

Josh Cohen's recipe (modified from Joan Nathan's). Makes 2 medium-sized challahs.

## Ingredients

1¼ c. water

1 scant T active dry yeast

¼ c. sugar

¼ c. neutral oil (vegetable, canola, or grapeseed), plus a little extra for greasing

2 eggs

3 c. bread flour (unbleached all-purpose is okay)

1 c. whole wheat flour

½ T. salt

¼ c. raisins, OR poppy or sesame seeds (optional)

1. Put the water and yeast into a bowl. If you're doubtful of your yeast, add a pinch of the sugar as well, and let it sit for 10 minutes to make sure it becomes foamy. But if you're reasonably confident of your yeast, you don't technically need to proof it.
2. Add the rest of the sugar, the oil, and one of the eggs, and combine.
3. Add the first cup of the bread flour, and stir until it's completely incorporated.
4. Add the whole wheat flour and the salt, and stir until completely incorporated.
5. Add the remaining bread flour ½ cup at a time, each time stirring until completely incorporated. Your dough should be pleasantly sticky, but not shaggy.
6. Knead by hand for 10 minutes, or in a stand mixer for 2 minutes. It will get stickier as you knead it, so add more flour as necessary (a little at a time) to maintain the slightly-sticky consistency. (If you're making raisin challah, incorporate the raisins during kneading.)
7. Put a drop of oil into your bowl and spread it around with a paper towel. Form your dough into a ball, and put it in the bowl. Cover with a clean towel or saran wrap, and let rise in a warm place until doubled in bulk. Bare minimum one hour if you're in a rush, an hour and a half is better, I've found that 2 hours is best.
8. Punch the dough down to deflate it. Divide it into six equally-sized balls. (I like to use a kitchen scale to make them exactly even, but you can eyeball it.)
9. Roll each ball into a rope about 15" long.
10. Prepare a baking sheet, with a silicone mat, parchment paper, or a little bit more oil.
11. Put three of the ropes on the baking sheet, and pinch one end of them together, with the middle rope on top. Tightly braid the ropes, and tuck the ends under on both ends. Do the same with the other three ropes to make the second challah.
12. Beat the other egg in a bowl to make an egg wash, and paint the challahs with it, getting as much into the crevices of the braids as you can.
13. Let the challahs re-rise for a total of 30 minutes until they're nice and puffy. 20 minutes into that time, preheat your oven to 350.
14. When your oven comes to temperature, reapply the egg wash, and sprinkle seeds on top if you're using them. Put the challah in the middle of the oven.
15. After about five minutes, take the challah out. It will have risen dramatically (oven spring), exposing un-egg-washed parts of the dough. Reapply the egg wash in those crevices, and put the challah back in the oven. Depending on your oven, you may need to reset it back to 350 to make sure it comes back to temperature.
16. Bake for an additional 25 minutes.
17. Take the challahs out and put them on a wire rack to cool.