

Barnert Temple Sisterhood **PINK** Challah Recipe



Yields one challah.

This dough does not rise the same as standard challah dough. The end result is a bit denser/heavier than the light, fluffy challah you get from our standard recipe. However, it's still very delicious and does *NOT* taste like beets 😊 The dough itself is a vibrant fuchsia and looks almost like Play-Doh. However, once it's baked, the inside turns light brown, almost like whole wheat bread, and the exterior retains a pink hue.

Note: If you are joining us for our **PINK Challah Bake, please make the beet puree before we gather online. Just don't refrigerate the puree as it will be cold and impact the yeast and recipe. If you are nervous and want to make the beet puree with us, at least have your beet peeled and chopped and your blender ready to go.**

Ingredients:

- 1 package **fast-acting/instant/rapid-rise** yeast (yes, this recipe works better with this specific type of yeast)
- 1 red beet
- ½ cup of very warm water + extra to total 1 1/3 cup of puree
- 1 tsp sugar (to bloom the yeast)
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 egg (room temp)
- 1/3 cup oil
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 4 cups flour
- 1 egg yolk (room temp) for the egg wash
- Honey or agave (if you want to sweeten your egg wash)

Supplies:

- 2 large bowls (glass, ceramic or metal)
- Parchment or Silpat
- Tea towel

- Baking sheet(s)
- Cooking spray
- Gallon Ziploc bag (for expedited rising method)

Directions:

1. Peel the beet and chop into chunks. Place beet and ½ cup of water into a blender/Ninja to create a puree. Blend until smooth and there are no/minimal chunks. Transfer to a measuring cup and add additional water until you have 1 1/3 cup puree. If your water wasn't very warm, you may need to warm the puree in the microwave at 30-second intervals until warm. Depending on your microwave and the starting temp of the puree, this could take 1 – 2 minutes.
2. In a bowl, dissolve yeast and 1 tsp sugar in the beet puree and mix. Let stand for approximately 10 minutes (until bubbling and foaming). Note: It will not foam as much as standard yeast in water with sugar.
3. Mix salt, egg, oil, and remaining sugar in a separate bowl, and then add to the beet and yeast mixture. Mix well.
4. Gradually add flour, 1-2 cups at a time, mixing after each addition.
5. Once combined, flour your hands and knead dough until smooth and elastic, but not too sticky. (If adding raisins, add during this step.)
6. Cover with plastic wrap or towel. Let dough rise for 1-2 hours. Punch down approximately 1 hour into rising time. (If you do not have two hours, follow one of our expedited rising techniques described at the bottom of this document).
7. Braid and form dough as desired and place on baking pan with parchment or a Silpat mat. Coat with egg wash. Let rise another 30 minutes.
8. Bake in 350-degree pre-heated oven for approximately 30 minutes, until golden brown. If making one large challah, your baking time may need to be increased to 40 minutes. Check your dough with a toothpick to make sure the center is cooked.

FAQs from Challah Bakes

All-Purpose, Bread, Whole Wheat...Which Flour to Use

We typically use all-purpose white flour. Rita Kron, one of our teachers has used a white whole-wheat flour. Rebecca has used all-purpose and bread flour. However, the general consensus was that all-purpose flour does the trick!

For those who want to use whole wheat flour, know that you can't simply swap whole wheat for white flour. The whole wheat challahs you purchase from bakeries and stores are made from a blend of whole wheat and white flours. If you want to try a whole wheat challah, check out this recipe

(https://www.chabad.org/recipes/recipe_cdo/aid/2742173/jewish/Fluffy-Whole-Wheat-Challah.htm)

Rapid, Instant, Regular...Which Yeast to Use?

Technically, these yeasts are a bit different and can be used differently in recipes. However, our challah bakes are all about removing the intimidation factor so challah baking is easy and accessible. So, the short answer is this: They all work! Use what you have or can find in the store and follow the directions.

To learn more about the different types of yeast, visit <https://www.thekitchn.com/whats-the-difference-between-active-dry-yeast-and-instant-yeast-54252>.

How Warm Should the Water Be to Proof My Yeast?

For some, dealing with the yeast is the scariest part of making challah or bread. Yeast won't proof in water that is too cold, but water that is too hot will kill yeast.

Typically, hot water that is 105-115 degrees Fahrenheit is ideal. However, most of us don't have baking thermometers at home. You can use the good old-fashioned wrist method. If the water feels warm on your wrist, you should be fine.

To learn more about proofing yeast, visit <https://www.bobsredmill.com/blog/baking-101/what-temperature-kills-yeast/>

What's an Egg Wash?

Love that shiny look of challah? That comes from egg wash.

An egg wash is typically made of egg and water. According to [thespruceeats.com](https://www.thespruceeats.com), an egg wash is typically a 3:1 ratio. However, we have learned that the egg yolk is what creates that shiny finish. The more egg white you have, the duller the finish. For a shiny finish, use just the yolk with a dash of water. If you are using the whole egg, you can use 1 egg and approximately 1 tablespoon of water. If you want to sweeten your wash, you can add honey or agave. “How much honey or agave?” you ask. Our technical answer is, “One big squirt from your honey bottle.”

To learn more about the different types of egg wash, visit <https://www.thespruceeats.com/egg-wash-yeast-breads-rolls-3057783>.

When to Egg Wash

Ask a group of Jews a question and you'll get multiple answers. This situation is no different.

Two of today's teachers apply their egg wash right before baking (after the second rise). Another liked to apply it after braiding, before the second rise.

