

Taste of Home



Honey Challah

TOTAL TIME: Prep: 45 min. + rising Bake: 30 min. + cooling

YIELD: 2 loaves (24 servings each).

I use these shiny beautiful loaves as the centerpiece of my spread. I love the taste of honey, but you can also add chocolate chips, cinnamon, orange zest or almonds. Leftover slices of this sweet challah recipe work well in bread pudding or for French toast. —Jennifer Newfield, Los Angeles, California

Ingredients

2 packages (1/4 ounce each) active dry yeast

1/2 teaspoon sugar

1-1/2 cups warm water (110° to 115°), divided

5 large eggs

2/3 cup plus 1 teaspoon honey, divided

1/2 cup canola oil

2 teaspoons salt

6 to 7 cups bread flour

1 cup boiling water

2 cups golden raisins

1 tablespoon water

1 tablespoon sesame seeds

Directions

1. In a small bowl, dissolve yeast and sugar in 1 cup warm water. Separate two eggs; refrigerate two egg whites. Place remaining egg yolks and eggs in a large bowl. Add 2/3 cup honey, oil, salt, yeast mixture, 3 cups flour and remaining warm water; beat on medium speed 3 minutes. Stir in enough remaining flour to form a soft dough (dough will be sticky).
2. Pour boiling water over raisins in a small bowl; let stand 5 minutes. Drain and pat dry. Turn dough onto a floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic, 6-8 minutes. Knead in raisins. Place in a greased bowl, turning once to grease the top. Cover with plastic wrap and let rise in a warm place until almost doubled, about 1-1/2 hours.
3. Punch down dough. Turn onto a lightly floured surface. Divide dough in half. Divide one portion into six pieces. Roll each into a 16-in. rope. Place ropes parallel on a greased baking sheet; pinch ropes together at the top.
4. To braid, take the rope on the right and carry it over the two ropes beside it, then slip it under the middle rope and carry it over the last two ropes. Lay the rope down parallel to the other ropes; it is now on the far left side. Repeat these steps until you reach the end. As the braid moves to the left, you can pick up the loaf and re-center it on your work surface as needed. Pinch ends to seal and tuck under. For a fuller loaf, using your hands, push the ends of the loaf closer together. Repeat process with remaining dough. Cover with kitchen towels; let rise in a warm place until almost doubled, about 30 minutes.
5. Preheat oven to 350°. In a small bowl, whisk remaining egg whites and honey with water; brush over loaves. Sprinkle with sesame seeds. Bake 30-35 minutes or until golden brown and bread sounds hollow when tapped. Remove from pans to a wire rack to cool.

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