

## Challah

Combine the following in a large bowl:

4 ½ tsp instant yeast (2 pkgs)  
½ c + ½ tsp granulated sugar  
5 c unbleached all-purpose flour  
1 ½ Tbsp table salt

Add all at once, then mix thoroughly:

2 ½ c warm water (105-115°F)  
4 large eggs  
¼ c vegetable oil (neutral-flavored oil, e.g. canola, preferred)

Continue to mix, adding in an additional 2 – 2 ¼ c flour.

Knead on a lightly floured surface until dough is smooth and elastic, adding flour as necessary to prevent stickiness.

Turn into a lightly-oiled bowl and allow to rise in a warm place until quite puffy (doubled in bulk), about 45-80 minutes.

Line a baking sheet with parchment.

Punch down the dough, and divide into 6 pieces. Roll each piece into a 25-30 cm rope. Taking three ropes at a time, braid loosely, to make two braided loaves. Place each completed loaf onto the parchment; cover with a tea towel and allow to rise until doubled, about 45-80 min.

Pre-heat the oven to 350°F.

Make an egg wash of 1 egg and 1 Tbsp of water, well mixed. Brush the loaves well with this, ensuring wash gets between the braids as much as possible. Sprinkle with poppy and/or sesame seeds (both are traditional), or any other combination of seeds, or none at all.

Bake for 35 to 45 minutes; you may have to cover the loaves loosely with aluminum foil after 25 min if the tops are browning too much. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.