PREPARING SHABBAT FOOD

INTRODUCTION TO PREPARING SHABBAT FOOD

Introduction to Preparing Shabbat Food

Before *Shabbat*, we make or buy the food that we will need for *Shabbat*. Although cooking is forbidden on *Shabbat*, some food preparation is allowed after *Shabbat* begins. See *Shabbat*: Cooking.
Special *Shabbat* foods include two loaves of bread for each of the first two meals and, preferably, for the third meal, too.

CHALLA

WHAT TO USE FOR CHALLA

What Is Challa

C*halla* refers to the two loaves of bread (or *matza*) over which we say the *ha'motzi* blessing at *Shabbat* and *Jewish festival* meals.
The loaves must be:

- Whole, without significant parts missing.
- Made out of one or more of the *Five Grains*.

MAKING CHALLA

Six-Braid Challa for Shabbat

It is a non-binding custom to braid *challa* as a reminder of the 12 showbreads (*lechem ha'panim*) in the *Temple* that were changed each *Shabbat*. Proper practice is to braid each *challa* from six pieces of dough, as there were two columns of six loaves each.

NOTE Since these showbreads were not changed on *Rosh Hashana* and *Jewish festivals*, we may use round *challot* for those holidays (unless they fall on *Shabbat* or the holiday is *Passover*!).

NOTE Sectional *challa* should be made from six pieces but counted as one loaf: you may not separate the rolls of a "pull-apart" *challa* and count them as multiple loaves.

Breaking Apart Challot Baked Together

If you bake several units of dough in one pan and they expand into each other, you may not break them apart after baking and use them as separate *challot*. If they only slightly touch each other, you may separate them and use them as individual *challot*.

SEPARATING CHALLA (HAFRASHAT CHALLA)

INTRODUCTION TO SEPARATING CHALLA

Introduction to Separating Challa

Although *challa* refers to the two loaves of bread (or *matza*) over which we say the *ha'motzi* blessing at *Shabbat* and *Jewish festival* meals, *challa* also means the portion of dough or bread that we are obligated to give to the *cohen*/priests during *Temple* times. Today, we burn a token portion ("*challa*") of dough.

NOTE Burning the *challa* is not considered to violate *bal tashchit* (needless destruction), since the *challa* is separated and destroyed to fulfill a *mitzva*.

SEPARATING THE CHALLA PORTION

Separating the Challa Portion

Separating *Challa* from more than 5 lbs. of Dough

After you knead more than 5 lbs. (2.3 kg) of flour at one time:

- Hold part of the dough (at least 1 fl. oz.) while it is still part of the main mass of dough;
- Say the blessing *lehafrish challa min ha'isa*;
- Separate a small amount (1 fl. oz. is sufficient) of the dough as *challa*; and
- Say *harei zu challa*.

Separating *Challa* from between 2.5 and 5 lbs. of Dough

SITUATION You prepare dough, in a single batch, from more than 2.5 lbs. (1 kg), but less than 5 lbs. (2.3 kg), of flour.

WHAT TO DO Separate a small amount (1 fl. oz. is sufficient) of the dough as "*challa*." Don't say the blessing; just say *harei zu challa*.

NOTE If you mix at least 2.5 lbs. (1 kg) of dough, you must separate *challa* (without a blessing) even if you will not be baking some of the dough until another time.

Separating *Challa* from less than 2.5 lbs. of Dough

Don't separate *challa* if the dough was prepared from less than 2.5 lbs. (1 kg) of flour.

Separating Challa from Dough Mixed by Non-Jew

Don't separate *challa* if you acquire dough that had been owned by a non-Jew at the time it was mixed.

Separating Challa after Baking

You may separate *challa* after baking (on weekdays only) if you forgot to separate *challa* before baking.

SITUATION You forgot to separate *challa* from dough made of at least 2.5 lbs. (1 kg) of flour, it is now *Shabbat* or a *Jewish festival*. You want to eat the bread.

WHAT TO DO

- If you are outside *Eretz Yisrael*: You may leave part of the *challa* until after *Shabbat* or *Jewish festivals*. After *havdala*, separate the *challa* from the part that you had set aside.
- If you are in *Eretz Yisrael*: You may not use bread from which *challa* was not separated. Once *Shabbat* or the *Jewish festival* ends, you may separate *challa* and then eat the bread.

BURNING THE CHALLA PORTION

Which Piece of Challa To Burn

Once you intend a particular piece of dough to be the *challa* portion, you must burn that piece and not put it back into the main dough.

When To Burn the Challa Portion

There is no time limit for burning "*challa*." You may save several pieces for burning together, but you may not keep them in a place where they might get used.

How To Burn the Challa Portion

You may burn the *challa* portion any way you wish. You must burn it completely.

CHOLENT

Cholent

At least one hot food should be eaten at the midday meal on *Shabbat*/Saturday.

GEFILTE FISH

Gefilte Fish

Eating *gefilte* fish, made of fish in which bones have been removed, avoids the necessity of doing the *melacha* of selecting (*boreir*) the bones from the fish. This allows a fish course to be eaten at a *Shabbat* meal (which, in addition to the meat, makes the *Shabbat* meal special because both fish and meat would not have been commonly served in poor areas during the week).

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