

Challah!

By Mark Binder & Jonathan Berlowe Binder

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NOTE: These recipes were developed by Mark Binder, an author and storyteller in Providence, RI. You can find out more about him and his work at www.markbinder.com.

Ingredients

-) 2 cups flour, plus 5-7 more cups for kneading and extra for the counter
-) ½ cup sugar
-) 1½ tablespoons of active dry yeast (equivalent of 2 yeast packets)
-) 2 cups water
-) 1 egg
-) ½ cup canola oil
-) 1 heaping tablespoon kosher salt
-) 2 egg yolks (can be substituted with 1 full egg and 1 teaspoon water)

Supplies

-) Large bowl, towel, counter, cookie sheet with parchment paper, small bowl, wire cooling racks. Consider purchasing a silicone baking mat if you plan to make challah frequently.

Making the Dough

1. In a large bowl, add and stir together: 1 cup of flour, 2 cups warm water (about 110 degrees F, feels warm to the touch), sugar, yeast. The mixture does not need to be completely smooth.
2. Let sit for approximately 10 minutes until mix bubbles/froths (to make sure the yeast works).
3. Whisk the egg.
4. Stir in the following: Kosher salt, 1 whisked egg, canola oil, 1 cup of flour.

Kneading

1. Add 1 cup of flour at a time until the dough starts to “hang together” in a big ball.
2. Spread flour over the counter and dust your hands with flour to reduce sticking.
3. Scrape the dough out of the bowl and place it on the floured counter.
4. Knead the dough, pushing in and folding it over continuously. Take a rest if you need it.
5. Continue adding flour until the mixture feels soft and smooth “like a baby’s bottom.” This will likely take 4 or more cups of flour.

6. Place smooth, kneaded dough back in the bowl and cover it with towel to let it rise until it doubles (about 1½ - 2 hours).

NOTE: Follow **Option 1** below if you want to make the dough on day 1 and braid and bake it on day 2. Follow **Option 2** if you want to bake the challah within 3-4 hours.

After the first rise

1. Make sure you have given the dough time to rise until it doubles (it takes about 1.5 – 2 hours to double). It is ok let the dough rise past this amount of time.
2. Punch down gently on the dough.
3. Flour the counter and carefully place the dough on the counter, flattening and spreading it out.
4. Cut the dough equally into long, thin sections (you'll need 3 strands for a classic 3-braid challah and 6 strands for a 6-braid challah)
5. Roll out each rope with lightly floured hands. Length/thickness impacts the length/height of your braided challah.
6. Braid the challah. Pinch one end of the ropes together and braid. When finished braiding, pinch the other ends of the ropes together. NOTE: For a 3 braid – braid as if you are braiding hair. Left over the middle, right over the middle.
7. Place the braided challah on parchment paper/cookie sheet (or silicone baking mat) for the second rise (30 minutes – 1 hour)

After the second rise

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
2. Create an egg wash by mixing two egg yolks together (can substitute one whole egg and one teaspoon water)
3. Glaze or “paint” the braided challah with the egg wash. Feel free to add sesame/poppy seeds or other toppings.

Bake the Challah

-) The internal temperature should be 190 degrees F and the challah loaves should be golden brown.
-) Small challah: bake for 15-20 minutes
-) Medium challah: bake for 20 – 25 minutes
-) Large challah: bake for 25 -35 minutes

ENJOY!

OPTION 1

Make Dough on Day 1 & Bake on Day 2

Follow the recipe through “Making the Dough” and “Kneading”

-) Place bowl with dough in refrigerator, cover with towel or upside-down plate.
-) Remove bowl from refrigerator the next day and allow dough to get to room temperature (2+ hours)
-) Follow steps starting “after first rise”.

OPTION 2

Making Entire Recipe in 3-4 Hours

1. After Making the Dough and Kneading, place the covered dough (for first rise) in the (non-heated) oven. Allow dough to rise until almost doubled.
2. Braid challah as normal.
3. Use a heated oven for the second rise of the braided challah (heat oven to 200 degrees & then turn oven off).
4. Follow steps starting “after the second rise”.