

Yield: two large challahs OR two large babkas OR a large challah and a large babka

BASE DOUGH INGREDIENTS (can make challah or babka)

- ◆ 1 cup lukewarm water, plus 1/3 cup lukewarm water for proofing yeast
- ◆ 1 heaping tablespoon active dry yeast
- ◆ 1/3 cup sugar, plus 1 teaspoon sugar for proofing yeast
- ◆ About 4 cups bread flour (all-purpose works as well)
- ◆ 2 eggs, beaten, plus 1 egg for glazing challah
- ◆ 2 teaspoons table salt
- ◆ 1/3 cup honey
- ◆ 1/3 cup vegetable oil or other neutral oil (olive oil also works for challah)
- ◆ **Optional toppings/fillings for challah** (poppy seeds; sesame seeds; cinnamon sugar mixture; rosemary and sea salt; chocolate chips; walnuts and cinnamon; mixture of cardamom, walnuts, cinnamon, and sea salt (Noah's favorite), etc.)

BASE DOUGH DIRECTIONS

1. In a bowl or measuring cup, dissolve the yeast in 1/3 cup lukewarm water with 1 tsp sugar. Beat well and let rest for 10 minutes or until it froths and rises considerably.
2. In a large bowl, lightly beat two eggs. Then add the salt, 1/3 cup sugar, 1 cup warm water, honey, and oil and stir again.
3. Add the frothy yeast mixture and mix well. Then add the flour gradually, mixing well. Mix first with a large spoon, then knead it with your hands. Add just enough to make a soft dough that holds together and doesn't stick to your hands.
4. Knead vigorously for 10 minutes, until it is very smooth and elastic, adding bits of flour as needed.
5. Lightly oil the bowl, return the dough to the bowl and flip it over, so that it is greased all over.
6. Cover the bowl with a towel and put it in a warm place to rise for at least 2 hours, or until doubled in size. You can also turn your oven on to "warm" or 200 for a few minutes, then turn it off, and let the dough rise in the oven.
7. Punch the dough down and knead again for just a few minutes to release air bubbles, and return to the bowl to rise again, this time for at least an hour, until doubled. Before you begin to braid, pinch off a small piece (about the size of an olive), roll it into a ball, and set it aside for the mitzvah of taking challah (blessing and more information on following page).



1. Divide the base dough in half. You can make two challahs, two babkas, or a babka and a challah.
2. With each hunk of dough, divide it into 3 or 4 sections, rolling each section into 8-10 inch lengths. Pinch them together at the top.
 - a) With three sections, you can braid normally (like braiding hair). When you can't braid any more, tuck the ends underneath.
 - b) With four sections, take the piece on the left and weave it over the piece of dough next to it, then under the next piece and finally over the last piece, so it finishes on the far right. Next, take the piece that is on the far left. Again, weave it over, under, and over until it's on the far right. Continue to weave until pieces are too short. Then push them all together and tuck them under the loaf.
3. Place loaves on a nonstick cookie sheet or a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Cover with a dishtowel. Let sit for at least 20 minutes more.
4. Lightly beat the last egg and brush onto the top of the dough. Add sesame or poppy seeds if desired, gently pressing into the egg.
5. Bake on the middle rack of a 350 degree oven for 28-30 minutes. At 20 minutes, switch the location and orientation of the pan for more even cooking.



A few variations, though the possibilities are endless!

- ♦ **Chocolate chip challah:** mix chocolate chips into dough when you mix in flour, or when you braid
- ♦ **Rosemary sea salt challah:** mix in some fresh or dried rosemary before you braid. After brushing with egg wash, sprinkle some sea salt on top
- ♦ **Cinnamon sugar challah:** mix a bit of vegetable oil (or melted butter) into cinnamon sugar so it slightly resembles wet sand. Flatten the strands before you braid them. Spread the cinnamon sugar mixture on the strands then roll the strands up again with the cinnamon mixture inside, and braid as usual.

