

The Perfect Challah

Recipe By Kiki Fisher



Cooking and Prep:  3
h 40 m

Serves:  36

Contains:   

Preference: Parve

Difficulty: Medium

Occasion: Shabbat

Diet: Vegetarian

Source: Whisk by Ami
Magazine

Cuisines: Ashkenazi

This is the way my mother makes challah, and I follow her method exactly. Lots of people might be using the same recipe but aren't enjoying the same results. It's not one specific detail but all of these techniques together that will guarantee you tall, fluffy, light challahs every time—from the type of flour used to the long rising, mixing, and baking time. I wake up early on Friday morning to make sure I have enough time to do it perfectly.

Ingredients (7)

Main ingredients

- 6 pounds high-gluten flour
- 6 cups warm water, divided
- 4 tablespoons **Gefen Dry Yeast**
- 1/2 – 3/4 cup sugar, divided

4 tablespoons **Haddar Kosher Salt**

3 whole eggs, plus 1 for egg wash

1/2 cup oil

Start Cooking

Make the Challah

Yields 6 challahs.

1. Sift flour into a bowl and set aside.
2. In the bowl of your Bosch, combine 1 cup warm water, yeast, and 2 tablespoons sugar. Cover and let sit a few minutes, until yeast activates and bubbles up a bit.
3. Add sifted flour to the mixer. Add remaining sugar (total quantity depends on your preference), salt, eggs, and oil. With the mixer on low, slowly add in remaining 5 cups water, 1 cup at a time. Stop for a few seconds between cups to allow the previous cup to incorporate.
4. Once a dough forms, raise mixer speed to medium and allow to mix for 12 to 15 minutes.
5. Remove dough from Bosch and place in a lightly floured bowl. Cover with a towel and place in a warm place to rise (turn your oven on even if you're not cooking). I like to place the bowl inside a large garbage bag as well to keep the dough nice and warm. Allow to rise at least 1 hour, until doubled in size. Patience makes the prettiest challahs.
6. Place dough on a well-floured surface. Remove a piece to make the brachah ([click here](#) for more information on hafrashat challah). Divide dough into 6 even parts (to form 6 challahs).
7. Spray challah pans with nonstick cooking spray. Braid each challah as desired and place in prepared pans. Using a pastry brush, brush challah with egg wash. Sprinkle with sesame seeds or other desired toppings.
8. Allow to rise at least 1 hour, until challah is desired height (it will continue to rise as it bakes).
9. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 350°F.
10. Bake for 1 hour. Remove from oven and immediately remove challahs from pans. Allow to cool on a wire rack.
11. I like to reheat the challah before Shabbos in a 250°F oven by placing it directly on the wire

oven rack for a crispy crust. Enjoy!

Note:

- High-gluten flour results in a stronger dough with more structure. I use the kind that comes in a brown bag. Even though it's pre-sifted, I sift it again for a finer flour. The long mixing time helps develop the gluten. When you finish mixing, you'll have a dough with lots of air bubbles that will result in fluffy challah.
- I bake my challahs in medium-size oval challah pans.
- When I make the strips to braid, I only roll the ends thinly, not the center, so I'm left with a pillowy center. This is how I achieve an even-looking challah that looks nice once braided, with wide pieces at the top.
- Always keep the challah close to an oven that's turned on while it's rising. This is especially important in the winter, when the counter can be cold. I've tried placing the dough in a 200°F oven for a quicker rise, but that resulted in a much denser dough. The dough needs to rise naturally on its own. This will result in an extremely light challah that doesn't feel like a ball of dough when you hold it