

The Winning Challah

I've tried out a LOT of challah recipes. This is the recipe that has won the bake-off, both in terms of taste and ease of baking. This recipe is adapted from Yona Goldman's challah recipe. Enjoy!

<u>Step 1</u> 1.5 Tbsp Yeast (active dry yeast) 2 T Sugar 3/4 Cup Warm Water	<u>Step 2</u> ¾ Cup Sugar ½ Cup Oil ½ Tbsp Salt 1 Cup Warm Water 3 ¾ Cups flour 2 eggs	<u>Step 3</u> Around 3 ¾ Cups flour ½ Cup Warm Water
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Yields 2 large size loaves.

Combine yeast, sugar, and warm water (bathwater warm) in a bowl and let stand for 5 minutes. You will know your yeast is good to use if you see it bubbling and frothing. Using water that is too hot will kill the yeast. Using water that is too cold will not activate the yeast. Set the yeast mixture aside.

In a separate bowl combine all the ingredients from step two and knead together until your dough begins to form. When your mixture has become dough-like add the yeast mixture.

Once you have added the yeast mixture to the dough add the rest of the ingredients in step 3, but DO NOT add all the flour at once. You will need to judge the consistency as you add and you may find you need slightly less or slightly more flour than the recipe suggests. I'd suggest starting with 2.5 cups of flour. Knead everything together for a few minutes until you get smooth not sticky dough. Add flour as needed to get the right consistency. You do not want to add too much flour to the dough as it will become heavy and tough to work with.

Choose a large bowl for your dough to rise. Spray the bowl with cooking spray, place the dough in the bowl, cover with wax paper that has been sprayed and then with a damp clean towel. Place it in a warm area to rise. You can even place the dough in a warm oven. If you put the bowl in the oven to rise make sure that it is a metal bowl not plastic and I do not cover it with a towel. Let your dough rise until it doubles in size. That should be approximately 2 hours.

Once your dough has risen, punch the dough down removing all of the air bubbles. Take a piece of dough the size of an egg and recite the blessing for separating challah.

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו ה'ך העולם אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וציונו להפריש חלה

"Boruch Atoh Ado-nay Elo-heinu Melech Ha'Olam Asher Kidshanu B'mitzvosav V'tzivanu L'hafrish Challah"

"Blessed are You, Lord, our G-d, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us with his Commandments and commanded us to separate challah (from the dough)."

Take the piece of dough, wrap it in tin foil and bake until it's burnt.

Shape your challot, and then let them rise again until they double in size. Once they have risen and are ready to be baked, brush them with a beaten egg which will give them a beautiful sheen once baked. Place them in a preheated oven at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for about a half hour. Every oven is different so check your challot to see if they are golden brown on the top and light brown on the bottom. You can also tap the challot on the bottom to make sure they sound hollow.

Shabbat Shalom!