

Weekly Challah

[Recipe very lightly adapted from a recipe by Katja Goldman, from the cookbook, "The Community Table, Recipes And Stories From The Jewish Community Center In Manhattan & Beyond."]

Makes 2 Large Loaves

Bread:

2 cups warm water
2 packages dry yeast (4 ½ teaspoons)
2 teaspoons plus 1/3 cup sugar
1/4 cup honey
5 large eggs
6 to 7 cups unbleached all-purpose flour, as needed, plus more for dusting
4 teaspoons kosher salt
1 cup grapeseed or safflower oil, plus more for oiling the bowl
1 cup bread flour (not totally necessary if you don't have it, but good)



Toppings (sesame seeds, poppy seeds, etc) or chocolate chips for incorporating into the dough

Glaze:

1 large egg
2 tablespoons water
2 teaspoons honey (optional)

Directions

- 1) To make the bread, place the warm water in a large bowl and sprinkle the yeast and 1 teaspoon of sugar over the water. Let stand until foamy, about 10 minutes (this is called proofing or activating the yeast).
- 2) Add the honey, eggs, 1 cup of all-purpose flour, and the remaining sugar to the yeast. Beat hard with a bread whisk or stir vigorously with a wooden spoon until smooth.
- 3) Add the salt and oil and continue to whisk or stir until the oil is incorporated. Stir in bread flour (if you have, otherwise use more all purpose). Gradually add remaining all-purpose flour, starting one cup at a time. When you can no longer stir in the bowl, transfer to a lightly floured surface and continue to gradually add flour, kneading gently until dough is smooth, elastic, and no longer sticky. (The flour amount may vary depending on the age of the flour, the humidity, and the size of your eggs.) Form the dough into a ball.
- 4) Oil a large bowl and add the dough, turning it once to coat it. Cover the bowl with a damp cloth and place it in a warm, draft-free spot, such as in an oven that's turned off. Allow the dough to double in bulk, 1 to 2 hours (you can also put the dough in the fridge overnight. Allow it to come to room temp before braiding and baking). Poke the dough with 2 fingers; if the

indentations remain, the dough has adequately risen; if the indentation fills in, cover the dough and allow it to rise 15 to 30 minutes more.

5) When the dough has doubled, transfer it to a lightly floured work surface and deflate the dough by pushing down on it with the heels of your palms 3 or 4 times (called punching down the dough). If the dough feels sticky or seems too soft, knead in more flour. Divide the dough into two portions. Divide each portion into three equal pieces. Roll out each piece into a long uniform strand (about 16-inches). Place the three strands side by side lengthwise and braid them, resulting in two braided challah loaves.

6) Transfer each loaf to a parchment covered baking sheet. Allow the shaped dough to rise in a warm place until an indentation remains when the dough is poked lightly with a finger, 30 to 40 minutes.

7) Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

8) To make the glaze, beat the egg in a small bowl with the water and honey, if using.

9) Bake the challot until they sound hollow when tapped (or to an internal temperature of 195 to 199 degrees F). This will take 25-45 minutes depending on the size of your challahs. Just before they are done (at 190 to 193 degrees F), remove them from the oven and brush with the glaze. Return the breads to the oven and bake until golden brown, 5 to 10 minutes. Brush again with the glaze, sprinkle with the seeds, if using, and return them to the oven until they look shiny and the glaze looks cooked, about 2 minutes. Remove from oven and cool on racks.