

בס"ד

Chabad Women's Circle

CHALLAH

with a twist



Chabad Women's Circle

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About Challah

Challah is the name we typically call the bread traditionally eaten on Shabbat and Jewish Holidays. Not everyone knows that the term *Challah* actually refers to the small piece of dough taken from the larger portion being prepared for baking. In ancient times, this was given as a gift to the *Kohen*. Today, it is burned and discarded.

This Mitzvah strengthens our faith by reminding us that all our sustenance comes to us through the hand of G-d. In appreciation, we therefore give of "our first and best" to *Hashem*. Thus, the Jewish woman not only nurtures her family physically, but also brings spiritual awareness into her home.

The *Mitzvah* of *Hafreshat Challah*, separating *Challah*, is one of the three *Mitzvot* entrusted especially to the Jewish woman. This *Mitzvah* embodies the belief that all of our sustenance comes truly to us through G-d's Hand. Just as we may not use the dough unless we have separated *Challah*, so too a portion of our livelihood is always reserved for the giving of charity which is given freely — "of the first and the best." Our sages tell us that observing this *Mitzvah* "will cause a blessing to rest on your house."

The Origins of Challah

The Challah bread originates from several sources. The biblical commandment connected with Challah baking dates back to the Tabernacle and the Holy Temple. When Jewish families would bake bread, they were commanded to donate a portion of their dough to the priests serving in the Temple, as representatives of the Jewish nation. These gifts of food allowed the priest the freedom to continue their holy service, without financial worries. In commemoration of the biblical commandment, Jews separate a portion of their dough with a blessing, and then burn it, so that it not be used for any other purpose.

In the Holy Temple stood a table of the Showbreads. This table displayed twelve loaves of bread, which stayed fresh from week to week, until a new batch was baked. The Challah bread is braided in different multiples of twelve, to remember this miraculous display in the Temple.

When the Jews wandered in the desert for forty years, they were sustained by the Heavenly manna. Each morning they would collect the manna from the ground. Every Friday, each family would collect a double portion, one portion for that day, and an extra portion for the holy Sabbath, during which the manna would not fall. Jewish families remember this double portion and grace their Sabbath table



Ladder Challah



Hand Challah



Pinwheel Round

1 batch Challah dough
1 egg, lightly beaten
Poppy seeds
Sesame seeds

YIELDS: Dough for 1 challah = 5 napkin rings

Challah Napkin Rings

Preheat oven to 350. Cover one large baking sheet with parchment paper. Take two empty paper towel rolls, and smoothly cover them with a double layer of aluminum foil. Cover the foil with a sheet of parchment paper. (Tape won't stick to keep the parchment layer sealed.

Instead, use a small strip of foil like a rubber band around the center of the tube.) Set aside.

Cut dough into 5 sections. Braid each section, and place braid over the prepared wrapped tube. Wrap it around so the top and bottom ends meet. Pinch the ends together to make a complete circle. Repeat this process with all 5 sections, placing up to 3 rings on each tube.

Brush each ring with the beaten egg and sprinkle with poppy or sesame seeds. Set tubes on the prepared baking sheets. Bake for 30 min. or until golden.

Tips

- When dissolving yeast, be sure the water is not too hot or too cold.
- Add sugar or honey, and 1/3 of the flour to the yeast mixture to aid in the fermenting process.
- Substitute oatmeal for some whole wheat or white flour in a recipe for a delicious flavor and nutritious value.
- Do not allow braided Challah to rise too long (over 45 minutes), as it will fall.
- Place Challahs in a warm (180°) oven (oven is off) with a pan of warm water to hurry the rising process.



When is Challah Separated?

In regard to separating *Challah* there are three possibilities. One may be required to:

- separate *Challah* with a blessing
- separate *Challah* without a blessing or
- not to separate *Challah* at all. It depends on the type of flour, the liquid content and the amount of flour used. *Challah* is taken only from dough:
 - Made from: barley, rye, oats, wheat and spelt (b.r.o.w.s.). *Challah* is not separated from rice and similar flours.
 - With a majority liquid content of water. If the majority is juice, eggs, etc. then *Challah* is not separated. (If you add in a liquid other than water to the flour, *Challah* is taken without a blessing. If you use fruit juice instead of water, be sure to still add a few drops of water anyways.)
 - Which has a minimum of 5 lbs. (equals 2268 grams) flour (2.5-5 lbs., *Challah* is separated without a blessing). Note: If a few batches are put together to be made in one baking session, you calculate the total flour from all the batches.
 - Your intention must be to "bake" the entire amount (not fry or boil it), and to do so in one baking session.

