

Challah Bread

Make perfect homemade challah bread with this easy recipe. Beautiful braided Jewish bread that's soft, golden, and perfect for any occasion.

3h 30min

PREP

35 min

COOK

4h 5min

TOTAL

8

SERVINGS

Medium

DIFFICULTY

Challah Bread

Ingredients

- 1 cup water
- 2 tsp yeast
- 4 cup flour
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 egg
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 cup canola oil
- 2 tsp salt

Instructions

- 1 Activate the yeast**

Warm 1 cup water to 105-115°F (40-46°C) and pour into a small bowl. Sprinkle 2 teaspoons active dry yeast over the water and let stand for 5-10 minutes until foamy and bubbly on top.
- 2 Make the dough**

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together 4 cups all-purpose flour and 2 teaspoons salt. Make a well in the center and add the yeast mixture, 2 eggs, 1 egg (reserving the white for later), 1 cup vegetable oil, and remaining ingredients. Stir with a wooden spoon until a shaggy dough forms.
- 3** Turn dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead for 8-10 minutes until smooth and elastic. The dough should spring back when poked and feel slightly tacky but not sticky.
- 4 First rise**

Place dough in an oiled bowl, turning to coat all sides. Cover with plastic wrap and let rise in a warm place for 1-2 hours until doubled in size.
- 5 Shape the challah**

Punch down dough and turn onto a clean surface. Divide into 3 equal pieces and roll each into a 16-inch rope. Pinch the tops together and braid the ropes, then pinch the bottom ends together and tuck under.
- 6 Second rise**

Place braided challah on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Cover with a clean kitchen towel and let rise for 45-60 minutes until puffed and increased in size by half.

- 7 **Prepare for baking**
Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). Beat the reserved egg white with 1 tablespoon water and brush all over the challah, getting into the crevices of the braid.
- 8 Bake for 30-35 minutes, rotating the pan halfway through, until deep golden brown and the internal temperature reaches 190°F (88°C) when tested with an instant-read thermometer.
- 9 Transfer to a wire rack and cool for at least 30 minutes before slicing. The bread will sound hollow when tapped on the bottom when fully baked.

Tips

Test your yeast before starting by dissolving it in warm water with a pinch of sugar. Active yeast will foam and bubble within 10 minutes – if it doesn't, your yeast may be expired and should be replaced.

The dough should be slightly tacky but not sticky after kneading. If it's too sticky, add flour one teaspoon at a time. If it's too dry, add water one teaspoon at a time until you achieve the right consistency.

Create a warm environment for rising by placing the dough bowl on top of your refrigerator, in a slightly warm oven (turned off), or near a sunny window. Ideal rising temperature is 75-80°F.

When rolling dough ropes for braiding, work from the center outward to create even thickness. If the dough springs back, let it rest for 5-10 minutes to relax the gluten, then continue rolling.

Keep your braid tight but not stretched. Loose braiding will result in gaps after baking, while over-stretching can cause the dough to tear or create uneven rising.

Brush the egg wash into all the crevices and sides of the braid for even golden color. A pastry brush works best, but you can also use a clean kitchen brush or even your fingers in a pinch.

Use an instant-read thermometer to check doneness – the internal temperature should reach 190°F. The bread should also sound hollow when tapped on the bottom.

Let the baked challah cool on a wire rack for at least 30 minutes before slicing. This allows the interior to set properly and prevents the bread from becoming gummy.