

LOVE'S CHALLAH

2 pks instant yeast
1 tsp sugar
½ cup very warm water

2 eggs (room temp.)
½ cup milk (room temp.)
½ cup honey
2 tsp salt

4-1/2-5-1/2 cups flour (bread flour preferred)
1 stick softened butter

2 egg yolks mixed with tsp water
Poppy or sesame seeds

In large bowl dissolve yeast and sugar in water. Cover lightly with dish towel for 5 min. or until yeast looks foamy.

Add next 4 ingredients; then add 3 cups of flour and butter. Gradually add 4th cup of flour and mix briefly until dough is able to be handled. Turn out onto floured board and begin kneading the dough, gradually adding flour (up to 1 cup) as needed until dough is smooth and satiny. (Kneading should take 10 to 15 min.)

Place dough in greased bowl and turn once to lightly grease surface of dough. Cover tightly with plastic wrap.

Let rise until doubled in size (1 ½-2 ½ hours).

Punch down, knead 5 or 6 times in bowl and let rest for 10 min. Then turn dough out onto lightly floured board and flatten into a circle. Cut in half. Divide 1st piece into 3 strips, squeezing and elongating strips for braiding. Braid and place on lightly greased baking sheet. Repeat with 2nd piece of dough.

Lightly cover loaves and let rise for approx. 30-40 min.

Mix 2 egg yolks with teaspoon or so of water and when loaves are ready brush them all over with egg wash and sprinkle with seeds (optional).

Bake in 375 degree oven for 20 min., then turn oven down to 350 and bake an addl.10 min. or until loaves are brown (to your liking) and sound hollow when tapped.

Cool on rack.