



Rosh Hashanah Challah

Yields one 1 lb. loaf

Ingredients

1/2 c water

1/4 c oil

2 T honey

1 egg

2 c bread flour (if using all purpose, 2

1/4 c)

1 T sugar

1/2 tsp salt

3/4 tsp instant yeast (*If using active dry, use 1 tsp. See note below)

Optional: 1/2 c raisins, plumped with warm water for 5 minutes, then drained

Instructions

Mixing in a bag

Children can mix the dough by combining all ingredients in a gallon Ziploc bag, pressing out the air, and squishing well until no dry areas or chunks remain, about 5 minutes. If adding raisins, add them now and mix for one more minute.

After fermenting in the bag for 1 hour, gather dough into a very tight ball and allow to rest 20 minutes before continuing on with shaping. This method will create a loaf with potentially less volume than a machine-mixed dough.

Mixing in a mixer

To mix in a stand mixer, add wet ingredients to a mixing bowl, then dry ingredients. (*If using active dry yeast, activate by warming 2 T of the water and allow it to bloom. Add with other wet ingredients.)

Mix all with a dough hook on low speed for 3 minutes until all dry is combined, then on medium/high speed for another 7-10 minutes. Dough should be shiny, smooth and gathered into a relatively taut ball.

If adding raisins, do so toward the very end and mix one more minute to combine. You may need to help disperse them through the dough by hand. (If using the next day, place in an oiled bowl, cover and chill.) Otherwise, place in an oiled bowl, cover and ferment at room temperature for 1 hour.



Recipe provided by Chef Melinda McNeil of the East Valley JCC's Challah Factory.



Shaping the dough

1. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface and pat lightly into a rectangular shape.
2. Cut into desired portions; for example, leave as one piece for a simple spiral, cut into two pieces for a twisted round, or cut into 3 pieces for a classic braid.
3. Pre-shape the strands for the braids: place the rectangle lengthwise in front of you and de-gas by gently patting. Using pinky edges of hands, gather the top of the rectangle toward you, press into the dough and gently away, to tighten. Repeat, which closes the piece of dough into a tube.
4. Press seam closed with the heel of your hand and repeat with remaining dough portions.
5. Allow these to rest for 20 minutes, then roll out to length needed for braiding.
6. Braid and place loaves on a parchment-lined baking sheet.
7. Brush with beaten egg.
8. Allow it to proof in a warm environment (anywhere from 80-90 degrees). When loaves have become larger, jiggy and airy - anywhere from 2-3 hours - brush again gently with beaten egg, and bake at 350 degrees for about 25 minutes.