Note: *Challah* is taken from all dough, including cakes, cookies or pastries that fit the above conditions.

How To Separate Challah

- Challah is separated after the dough has risen, before it has been divided and shaped into loaves.
- Recite the following blessing before separating Challah:
Baruch Atab, Ab-do-noi E-lo-hey-nu Melech Ha-olam A-sber Kid-shanu B'mitz-vo-tav Vi-tzi-vanu Li-ha-frish Challah. (Blessed are you, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Who has commanded us to separate Challah.)
- Then remove a piece of dough approximately the size of an egg - at least 1 oz.
- Say *Harei zeh Challah* ("This is *Challah*"), wrap the piece in foil and bake (separately from the loaves) until black. It can then be thrown into the trash. Once the dough is in the oven starting to burn, you may begin forming and baking the bread.

If for some reason, you couldn't/didn't separate the Challah before baking the batter (i.e. using a bread maker), you may separate Challah from the finished product (when doing so, place all of the finished product into one container or put everything under one cover - i.e. towel) and burn it alone in the oven, with the same blessing. You may not separate Challah after Shabbat candles have been lit. (On Yom Tov it's okay if you also made the batter on Yom Tov.) If you forgot to do so before Shabbat, separate a small piece and put it away for burning and disposal after Shabbat. You may then eat the rest of the

Challah in the Making

This is the formula of family life in a bowl. Your whole home is in the bowl and we access it through our fingertips.

FLOUR

Flour is the main substantial ingredient. It represents the physical body of our family. When pouring the flour, think about the physical health of your loved ones.

WATER

Water is the fluid ingredient. It represents our soul and the Torah of your family. Think about the spiritual health of your loved ones.

OIL

Oil is traditionally used for anointing. It represents making our family members feel special and consecrated. When pouring the oil, think of each member of the family. Pour the oil onto your hands as if you are anointing each and every member of your family.

SUGAR

Sugar is about creating a sweet environment. While adding sugar, think about how you can continue making your home a happy place.

SALT

Salt is all about disciplining our family members to follow the moral and ethical path of our people. Too much can be harmful, too little is tasteless.

YEAST

Yeast is the ingredient, which inflates the Challah. This represents the self-esteem, confidence and reassurance that all our members crave for.

Washing Hands for Bread

The ritual custom is to wash our hands before we eat bread. Once you are ready to eat the Challah, remove all rings, wash your hands three consecutive times on your right hand with a cup, the water should reach your wrist and cover your entire hand, and then do the same to the left hand. Hold some water in your hand, rub them together and recite:

*Ba-ruch A-tah A-do-noi Elo-hai-nu
Me-lech Ha-o-lam A-shev
Kidi-sba-nu B'Mitz-votav
V'Tzi-va-nu Al Nitilat Yudoyim
(Blessed are you, L-rd our G-d, King of
the Universe, Who has commanded us
to wash our hands.)*

Dry your hands completely. Do not speak until you have eaten the bread.

Now take the Challah in your hand, dip it three times in salt and say:

*Ba-ruch A-tah A-do-noi Elo-hai-nu
Me-lech Ha-o-lam Ha-Motzee Lechem
Minn Ha-Aretz (Blessed are you, L-rd
our G-d, King of the Universe, Who
brings forth bread from the land.)*



Challah Variations

Cinnamon Sugar Challah -Perfect for Yom Tov

Combine 1/4 cup sugar with 1 heaping tablespoon cinnamon. Spray each strand of dough completely with cooking spray (or brush on oil). Coat strands in cinnamon sugar mixture, and braid or shape as desired. Sprinkle Challah with remaining cinnamon sugar. Bake according to recipe. Optional: Cut a slit with a sharp knife down each strand before coating and fill with raisins or craisins. Variation: Form Challah dough into balls (instead of strands), coat with cinnamon & sugar and fill with raisins or craisins (as desired) and place them in a bundt, bread or other pan. Makes a great pull-apart bread!