Mitzvah of Taking Challah

Hebrew Transliteration:

BA-RUCH A-TAH A-DO-NOI ELO-HAI-NU ME-LECH HA-O-LAM A-SHER KID-SHA-NU B'MITZ-VO-TAV
V'TZI-VA-NU L'HAF-RISH CHAL-LAH MEEN HA-EESAH

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with God's commandments and commanded us to separate challah.

(For more on this mitzvah, you can look here:

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/recipe/taking-challah/>

In addition to the base dough:

FILLING

- ◆ 6 ounces semi-sweet or bittersweet chocolate chips, preferably mini
- ◆ 6 tablespoons melted butter or 1/3 cup neutral oil
- ◆ 3/4 cup white sugar
- ◆ 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- ◆ Pinch of table salt

STREUSEL TOPPING

- ◆ 1/2 cup flour
- ◆ 1/4 cup sugar
- ◆ 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- ◆ Pinch of salt
- ◆ 1/4 stick butter, melted, or 2 tablespoons neutral oil
- ◆ 1/2 cup chocolate chips



1. Combine all filling ingredients except for chocolate chips.
2. On a floured surface, roll dough into a rectangle (somewhere around 12" x 18"). The dough should be thin, but thick enough so that it won't rip. You can pick it up and let gravity pull it down a bit. If you get a hole or rip, just fold the dough over itself and roll it out to remove the hole.
3. Spread the chocolate spread on the dough in a thick, even layer, leaving a half-inch or so border around the perimeter. (I have had luck dropping some spread around the dough then gently spreading it with a knife or the back of a spoon.) Scatter chocolate chips on top.
4. Line a loaf pan with oiled parchment paper.
5. Starting at one of the shorter ends, roll the dough over itself into a log. Stretch it out a bit, then twist it into the shape of an 8, pinching the ends together. If the dough is starting to unroll, pinch it tightly to make a seam.
6. Gently lift the 8-shaped babka and place it into the loaf pan.
7. Using a skewer, poke several holes in the babka. Then cover the babka with a towel and let it rest for at least 30 minutes.
8. Mix together streusel topping. Scatter over top of babka.
9. Place a baking pan on the bottom rack to catch any streusel topping "drips". Bake at 350 degrees on the middle rack for 35-40 minutes until the top is browned, turning it halfway through.



In addition to the base dough:

FILLING

- ◆ 3 tablespoons butter, melted, or neutral oil
- ◆ 1 cup brown sugar
- ◆ 1– 2 tablespoons cinnamon
- ◆ 1/2 cup chopped walnuts (optional)
- ◆ Pinch of salt

STREUSEL TOPPING

- ◆ 2 tablespoons butter, melted, or 2 tablespoons neutral oil
- ◆ 1/2 cup flour
- ◆ 1/2 cup brown sugar
- ◆ 1 teaspoon cinnamon



1. In a mixing bowl, combine cinnamon, sugar, and salt. Then add butter or oil, mixing thoroughly.
2. On a floured surface, roll dough into a rectangle (somewhere around 12" x 18"). The dough should be thin, but thick enough so that it won't rip. You can pick it up and let gravity pull it down a bit. If you get a hole or rip, just fold the dough over itself and roll it out to remove the hole.
3. With a pastry brush, brush the melted butter or oil on the dough, leaving a half-inch or so border around the perimeter. Sprinkle the cinnamon sugar mixture on top. Sprinkle walnuts on top, if using.
4. Starting at one of the shorter ends, roll the dough over itself into a log. Stretch it out a bit, then twist it into the shape of an 8, pinching the ends together. If the dough is starting to unroll, pinch it tightly to make a seam.
5. Line a loaf pan with oiled parchment paper. Gently lift the 8-shaped babka and place it into the loaf pan.
6. Using a skewer, poke several holes in the babka. Then cover the babka with a towel and let it rest for at least 30 minutes.
7. Mix together streusel topping and scatter it on top.
8. Bake at 350 degrees for about 35-40 minutes on the middle rack, turning halfway, or until the top is browned.