



pretzel challah

Servings
10 servings

Prep Time
1 hour

Cook Time
3 hours

Kosher Key
Parve

Description

How to make yummy Pretzel Challah bread. Tastes like a soft pretzel, fluffy egg dough with a beautiful braided challah shape. Kosher, pareve

Ingredients

Pretzel Challah Ingredients

- 3/4 cup warm water
- 2 1/4 tsp active dry yeast (one packet)
- 1 tbsp white sugar
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil (I use canola)
- 1 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 large egg
- 2-3 cups flour
- 4 quarts water
- 1/2 cup baking soda
- 1/2 cup dark brown sugar
- Corn meal for dusting the baking sheet
- Kosher or coarse salt for dusting
- 2 tbsp melted butter or margarine (optional - if using butter, bread is no longer parve)

Egg Wash Ingredients

- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 tbsp cold water
- 1/4 tsp white sugar
- 1/4 tsp salt

Recipe Notes

You will also need: Mixing bowl, 2 smooth kitchen or tea towels, saucepan, large cookie sheet (or 1 large and 2 half sheets), 2 large spatulas, whisk, stovetop-safe roasting pan or oval pot with wide opening on top, parchment paper, pastry brush

Instructions

1. Add 3/4 cup warm (not hot) water, 1 tbsp white sugar, and yeast into a large bowl, whisk till combined.
2. Let mixture rest for 10 minutes. The yeast should have activated, meaning it will look expanded and foamy. If it doesn't, your yeast may have expired, which means your bread won't rise—go buy some fresh yeast!
3. Whisk in canola oil, salt, and egg and beat till well combined.
4. Begin adding the flour to the bowl by half-cupfuls, stirring with a large spoon each time flour is added.
5. When mixture becomes too thick to stir, use your hands to knead. Continue to add flour and knead the dough until it's smooth, elastic, and not sticky. The amount of flour you will need to achieve this texture varies—only add flour until the dough feels pliable and “right.”
6. Place a saucepan full of water on the stove to boil.
7. Meanwhile, remove the dough from your mixing bowl and wash out the bowl. Grease the bowl with vegetable oil. Push the dough back into the bottom of the bowl, then flip it over so that both sides are slightly moistened by the oil.
8. Cover the bowl with a clean, damp kitchen towel.
9. Place the bowl of dough on the middle rack of your oven. Take the saucepan full of boiling water and place it below the rack where your dough sits.
10. Close the oven, but do not turn it on. The pan of hot water will create a warm, moist environment for your dough to rise. If it's a cold day, you can also heat the oven for 2-3 minutes till it's warm inside (not hot). Let the dough rise for 1 hour.
11. Take the dough bowl out and punch it down several times to remove air pockets.
12. Place it back inside the oven and let it rise for 1 hour longer.
13. Take the dough out of the oven.
14. Flour a smooth surface like a cutting board. Punch the dough down into the bowl a few times, then turn the dough out onto the floured surface. Knead for a few minutes, adding flour as needed to keep the dough from feeling sticky.
15. Now it's time to braid your challah. [For challah braiding instructions, click here.](#) I highly recommend you make two small braids with your dough, because later you will have to

immerse the braids in boiling water. It is easiest to manage two small braids, rather than one large one.

16. For this blog, I made two 4-strand braids, which worked out great. Two 3-strand braids will work, as will round challah shapes. I do not recommend making 6-strand braids, it would be difficult with the small amount of dough you're working with. Mini challah rolls are fun, too!
17. [To learn how to make the challah rolls and other braid shapes, click here.](#)
18. Line a large cookie sheet with a clean, dry, smooth kitchen towel. Place the braids on top of the towel and let them rise for 30-45 minutes longer. You'll know the dough is ready to bake when you press your finger into the dough and the indentation stays, rather than bouncing back.
19. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Bring 4 quarts of water to boil in an oval saucepan or roasting pan on your stovetop. The pan should be large, with an opening wide enough to immerse the entire challah. Dissolve the baking soda and 1/2 cup brown sugar into the boiling water, using a whisk to break up the baking soda and sugar that settles on the bottom of the pan. Careful, the baking soda will fizz up when you add it to the boiling water!
20. Bring the cookie sheet to the stove area. Gently immerse the two braids in the boiling water for 30 seconds. Turn them once with a spatula to make sure both sides of the braid are evenly moistened by the boiling water. Use the spatulas to carefully remove the braids from the water and place them on the kitchen towel lined cookie sheet. If you prefer, you can immerse the braids one at a time for easier handling.
21. Let the soaked braids rest on the kitchen towel for a few minutes while you prepare your egg wash. They will look slightly "water-logged" and pruney at this point, but don't worry, they'll puff up again when they bake. The kitchen towel will soak up any excess liquid so the bottom of each challah doesn't become soggy.
22. To prepare the egg wash, whisk together the yolk, water, sugar and salt till smooth.
23. Line another baking sheet, or two half sheets, with parchment paper (or, you can gently remove the challahs from the baking sheet and dry that one, then re-use it). Sprinkle the parchment paper with a light dusting of cornmeal. Pretzel bread is sticky business; doubling up with parchment paper and cornmeal is the safest bet to ensure that the challahs don't stick.
24. Place the braided challahs onto the parchment paper lined baking sheet(s).
25. Brush the challahs evenly with a light, thorough coating of the egg wash.
26. Dust the challahs with kosher or coarse salt to taste. Careful, they can get very salty very fast! A thin, even sprinkling will work best.
27. The challah needs to bake for about 30-40 minutes total, but to get the best result the baking should be done in stages. First, set your timer to 15 minutes and put your challah

in the oven.

28. After 15 minutes, take the challah out of the oven and coat the center of the braid with another very thin layer of egg wash. This area tends to expand during baking, exposing areas that will turn white unless they are coated with egg wash. Don't lay it on too thick, or the egg will scramble-- just a thin layer will do it.
29. Turn the tray around, so the opposite side is facing front, and put the tray back into the oven. Turning the tray helps your challah brown evenly—the back of the oven is usually hotter than the front.

The challah will need to bake for 15-25 minutes longer. Challah is finished when it's a dark golden brown color all the way across. Test the bread for doneness by turning it over and tapping on the bottom of the loaf—if it makes a hollow sound, it's done.

30. To keep the outer part of the pretzel challah soft and supple, you can brush each challah with a tablespoon of melted butter or margarine as soon as it comes out of the oven (if you use butter, it becomes a dairy dish, not pareve). This step is optional.
31. Let challah cool slightly on the baking sheet or a wire cooling rack before serving. Pretzel challah is best served warm; reheat before serving. Store it wrapped tightly in plastic wrap or foil to keep it fresh.

Nutrition Facts

Pretzel Challah

Amount Per Serving

Calories 185	Calories from Fat 36
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% Daily Value*

Total Fat 4g **6%**

Saturated Fat 2g	10%
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Cholesterol 43mg	14%
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Sodium 2042mg	85%
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Potassium 56mg	2%
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Total Carbohydrates 31g **10%**

Sugars 12g

Protein 3g	6%
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Vitamin A	2.4%
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Calcium	2.9%
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Iron	7.7%
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* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2000 calorie diet.