

# SWEET ROUND RAISIN CHALLAH

*by Torah.org*

Source: "A Treasury of Jewish Holiday Baking"© - by Marcy Goldman

Yield: one large or two medium loaves

## **Dough:**

1 1/2 cups - Dark or yellow raisins, plumped

1 3/4 cups - Warm water

2 Tbs. - Dry yeast

pinch - Sugar

1/3 cup - Sugar

1/3 cup - Light honey

3 1/2 tsp. - Salt

1/2 cup - Oil

3 - Eggs

2 - Egg yolks

6-7 cups approximately - Bread flour

## **Egg wash:**

2 Tbs. - Water

2 tsp. - Sugar

1 - Egg

1 - yolk

In a large mixing bowl stir together the yeast, water, and pinch of sugar. Let stand five minutes to allow yeast to swell and dissolve.

Briskly stir in remaining sugar, honey, and salt. Then add oil, eggs, yolks and about five cups of the flour. Stir into a shaggy mass. Let stand 10-20 minutes to absorb flour. Knead, by hand or with a dough hook, adding remaining flour as required to make a soft and elastic dough (about 10-12 minutes). Dough should leave sides of the bowl. If it is sticky, add small amounts of flour until dough is soft but no longer sticks. (Note: if you find dough too bulky for your mixer, divide in two. Knead one portion at a time).

Let dough rest on a lightly floured board ten minutes, then flatten and press in raisins as evenly as

possible into the dough, folding dough over raisins to "tuck" them in. Place dough in a greased bowl and either cover with greased plastic wrap and a damp tea towel or cover with a damp tea towel and place entire bowl inside a large plastic bag. Let rise in a draft free place until doubled and puffy looking, anywhere from 45 to 90 minutes.

(If you are doing an overnight, cool rise, place dough in a large, lightly greased bowl and insert this in a large plastic bag. Refrigerate overnight. If you see the bread rising too quickly, open the bag, deflate dough, and reseal. Next day, allow dough to warm up then gently deflate and proceed.)

Divide dough in two. For 'faigele' or turban-shaped New Year's challah, shape each section into a long rope (about 12-14 inches long) which is thicker at one end and coil it, starting with the thicker end first, tucking the end in on top to "lock". Or, you can divide each dough section into three ropes, around 14 inches long and make a traditional challah braid.

Place on cornmeal dusted baking sheet. In a small bowl, whisk together egg glaze ingredients. Brush loaf with egg wash and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Let rise until puffy, around 20-30 minutes. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Bake bread 12 minutes then reduce heat to 350 Degrees F and bake another 25 minutes or until bread is evenly browned.

Makes one large or two medium loaves. Can be frozen baked or unbaked. If freezing unbaked, let bread rise slowly, overnight in the fridge. Bring to room temperature before baking.

NOTES: "The sound of the shofar, the ram's horn that trumpets in the New Year at synagogues everywhere, is the unique sound of Rosh Hashanah. It stirs the soul. A freshly cut wedge of this challah, liberally dipped in new autumn honey, stirs the taste buds."

Substitute dried cranberries or sour cherries and make up a batch of miniatures to offer in a Rosh Hashanah gift basket. Rich bread doughs like this one really put yeast to the test. Make sure you use a highly tolerant yeast (such as fermipan) for best results.