

Nicole Duval's Challah Recipe

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Ingredients:

1 cup of lukewarm water
1 packet of dry active yeast (2 1/4 tsp)
2 tsp sugar
+ 3-4 Tbsp sugar
1/8 cup honey (you can substitute other things here - maple syrup, brown rice sugar, agave..)
2 eggs
1/2 cup of oil (I use canola)
1 1/2 tsp salt
~ 4 cups All Purpose Flour/Bread Flour (I have also used spelt flour successfully as my dad has various food issues or you can do half whole wheat, half white)

- 1) Pour warm water (approx 110 degrees Fahrenheit) into a bowl with 2 tsp of sugar. Sprinkle the yeast over the water and leave to proof until the yeast becomes frothy (about 5 minutes).
- 2) Add the rest of the sugar, the honey, the eggs and 1 cup of the flour and combine (I like to do this by hand using a dough hook but you could either do this using a stand mixer with a dough hook attachment or even just a wooden spoon).
- 3) When combined, add oil and combine.
- 4) Gradually add the remaining flour, 1 cup at a time. Add salt after the third cup is combined. Start by adding the remaining flour 1/4 cup at a time and knead after each addition. At this point, you will have to judge by the feel of the dough. You want an elastic and smooth dough that is not dry and not too sticky. You will find that when the weather is more humid, you need more flour and when it is dry, you need less. Continue to knead until desired consistency is achieved.
- 5) Place the dough in a large bowl (it will double in size) that is lightly oiled and then cover it with a damp towel or seran wrap. Leave it for it's first rise for 2 hours. You can also put it in a ziplock bag with 1 tsp of canola oil if you don't have time to bake it after its first rise. In that case you can squeeze the air out, reseal and put it in the fridge until you are ready to bake it. If you do put it in the fridge, the dough will need to come back to room temperature before you braid it (about 2 hours). If you are not putting it in the fridge, punch the dough down to release the air and then it is ready to braid. This recipe makes one large challah or two medium.
- 6) After braiding, leave to rise a second time for about 30-60 minutes. You know it is ready when you poke the dough with your finger and the indentation remains. If it is not ready, it will spring back.
- 7) Baste with an egg wash (1 egg + 1 Tbsp water - you can also add 1 Tbsp honey). Bake in a preheated oven - the temperature will depend on your oven. This recipe was given to me with a temp of 350 degrees fahrenheit, baking for 1 hour. I played around with the temperature and am happy with it at 325 degrees fahrenheit for about 40 minutes. The internal temp of the thickest part should reach 190 degrees fahrenheit.

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