Pizza Challah

Combine garlic powder, oregano, black pepper and paprika (or other seasoning as desired). Spray each strand of dough completely with cooking spray (or brush on oil). Lightly coat strands in seasoning mixture, and braid or shape as desired. Bake according to recipe. Optional: Cut a slit with a sharp knife down each strand before coating and fill with cheese or sautéed onions. Variation: Form Challah dough into balls (instead of strands), coat with seasoning and fill with cheese or sautéed onions (as desired) and place them in a bundt, bread or other pan. Makes a great pull-apart bread! Serve with pasta sauce.

Onion Challah

1 large onion, diced finely
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp salt

Combine all ingredients. Spoon mixture on bottom of baking pan and place Challah on top. If baking a pull-apart Challah, shape balls into “bagels” and stuff holes with onion mixture.

Tomato Basil Challah

Sun-dried tomatoes, chopped
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp dried basil
Salt to taste

Combine all ingredients. Spoon mixture on bottom of baking pan and place Challah on top. If baking a pull-apart Challah, shape balls into “bagels” and stuff holes with onion mixture.

1 medium Challah
without crust

5 eggs

1 cup sugar

2 tsp vanilla sugar

1 cup oil

1 instant vanilla

pudding

3 granny smith apples,
peeled and thinly sliced

Challah Kugel

A great way to use leftover Challah

Soak Challah in water, then squeeze it out.

In a large bowl beat all ingredients together (or do everything besides Challah and apples and then add them). Mix well. Spread cinnamon and sugar on top. Bake at 350 for 1 hour in 9 x 13 pan, until kugel is golden but still moist. It is delicious and doesn't taste like Challah!

1 lb. Challah without
crust

3-1/2 cups flour

2/3 cup oil

1/2 cup sugar

1 tsp salt

1/2 tbsps baking

powder

1 tsp vanilla extract

FILLING:

1/2 cup oil

1/2 cup sugar

4 gala apples,
shredded

1 cup raisins or
craisins

2/3 cups chopped
walnuts

2 tbsps lemon juice

1/2 cup oil

1/2 cup sugar

Challah Babka

A great way to use leftover Challah

Soak Challah in water. Squeeze out excess water. Add flour, sugar, oil, salt and baking powder. In an electric mixer, knead well to form dough.

Divide dough in half. Roll each half into a 9"x12" rectangular shape onto well-floured board. Brush dough with oil and sprinkle with 1/4 cup sugar.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 10-to 12-cup bundt pan.

In a bowl, combine apples and lemon juice.

Spread over rolled-out dough. Top with walnuts and raisins or craisins. Roll up like a jelly roll.

Using a very sharp knife, cut 1/2" slices. Dip each slice into oil and lightly into sugar. Line up slices onto bottom and both walls of bundt pan. Repeat with second half of the dough. Fill up center with remaining slices. Bake 2 hours until golden-brown. Remove from oven and invert onto tray. Let sit for 20 minutes, until bundt comes off easily. Dust lightly with confectioner's sugar.



Customs

•To recall the twelve showbreads in the Temple, the Challah may be braided with six strands, for a total of twelve strands in the two Challahs.

•For Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, and the weeks following many families use a round Challah, symbolic of the cycle of life which began on Rosh Hashanah.

•In honor of Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, some shape the Challah into a ladder, in hope that our prayers ascend directly to G-d.

•For the holiday of Hoshana Rabba-the last day of Sukkot, when G-d finally seals our fate for the year to come, some shape the Challah in the form of a hand, symbolizing G-d's hand signing the Book of Life.

•For the Shavuot holiday, celebrating the receiving of the Ten commandments, some families shape the challah into a ladder, to symbolize Moses ascending Mount Sinai.

Toppings & Fillings

- These are all great in or on Challah
- Mix a few toppings or fillings together
- For festive Challah, put sugar flowers, cherries or dried fruit in creases
- Add sugar, vanilla or seasoning to egg before glazing the Challah

SWEET

- Chocolate chips
- Chocolate and/or fruit syrup
- Sprinkles (with cherries in creases)
- Vanilla (or regular) sugar
- Honey
- Maple syrup
- Cinnamon & sugar
- Nuts
- Sunflower seeds
- Sugar flowers
- Cherries
- Dates, figs and/or other dried fruits
- Shredded apples and/or pears

SAVORY

- Za'atar spice (great with sesame seeds)
- Sesame seeds
- Poppy seeds
- Kimmel
- Anise
- Kosher salt
- Sun-dried tomatoes
- Mustard, ketchup, pasta sauce and/or b-b-q sauce
- Onions and/or garlic - fresh, dried, powder, sautéed, in oil
- Oatmeal

Streusel Topping

Combine:

1 cup flour

1/2 cup margarine

3/4 cup sugar

Crumble together until it resembles fine crumbs.

