

Challah (Sabbath Bread)

2 packages dry yeast
2 cups warm water
1/4 cup sugar
1/4 cup oil
4 tsp. Salt
3 eggs, slightly beaten
7 1/2 cups flour

Take a large bowl and pour in 2 cups warm water. Take your time testing to make sure it is *warm*, not hot, lukewarm or cool. Soften the yeast in the water. Add sugar, oil, salt. Blend in the eggs (reserve 1 tbsp of white for brushing). Add 3 cups flour—beat well to avoid lumps. Let it rest about 5 minutes. Gradually add the rest of the flour (4 1/2 cups). Oil the table or board you will use and your hands and knead the dough about 10 minutes.

Put the dough back into the bowl, cover with a clean cloth and leave in a warm place. Let rise about 1 1/2 hours. Shape. Braid on cookie sheet. If you sprinkle cornmeal on the bottom of the pan, the bottom of the loaf comes out textured. Brush top with egg. Sprinkle with poppy seeds or sesame seeds. Let raise 1 hour. Bake at 375° for 30-45 minutes. Tap the bottom of each loaf. When there is a hollow sound the bread is done.

This makes two very large loaves or three average sized loaves. I braid two for the Sabbath table and make one loaf in a regular bread pan.

Variation. Take three smaller strands and braid them together. Lay them over the top of the large braided loaves. This makes a very impressive loaf of bread.

2 loaves are needed.