

CHALLAH BREAD

provenance: This recipe is from my sister and her husband, and is so foolproof that your kids can use it as play-doh for an hour and it will still rise and be amazing. This makes 2 huge loaves. This is easiest in a stand mixer, but can be done by hand.

combine in 2 c. lukewarm water (preferably nonchlorinated)

mixer bowl: 1/2 cup honey

2 T. dry yeast (or 2 packages)

Let sit for 20 minutes to make sure it bubbles.

This will show you that the yeast is active.

add to 4 large eggs

mixer bowl: 1/2 c. vegetable oil

1 T. salt

Mix with contents of bowl until combined.

slowly add to 6.5 - 7 c. flour

mixer bowl: (half whole wheat, half white)

Use dough hook attachment to stand mixer.

Gradually add in flour a half-cup at a time, until the dough is not sticky, and pulls away from the sides of the bowl. You will need more or less flour depending on the humidity that day.

add if desired: 1/2 cup raisins

to bake that day: On a floured surface divide dough into 2 balls. Slice each ball into 3 parts, roll each part out into a long rope, then braid the 3 ropes. Put each loaf onto a baking sheet lined with parchment paper and cover with a tea towel. Let rise for about an hour. Move on to "time to bake" instructions below.

to bake the Put all the dough into a large, oiled bowl. Turn dough to get it well-oiled.

next morning: Cover with plastic wrap and put in the fridge for up to 10 hours. When you are ready to bake, punch the cold dough down, and then proceed with instructions listed above for "to bake that day". It may need 1.5 hours to rise because it's starting colder.

time to bake: Preheat oven to 350F.

Mix one egg with 1 T. water

Brush risen dough with the egg/water mixture. Sprinkle dough with kosher salt or poppy or sesame seeds if desired. Bake loaves for 30-35 minutes, turning and switching racks after 15 minutes. Don't overbake! You will lose the delicious chew and it will become too airy. Try to let it cool a bit before tearing in!

Jen hadley