

Minka's Challah

Ingredients

8 cups all-purpose flour (do not pack the flour into the cup or overfill it)
1 T instant yeast
1/2 cup sugar
1 T salt
1/2 cup vegetable oil
5 eggs (room temperature)
1 1/4 cups water (temperature of bath water)

Directions

1. **Mix:** Combine all ingredients in the mixing bowl of a stand mixer and mix on low speed until the flour is absorbed and the mixture is homogenous.
2. Let the dough rest for 15 minutes.
3. Mix for 3 minutes in the mixer scraping down the bowl if necessary.
4. This process can also be done by hand in a large mixing bowl.
5. **Proof:** Place in an oiled bowl and cover for 90 minutes (or, place immediately in the refrigerator to shape and bake the next day).
6. **Shape:** Divide the dough into 6 pieces of equal weight then roll into tight cylinders, about 4 inches long.
7. Let the cylinders relax for 20 minutes then roll them into 12-14 inch strands. Take three strands, seal the starting ends together and braid loosely, sealing the finishing ends. Place on a parchment-lined baking tray and repeat with the second set of strands.
8. **Proof:** Place, covered, in a warm place for 1.5 to 2 hrs to rise.
9. **Bake:** While the loaves proof, preheat oven to 350F.
10. Egg wash thoroughly and sprinkle with poppy seeds or sesame seeds or coarse sugar and place in the center rack of the oven to bake for 30 minutes, rotating as necessary to ensure even color.