The bottom line is, pick what works for you. Just don't skip it. The egg wash adds the glossy brown coating that we have come to love on challah. However, it also helps apply moisture to the dough, which helps it rise.

Expedited Rising Process

Sometimes, we want to make challah but just don't have the time for 2 ½ hours of rising time. Furthermore, we could never do an in-person or virtual challah bake that lasted 3+ hours! That's why we have an expediting rising process.

Below are a few ways to expedite the rising process for your dough.

Plastic Bag in Warm Water

Grease a gallon Ziploc bag with cooking spray or oil. Place your dough in the bag. Fill a bowl with warm water, and place your Ziploc bag with dough in the warm water and cover with a towel.

Nested Bowls with Warm Water

Fill a bowl with very warm water (hot but not boiling). Oil another bowl, put your dough in the oiled bowl, and place the oiled bowl inside the other bowl with the hot water (nest the bowls). Cover with a towel.

The Oven/Microwave Method

Oven: Place a baking or pie dish filled with boiling water in the oven. Put your covered bowl in the oven and close the door. The heat and moisture from the dish will be trapped in the closed oven.

Microwave: Place a mug with boiling water in the microwave. Put your covered bowl in the microwave and close the door. The heat and moisture from the dish will be trapped in the closed microwave.

Expedited vs. Standard Rising Process: Which is “Better?”

“Better” is a totally subjective thing when it comes to challah. Have you ever heard people argue over who makes the best challah? People have very strong opinions when it comes to this delicious bread.

One is not better. They are just different and produce slightly different results. When you have the time to let your dough rise, you will get a lighter challah bread in the end. When you use the expedited process, the end result is a little denser. However, they are both delicious and will surely be devoured by you or the hungry mouths in your house.

Parchment/Silpat vs. Oil

Is parchment paper better than greasing your baking pan? Can you guess what our answer will be? Not better or worse – different.

If you are making challah in a pan with sides (e.g., a round pan, a loaf pan, etc.) spraying the pan with cooking spray does the trick! If you are making a braided challah on an open pan, parchment paper or a Silpat mat works nicely and makes clean-up easy. The bottom line is that either works. Try both out, and pick which you prefer.

Neutral vs. Flavored Oils

We typically use vegetable oil in our challah recipe. However, it can be fun to experiment with flavored oils. Have a garlic oil or a rosemary oil that has been sitting in your closet for ages? Yum! Flavored oils can add a fun variation to your standard challah.

Vegetable vs. Olive Oil

Typically, when a challah recipe calls for oil it means vegetable oil. However, you can use olive oil. There are many types of olive oils out there, and they will impact your dough in slightly different ways. If you use a basic olive oil that doesn't have a strong flavor, you will barely notice the difference. If you use one with a strong flavor, the flavor will come through in your challah. The main impact of using olive oil is that it makes your dough a bit richer and moister. I happen to like it, but it's more expensive to use olive oil, so I typically stick with the lesser-expensive vegetable oil.

Do Room-Temp Eggs Matter?

Apparently, they do. Using cold eggs can impact the rise of your dough because they cause the temperature of your dough to drop.

I never remember to take my eggs out in advance to warm them up, so what do I do? I put them in a mug of very hot tap water for approximately 10 minutes (essentially, while the yeast blooms). That does the trick!

How Dangerous is it to “Experiment” With the Recipe?

Not dangerous at all. Want to add another egg or egg yolk? Want to replace the water with warm milk? Want to add a little garlic powder to the recipe? Why not! This recipe is a standard “go to” recipe that leaves room for experimentation and creativity.

“Taking Challah”/Hafrashat Challah – What Is It and Why Do We Do It?

Have you ever seen someone remove a piece challah dough and cook it separately? You are either saying, “Yes!” or “Huh?”

There is an ancient tradition associated with challah making called hafrashat challah. In the Torah, God tells Moses to instruct the

Israelites to set aside the first loaf in their bread baking as a gift to God. In observance of this mitzvah, the Israelites set aside a portion of their dough for the kohanim (priests). The dough was considered part of their salary since the priests were essentially public servants.

Today there is no Temple in Jerusalem. But this practice of “taking challah” (in Hebrew, *hafrashat challah*) is still around. Instead of bringing dough to the kohanim, though, we separate a small piece of dough — about the size of an olive — and either burn it or dispose of it respectfully, rendering inedible the portion that God commanded be set aside.

Learn more about this tradition at

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/ask-the-expert-taking-challah/>

Braiding Doesn't Have to be Scary

Most people can handle a 3-strand braid. If you have ever braided someone's hair, you can braid challah. When you begin discussing 4, 6 and 8 strands, anxiety levels seem to rise. Here's where YouTube will come to the rescue! Braiding/weaving round challah is actually easier than braiding regular challahs. However, with a bit of practice, braiding won't feel so daunting.

Below are links to two videos about creating braided round challahs.

- 4-Strand Round:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dj8tuQ1RojM>
- 4 & 6-Strand Round:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7D8PSBsy1M>

Below are links to some other braiding videos for regular challahs.

- 12 Minutes of Braiding Techniques!
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T99q8NPLdYU>
- 4-Strand:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=109&v=llhB1eNh580&feature=emb_logo

- 4-Strand “Over Under”:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sk_PPaAwOE
- 5 Strand:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZUXChyB3dhA>
-
- 6-Strand Regular:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWSPfToKiYA>
- 7 Strand:
https://www.tiktok.com/@challahprince/video/6992855419840466181?lang=en&is_copy_url=1&is_from_webapp=v1
- 8 Strand:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGlv0ul4djw>