

Challah Bread

Ingredients

- 2 ½ cups very warm water (100 – 115 degrees F)
- 2 packages active dry yeast
- 6 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 ½ cups whole wheat flour
- ½ cup butter, very soft but not melted
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 ½ tbl salt
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- Sesame or poppy seeds for garnish, if desired

Egg Wash

- 1 large egg, well beaten
- ¼ cup water

Instructions

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a large cookie sheet.
- In a small bowl, mix ½ cup of the water with the yeast until the yeast dissolves.
- In a large bowl, combine the all-purpose and whole wheat flours.
- In another large bowl, mix 4 cups of the flour mixture with the remaining water, butter, sugar, salt and eggs.
- In a mixer, combine the flour mixture and the yeast mixture. Mix for 1 minute at low speed. Add the remaining flour mixture and continue mixing at medium speed for about 5 minutes, until a dough forms and pulls away from the side of the bowl.
- Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface and knead for 5 to 8 minutes, adding more flour if necessary.
- Place the dough in a bowl, cover with a damp towel and let rise in a warm place for about 90 minutes or until doubled in size.
- Punch the dough down, turn it out onto the work surface and cut in half. Divide each half into 3 equal pieces and roll each piece into a strand 10 to 12 inches long. Squeeze the ends of three strands together and tuck them under.
- Braid the strands and when you reach the opposite ends, squeeze them together and tuck them under. Repeat with the remaining strands of dough.
- Place the loaves on the prepared cookie sheet. Cover and let rise in a warm place for approximately 1 hour.
- Mix the beaten egg with the water and, using a pastry brush, coat the top of the loaves with the mixture. Sprinkle with sesame or poppy seeds, if desired.
- Bake at 30 – 35 minutes. When the loaves are golden brown and sound hollow on the bottom when tapped, remove them from the oven.
- Remove the loaves from the cookie sheet to a wire rack to cool.