



Shabbat Challah

- Place **1 ½ cups of warm water (1 cup boiling, ½ cup cold)** in a mixing bowl.
- To this add **¼ cup of vegetable oil** and then **¼ cup of sugar or honey**. It's easier if you add the oil first and use the same measuring device for the honey.
- Add **1 teaspoon of salt** and **1 Tablespoon of dry, granulated yeast**.
- Mix all together and wait for bubbles.
- Add **2 beaten eggs**.
- Slowly add **5-6 cups of flour** while mixing until dough is the right moisture and consistency.

Knead the dough for ~10 minutes or until it is smooth and not sticky. Some say the act of kneading challah brings us back 5,000 years to our Jewish beginnings. Some say it just feels good. Either way, once you're done kneading, **cover with a dish towel and let rise until double**.

This is my favorite part: **Punch down** the dough with your fist.

* **Cut the dough** in the number of pieces corresponding to the number of strands you wish to have in your challah. Knead each until smooth. Roll each ball into longer strands. When desired length is reached, start braiding. **How many braids should you do?** Three? Four? Six? There is no right or wrong way to be Jewish, **you decide**. I think the same can be said for braiding challah. Let creativity drive you. If you need a starting point, you can find a few of my favorites on the back.

As you braid, think about the strands of your spiritual life. What are the aspects that when intertwined, help to define your spiritual or religious life?

Place your braided challah on an oiled and floured baking sheet and **let rise double**. You can have the matt or glossy finish, just like in pictures. For a matt finish, don't do anything. For a glossy finish, **add egg wash to the top**.

Place in a 350 degree oven for anywhere from 15-45 minutes, depending on the size. A finished challah will be **firm and crusty** on the outside and will **ring hollow when you tap the bottom**. If you're like Kalen, pull it out a tad early for that doughy goodness on the inside.

Additions: Sesame seeds, poppy seeds (or you decide) as a reminder that it is the little things in life that aren't necessary, but often make the most difference! Add just before egg wash.

Kavanah: an intention for our efforts

There is a tradition associated with Challah on Shabbat which I find intriguing. We have two loaves of Challah on Shabbat instead of one. Why? From a traditional context, Manna – lechem (bread or food) from the heavens – was given to us as we wandered through the desert. We learn in Exodus 16:4-30, that on Friday, we received a double portion so that we could have enough for Shabbat without having to gather. G-d provides.

Like all things in life, there is beauty in tradition and beauty in a renewed interpretation of tradition. With this said, how else can you add beauty to this understanding? Why else might we want to have two loaves of Challah on Shabbat instead of just one? I hope exploring this idea of “plenty” will engage and enrich both your Shabbat and our community as a whole.

Shabbat Shalom,
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