6 packages dry yeast
4 cups warm water
1 cup + 1 tsp honey
1 cup oil
5 eggs
3 tbsp salt
1 tsp oil
12 cups whole wheat flour
8 cups white flour

GLAZE: 1 egg, beaten

YIELDS: 7 loaves

Honey & Whole Wheat Challah

In a large bowl dissolve yeast in 2 cups warm water mixed with 1 tablespoon honey. Set aside 5 to 10 minutes. Add oil, eggs, honey and remaining 2 cups warm water, and mix well.

Gradually add dry ingredients and knead dough until elastic and not sticky, 5 to 10 minutes.

Place dough in an oiled bowl, turning to coat all sides with oil. Cover and let rise 1 to 2 hours.

Punch down and let rise 1 hour. Separate Challah with a blessing. Shape dough as desired and place in greased pans. Let rise another hour.

Preheat oven to 350. Brush loaves with beaten egg and bake until brown, 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Remove from pans and cool on racks.

1 cup warm water
1/4 cup sugar
1-1/2 tsp yeast
1 egg
2 egg yolks
3 tbsp oil
1 tsp vinegar
3/4 cup brown rice flour
3/4 cup white rice flour
1/2 cup corn starch
1/2 cup tapioca starch
1/4 cup potato starch
1 tsp xanthan gum
1 tsp salt

GLAZE: 1 egg, beaten

Gluten Free Challah

Combine water, sugar and yeast; set aside and allow to proof.

Whisk together egg, egg yolks, oil and vinegar.- Combine dry ingredients in large bowl of mixer. Add egg mixture and yeast mixture to dry ingredients; mix (I used the dough hook on my Kitchen Aide) on low for about 3 minutes.

Turn dough out onto floured board (parchment paper works well here too); form into ball.

Place dough into a lightly-oiled bowl; cover.

Leave in warm place for 30 minutes or until doubled in size.

Turn dough out onto counter; punch down.

Cover and let rise for about 20 more minutes.

(There is no need to separate challah) Shape dough and place in greased pan. Lightly brush top of bread with egg Bake in a pre-heated, 350 degree oven for 25 minutes.

1 cup lukewarm water
1 tsp sugar
1 tsp dry yeast
1 cup water
1/2 cup oil
1/2 tbsp salt
1/2 cup sugar (or more)
6-7 cups flour

Water Challah

Stir water, sugar and yeast until the yeast bubbles. Add remaining ingredients. Knead together until dough is a good consistency. Lightly oil a bowl and put the dough in (flip over so the dough is oiled too), cover with plastic wrap/ damp paper towel and let rise at room temp. for one hour or until pretty much doubled. Knead and shape, then let rise again.

Separate Challah without a blessing (or with a blessing if recipe is doubled)

Bake at 350 for approx. 30 min. depending on size. Do not over bake, because it may become quite dry.

4 cups warm water
4 oz fresh yeast
(4-1/2 tbsp active dry yeast)

1 tbsp honey
5 lbs of white spelt flour (or whole spelt flour)
1-1/2 tbsp salt
3 eggs
1-1/2 cups olive oil (light)
1 cup honey
1-2 cups oats (can use Quaker oats)
1-2 cups whole spelt

Spelt Challah

Mix water, yeast, and honey and proof yeast till bubbly

In a large bowl mix flour and salt.

Make well in center of flour and pour in eggs, oil, and honey.

Add oats and whole spelt until you reach a good consistency. Let rise 1 1/2 hours.

Take Challah and say Bracha. Braid, and leave to rise again for 45 min.

Bake on 350 for approximately 20 minutes and then turn loaves and bake another 20 min.

1 1/2 cups water
5 large egg yolks
1-1/8 tsp salt
1/3 cup oil
4 1/4 cups bread flour (or spelt - add more flour)
1/2 c. plus 1 tbsp sugar
1 tbsp active dry yeast
1 large egg, lightly beaten

Best Bread Machine Challah

Place ingredients in machine according to manufacturer's directions. Preheat oven to 350. Braid dough into two challahs, let rise for 30 min. Brush with beaten egg, and sprinkle with sesame or poppy seeds. Bake for 30 min.