

Deborah's Babka Recipe

(Makes 2 big or 3 small ones)

Need:

2 or 3 loaf pans (can use a bundt pan or round pan instead)

Parchment paper

Cooking Spray

Note: Babka traditionally starts with a sweet, enriched and yeasty bread dough, which to me sounds just like challah! I take my regular challah recipe and sometimes tweak it a bit for this, or just use my challah dough. I will give the recipe both for the challah dough (which truly is perfect for this!) or for a "traditional" babka dough recipe that I have used if you want to try that.

Challah Dough (this is what I use, but note variation from the original)

-1 tablespoon instant yeast (also called dry yeast, not to be confused with active dry which needs to be activated/proofed first)

-1/3 cup oil (can substitute softened butter)

-2 eggs or 4 egg yolks

-1/2 cup sugar

-2 teaspoons salt OR one teaspoon kosher salt

-1 teaspoon vanilla extract

-1 - 1 1/3 cups of water (start with 1, may need to add up to 1/3 cup more as you mix the dough, so have it ready in case) (can also use warm milk in place of water for a richer dough)

-5 cups all-purpose flour (plus up to 1 cup more as needed)

Combine all ingredients in a mixer, large bowl, or bread machine. Knead at least 5 minutes if doing in mixer or by hand, until soft, smooth and elastic and not sticky at all. Place in a clean oiled bowl and turn to coat. Cover with plastic wrap and clean towel. Either do a cold rise in the refrigerator (8-12 hours), or let rise 1.5-2 hours in a warm place. Once approximately doubled in size, place in refrigerator for 10-20 minutes or longer while you assemble the fillings.

Babka Dough (if you want to use this in place of challah dough)

-1/2 cup whole milk (warmed) or water

-1 tablespoon instant yeast

-2/3 cup butter, room temp, cut in small cubes

-4 egg yolks or 3 large eggs

-1/2 cup sugar

-1 teaspoon kosher salt

-3 3/4 cups all-purpose flour

Place flour, sugar and yeast in a mixer. Add eggs and water or milk if using, mix until dough comes together. Add salt and butter, few cubes at a time, until

incorporated. Mix for 10 minutes on medium speed, until dough smooth, shiny and elastic, pulling away from the side of the bowl. Place dough in a clean oiled bowl, cover with plastic wrap and clean towel, and refrigerate at least 8 hours or overnight.

OK-now that your dough is done, moving onto assembling the babka!! Giving recipes for traditional chocolate and cinnamon, but again, it is a method and options are endless! Halva, cookie butter, pistachio spread, chocolate espresso, Nutella, cookies and cream, fruit jam, etc. Please choose ingredients and recipes that your family will enjoy, with about 1-1.5 cups of filling per babka.

Chocolate Babka (for 2 large babka (standard loaf pans) or 3 medium (paper/rectangular/Israeli loaf pans)

*stores in fridge/freezer and reheats great

1/2 cup unsalted butter

1 cup chocolate chips/chopped chocolate-any kind you like

1/3 cup white sugar

1/3 cup cocoa powder

1/2-1 teaspoon cinnamon

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1-1.5 cups mini or regular chocolate chips or chopped chocolate, milk or semi-sweet

1 egg for egg wash

Melt butter and 1 cup chocolate on the stove or in microwave in 30 second intervals until smooth. Remove from heat, stir in vanilla, sugar, cocoa powder and cinnamon until smooth. Let cool or follow directions to chill log.

Roll out 1/2 the dough (or 1/3 if making smaller babka) on a floured surface to a rectangle approximately 12 x 14 inches, doesn't have to be exact. Spread the filling over the surface, leaving a small border around the edges. Sprinkle the chocolate chips or chopped chocolate over the filling. Start with the long edge closest to you and roll up into a log as tight as you can. The dough will be easier to work with if it is chilled. If it's not, you can put the filled log in the fridge to set for about 10-20 min. Using a sharp knife or clean kitchen shears, cut the log lengthwise down the middle. Turn the halves cut side up. Start at the top and braid or twist the 2 pieces together, then leave as is or fold in half and twist together again if using a wider pan. Place in a greased loaf pan lined with parchment paper or very well greased/sprayed. Cover with a clean towel and let rise for about 30 minutes to an hour or until doubled in size. Brush with egg wash and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar and more chocolate chips and/or streusel if using, recipe below.

Bake at 350 for 25-30 minutes until internal temp is about 190° and a skewer comes out clean. If using simple syrup, poke holes with skewer and spoon over

the top. Best served fresh and warm, will stay good at room temp for up to 2 days and freezes great.

Cinnamon Babka (for one loaf, double if making 2 cinnamon)

1/4 cup softened or melted butter (can use oil for parve)

1/4 cup white sugar

1/4 cup brown sugar

2-3 teaspoons cinnamon

Optional: 1/2-1 cup chopped pecans or walnuts/dried fruit

Roll out 1/2 the dough (or 1/3 if making smaller babka) on a floured surface to a rectangle approximately 12 x 14 inches, doesn't have to be exact. Spread the soft butter over the surface with your hand, leaving a small border around the edges. Sprinkle the cinnamon filling over the butter and press lightly. Sprinkle the nuts or fruit on if using. Start with the long edge closest to you and roll up into a log as tight as you can. The dough will be easier to work with if it is chilled. Using a sharp knife or clean kitchen shears, cut the log lengthwise down the middle. Turn the halves cut side up. Start at the top and braid or twist the 2 pieces together, then fold in half and twist together again. Place in a greased loaf pan lined with parchment paper. Cover with a clean towel and let rise about 30-60 minutes or until doubled in size. Brush with egg wash and sprinkle with streusel if using, recipe below. Bake at 350 for 25-30 minutes until internal temp is about 190° and a skewer comes out clean. If using syrup, poke holes with skewer and pour over the top. Best served fresh, will stay good at room temp for up to 2 days and freezes great.

Streusel Topping (for 2 loaves; optional, but delicious on any flavor babka)

-1/2 cup all-purpose flour

-4 tablespoons softened butter or oil

-1/4 cup sugar, each brown and white

-1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

-1/2-1 teaspoon cinnamon

-1/3 cup chocolate chips, for chocolate babka

(Optional: 1 teaspoon of cocoa powder for chocolate streusel)

Syrup (recipe for both loaves; optional)

-1/4 cup sugar

-1/4 cup water

Combine in a small saucepan over medium heat. Bring to a simmer and reduce heat to simmer for 2 minutes, stirring until sugar is completely dissolved. Pour the syrup over the Babka while it is still hot.