

## Challah

### Ingredients

2 T. or 2 envelopes active dried yeast  
1 cup and ½ cup warm water (100°-115°)  
1 teaspoon sugar  
3 eggs, plus 1 egg  
½ cup vegetable oil  
½ cup honey  
1 ½ teaspoons salt  
8-9 cups flour (I use bread flour)  
2 cups raisins (optional)  
Sesame and/or poppy seeds (optional)

In a measuring cup filled with 1 cup of warm water put the 1 teaspoon of sugar and stir until dissolved. Put the yeast in a small bowl and slowly pour in the water/sugar mixture. Set aside for 10 minutes. The mixture should bubble. This procedure is called proofing the yeast.

Beat the three eggs. Add in this order: the remaining ½ cup warm water, the oil, the honey and the salt. Mix well.

Add the yeast mixture and beat well.

Add 5 cups of flour, one cup at a time, and beating with a wooden spoon until each cup has been incorporated. (If you are adding raisins, do so now.)

Add two more cups of flour, one cup at a time, and beat well until the dough pulls away from the sides of the bowl.

Sprinkle two cups of flour onto a clean work surface and turn the dough out into it. Knead the dough until almost all the flour has been absorbed. Form dough into a big ball. Lightly grease a clean bowl big enough to hold the dough ball even when it will double in size. Place dough ball into bowl and cover with a dishtowel. Allow dough to rise 1-2 hours, until it has doubled in size.

When the dough has risen, punch it down with your fist.

Divide dough into two equal parts, and then divide each of these parts into three equal parts. Roll the dough into long ropes.

Braid three ropes. (If you start in the middle, you can braid to the ends and it will be easier to fold under the ends.)

Place the loaves on a greased baking sheet, (I also put parchment paper on top of the greased sheet.) Cover with a towel and let rise about 30 minutes more, until it has again almost doubled in size.

When dough has doubled, preheat oven to 350°. Beat remaining egg with a little water, then brush the loaves generously. (Sprinkle sesame and/or poppy seeds now, if you like.)

Bake for 30 minutes, or until golden.

(This recipe is adapted from Joan Nathan's recipe in The Children's Jewish Holiday Kitchen.)