night_1-2-3.asp

Friday night Kiddush:

http://www.aish.com/shabbathowto/fridaynight/Friday_Night_Kiddush_How_To.asp

Succat Hallel: www.jerusalempraise.com