

Mark's Challah

This is a quick method it takes just a few hours instead of two days.

Ingredients:

2 Cups of warm water (You should measure this accurately as well as the flour quantity, once this is all mixed it should be a nice solid mass not wet or too dry. The consistency of this dough ball is crucial to the end result.

½ cup sugar

2 teaspoons of salt

¼ cup of olive oil

1 ½ eggs.

Keep the other ½ egg for the wash for the loaves just before you bake them

3 tea spoons dry yeast

I add the yeast last so I can ensure the correct temperature when it is added.

6 cups of bread flour (this is different to normal flour)

Put the warm water and all of the ingredients except the flour into your mixer with a whisk if you have it. Mix it well for a couple of minutes it should become quite frothy. You need to get everything well dissolved especially the yeast.

(The water temperature is very important, if it is too hot or too cold the yeast won't activate and work, you want to add the yeast last and into a temperature just above luke warm.)

Then fit the dough hook to your mixer and gradually add the flour.

Now in order to create a hot moist environment for the bread to rise, get an old Tea towel and wet it. Then put it in the microwave for 2mins on high. It will get very hot, and the inside of your microwave will become warm and moist.

Then place this hot towel over your bowl and put it all back in the microwave, (now turned off). Leave it in there for 30-60mins until it is doubled in size.

Then take the mix out and place it on a smooth floured surface ready to braid.

Half the mixture as you will be making two loaves of Challah. Or you can make one Challah & some awesome pizza bases with the other half of the dough!

If you want to add raisins to your bread now is the time to do it.

Then divide each half into three parts of dough.

Stretch each section out to a long tube shape ready to braid.

Pinch the three tubes together and then braid them together loosely, again pinching it all together at the end.

Now place your loaves onto a tray and brush them with the remaining half egg.

Now place your loaves in a warm place again and leave again to rise, they should rise by about 50% then place them in a 180 deg oven to bake for 20-30mins. Check them after 20mins when you tap the bread it should sound hollow when it is cooked. My family prefers our Challah a bit doughy so we take it out a bit earlier.

There are traditionally two Challah loaves in remembrance of the fact that the people of Israel could gather enough manna miraculously supplied to them for Shabbat and it wouldn't spoil over night when they were in the desert being delivered from Egypt.

Enjoy your Shabbat celebration and blessing your family.