

Challah
(courtesy of “Zingerman’s Bakehouse” by Amy Emberling & Frank Carollo)

Ingredients

3/4 cup water, room temperature
5 egg yolks
2 tablespoons + 1 teaspoon corn oil
2 1/2 tablespoons honey
1 1/2 teaspoons yeast
3 cups plus 3 tablespoons (16 ounces) all purpose flour
1 1/2 teaspoons salt

Egg Wash

1 large egg
1 egg yolk
1 tablespoon water

Directions

In a large bowl, combine the water, egg yolks, oil, honey, yeast, and half the flour. Mix with a wooden spoon until the mixture becomes a thick batter. Add the remaining flour and salt, and mix until the dough becomes a shaggy mass. Scrape the dough out of the mixing bowl onto a clean, unfloured work surface.

Knead the dough for 6-8 minutes until it becomes smooth and firm.

Place the dough in a lightly oiled container, cover with plastic, and let rise for 1 hour.

After 1 hour, turn the dough out of the container onto a lightly floured work surface, and divide into 6 equal pieces. Shape each piece of dough into a round, cover, and let rest for 5 minutes. Form each piece into a 10 inch long cylinder with tapered ends. Toss the strands with medium rye flour and shake off the excess. Attach 3 of the strands together at one end, pressing together firmly. Repeat with the three remaining strands. Then attach the two groups of strands together so that three stick out to the left and three stick out to the right.

Shape the loaf into a 6-strand braid. (I recommend the King Arthur Baking video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeaYznp2zdk>

Place the braid onto a cornmeal-covered work surface (I use rice flour). Make the egg wash by beating together the egg, egg yolk, and water, and brush the braid with it.

Let the loaf for 1 1/2 hours, until they are least 1 1/2 times their original size.

Preheat a baking stone in your oven to 325 degrees Fahrenheit for 45 minutes.

When fully proofed, brush the loaf with egg wash as second time (and sprinkle with sesame or poppy seeds, if desired). Transfer to a lightly floured peel. Load onto the baking stone to bake for approximately 25 minutes, or until golden brown and the internal temperature is at least 190 degrees Fahrenheit.

Remove, please on a wire rack, and cool completely before serving.

[Alternatively, place on a parchment covered half-sheet sprinkled with flour (my preference is rice flour, as it’s finer-grained and won’t affect the dough’s moisture content).]