

# Vegan CHALLAH

by

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This is a vegan version of a traditional challah recipe—it is made without eggs. I have also designed it to be completely handmade, no machines necessary.

- Roberta

*what you need*

A large ceramic or glass bowl  
A wooden spoon  
A cookie sheet  
Parchment paper or silicone mat  
Liquid and dry measuring cups  
Measuring cups and spoons  
Cutting board

*ingredients*

4 ½ to 5 cups unbleached bread flour  
1 cup whole spelt flour  
½ cup wheat germ (not wheat bran)  
⅓ cup organic sugar  
2 teaspoons sea salt  
¼ teaspoon turmeric  
2 packages yeast (or if using yeast in a jar, 4 and ½ teaspoons) (if you have some and have not used it for a while, check the expiration date and keep the jar in fridge or freezer)  
1 cup ice water  
1 cup boiling water  
3 ounces olive oil  
Poppy seeds or sesame seeds for the top (or use both)

*directions*

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

Mix one cup ice water with one cup boiling water — you will have the right temperature for the yeast (a small plant that has been dormant for a long time) to activate.

Add a pinch of sugar or bit of agave to the water, stir with a chopstick, add the yeast, stir again and let sit for ten minutes. If it does not get foamy, it is not active and you need fresh yeast.

In a large bowl, measure the flour, sugar, salt and turmeric. Stir together well, then add the yeast mixture and the olive oil. Mix well with a wooden spoon, gathering up what sticks to the sides.

When well mixed, flour a cutting board. Lift the dough out of the bowl, place on the board and knead with your hands, punching down, folding over and changing directions. Having some flour on your hands helps. Knead until the dough is soft and elastic and feels like your earlobe. You may or may not need the additional half cup of flour, so start with 4 and a half and add slowly if too soft. (Flours vary in the amount of moisture they have; use a premium brand for best results.)

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A close-up photograph of braided dough, likely for challah, showing the intricate weaving of the strands. The dough is a light yellowish-tan color and has a smooth, slightly glossy texture. It is set against a dark, textured background.

