



NORTH SHORE
HEBREW ACADEMY
ישיבת חוף הצפון

The Great Kobrin Challah Bake

Michelle's Challah Recipe

3 1/2 packets dry yeast
4 cups very warm water
4 teaspoons sugar
One 5 lb bag flour
2 cups white sugar
2 Tablespoons salt
1.5 cups of canola oil
3 eggs plus one egg yolk
2 tablespoons of honey
splash of vanilla

Start by putting the warm water in a bowl and dissolve the yeast and the sugar in the water. Set aside for about 5-10 minutes, until the yeast begins to bubble. (Fancy word for this: proofing the yeast.) If it doesn't bubble, the yeast isn't active and you need to start again. Just buy yeast with an expiration date of several months in the future and it should be fine.

In very large bowl, mix:

Add flour (with two cups removed), sugar, salt (I use sea salt, usually one Tbsp coarse and one Tbsp fine)

Make a well (a little indentation) in the middle of the flour. Add into the hole: Oil, egg, honey, vanilla and the yeast mixture. Mix that all together for a bit.

Add 3 cups warm water and knead until it starts to form a dough. If it is very sticky, add some flour from the 2 cups you set aside.

Oil the sides of the bowl and leave the ball of dough to rise. In a perfect world, you then let it rise from 1.5 - 2.5 hours (more on an imperfect world later in the recipe).

At that point (after the dough rises but before you braid it) you take challah (you are *mafrish challah*) You can take challah with a *beracha* if you are using more than 11.5 cups of flour. A five lb bag is about 18 cups of flour.

The *berachah* on the mitzvah of separating challah (*hafrashat challah*):

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ
לְהַפְרִישׁ חֻלָּה.

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to separate challah from the dough.

Here's how we try to do it: we grab whatever kid is nearby, hold the little piece of challah, take a cleansing

breath, and focus on those who are ill, or need support mentally or physically, what is broken in the world that they want to fix, and think about bread being the miracle of human beings' perfecting God's world with a lot of effort. It's the partnership of people working hard to take a raw wheat kernel and yeast and arriving at a most perfect food. Adjust as the week's events demand. If kids aren't around, we use this time to think about those things. Then we wrap the piece of dough (the *hafrashat challah*) into a piece of tinfoil, and burn it (put it in the oven at this point, and let it sit there through the oven warming up, and cooking). We throw it out once it is burned.

This one is oval. Here's a braiding video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TOKt18P7z4> Other people seem to be able to just put it on a cookie sheet without a pan, but ours always seems to get too flat that way. We use an oval or rectangle pan that's about 8 inches long by 4 inches wide.

This braiding technique, from Michelle's favorite food blogger, is round:

<http://smittenkitchen.com/blog/2011/09/apple-and-honey-challah/> (this goes in an 7 or 8 inch round tin)

In a perfect world, we now let it rise another 1.5 - 2.5 hours, and bake it at 350 degrees for 35-40 minutes. If you have a convection setting, use that. You know it's done when it looks done, and to be sure, when you take it out of the pan and knock on the bottom, it should sound hollow. (Yup, it actually works!)

What to do in an imperfect world? You can retard rising by putting the dough, either in the first or second rising, in the fridge, or encourage it to rise by either putting it in a warm place (near your stove-top or on your radiator) or if you have a "proof" setting on your oven, put it in there, and it rises quicker.