

Carol Dochen's Challah Bread Recipe

Ingredients-this recipe makes two loaves. Cut recipe in half for one loaf.

2 Cups very warm water –hot enough to keep your hand in it
1/4 cup sugar
2 packages Rapid Rise Yeast or 4.5 tbsp standard yeast
7-8 cups bread flour (I like King Arthur bread flour)
1 Tbsp Kosher salt
2 eggs
½ cup vegetable oil

Toppings:

1 beaten egg or just the yolk for glaze **after** dough is braided
Optional toppings: poppy seeds, sesame seeds, kosher salt
sprinkle on top of egg wash before baking

Steps to making great bread: 20 minutes to prepare

- In a glass bowl or measuring cup measure 2 cups warm water,
- add the sugar, stir until dissolved; then add yeast, stir slightly-yeast will remain very lumpy,
- Let mixture sit with a lid on it until 1” of foam forms on top,
- Pour into mixer fitted with a dough hook or into a LARGE bowl if you want to make bread by hand,
- Add 2 cups of flour and salt-blend well,
- Add 1 egg-blend well,
- Add half the oil-blend well,
- Add second egg and remainder of the oil
- Add additional flour-approx. 1/2 cup at a time, mix well each time-

Notes: in mixer add only enough flour until dough pulls away from the sides as the dough grows;

Hand mixing: continue adding flour until dough is very stiff to stir.

Pour dough onto floured counter and begin adding 2 Tbl of flour at a time, kneading the dough after each addition of flour,

- Continue with kneading and adding flour until dough is barely sticky and can be formed into a ball with ease,
- Pour a tiny bit of oil into bottom of large bowl-add dough, turning over to barely coat the dough on both sides; cover with Pam-sprayed plastic wrap and on top a damp dish towel

- Leave on the counter for an hour, or put in a warmed oven (100) for 1 hour or in a refrigerator overnight to rise, Note: I often make the dough at night and bake the next day-**stored** overnight in the refrigerator. Push air out of dough with your hands while in bowl, let rise again for 20 minutes-or up to several hours. You can bake right away or hours later
- NEVER LET THE DOUGH REMAIN UNCOOKED FOR MORE THAN 24 HOURS!! IT WILL FERMENT AND BE TERRIBLE.

To Braid: Divide dough in half, cover the half you are not braiding with the damp cloth, then divide each half in 6 strands to braid

- Line up the 6 strands next to each other and join at the top by pinching together.
- Count from the left 1-6 strands.
- First take strand 1 and place between 3 and 4;
- Take 5 and place far left
- take 6 and place between 4 and 3
- Take 2 to far right
- Then start again until the ends are too small to braid. Tuck ends under and arrange
- After braiding place loaves on a parchment paper lined baking sheet
- Brush loaves with egg wash if you like a shiny loaf; sprinkle with toppings, if desired.
- Bake for about **30** minutes at 350. You can tap loaves which should sound hollow-they are done
- The baked color should be light golden brown
- Take out of oven, cool on racks on the counter and enjoy!!!!