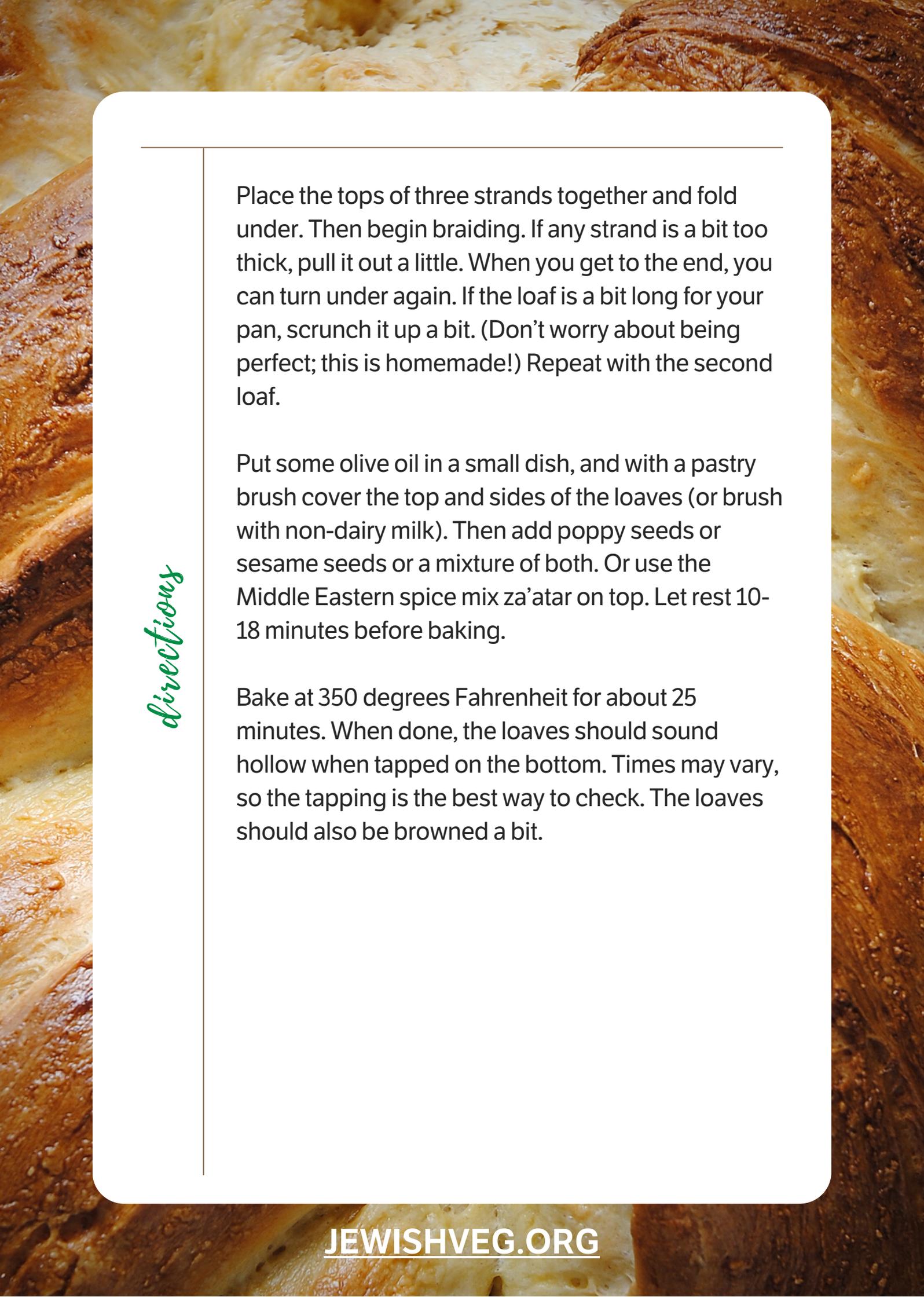
*directions*

Lightly oil the bottom and sides of the bowl. Put the dough inside and lightly oil the top of the dough. Cover with a damp kitchen towel and let it rise in a warm and draft-free place for about an hour and a half. When you poke a finger in the dough and it does not start rising again, it has risen enough. 85 degrees is the ideal rising temperature. (You can heat the oven to 200 for one minute, turn off, then let the bread rise inside; this is good in cold weather.) The dough should rise twice—about an hour and a half the first time and an hour is usually enough for the second rising. Punch the dough down between risings.

Take a cookie sheet and put parchment paper on it. Once you start using parchment paper you won't want to go back to greasing pans again! (You can also replace parchment paper with a silicone mat.)

Remove dough from bowl, cut in half with a sharp knife. Place one half back in the bowl, the other on a floured board. Punch down and roll into a rectangle. If you do not have a rolling pin, an empty wine or sparkling water bottle works well. Roll out until about 12-14 inches long. Cut into three pieces, lengthwise. Roll each piece into a log. Repeat with second half. Place the six logs on a prepared baking sheet. Let rest for 10 minutes uncovered.

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*directions*

Place the tops of three strands together and fold under. Then begin braiding. If any strand is a bit too thick, pull it out a little. When you get to the end, you can turn under again. If the loaf is a bit long for your pan, scrunch it up a bit. (Don't worry about being perfect; this is homemade!) Repeat with the second loaf.

Put some olive oil in a small dish, and with a pastry brush cover the top and sides of the loaves (or brush with non-dairy milk). Then add poppy seeds or sesame seeds or a mixture of both. Or use the Middle Eastern spice mix za'atar on top. Let rest 10-18 minutes before baking.

Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for about 25 minutes. When done, the loaves should sound hollow when tapped on the bottom. Times may vary, so the tapping is the best way to check. The loaves should also be browned a bit.

# Shabbat Shalom!

*from*

## Jewish Veg

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