

# Salt and Serenity

## Apple Challah Babka

This challah was inspired by [cloudykitchen's](#) Mixed Nut and Dulce de Leche Brioche Knot. I applied her brilliant twisting method to my challah dough and added an apple filling. Perfect for Rosh Hashanah. The challah dough recipe is from [lionsbread.com](#)

**Makes one large 10-inch round challah**

### Dough:

130 grams (1 cup) all-purpose flour  
1 cup warm water (105°-115°C)  
7 grams (2¼) teaspoons active dry yeast  
2 large eggs, room temperature  
97 grams (½ cup) vegetable oil (avocado or grapeseed)  
84 grams (¼ cup) honey  
325 grams (2½ cups) all-purpose flour  
195 grams (1½ cups) bread flour  
8 grams (1 Tablespoon) Diamond Crystal kosher salt

### Apple Filling:

2 large Honeycrisp or Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and cut into ¼ inch dice (about 2 cups diced)  
28 grams (2 Tablespoons) butter or vegan butter (such as earth Balance)  
25 grams (2 Tablespoons) brown sugar  
2 grams (1 teaspoon) ground cinnamon

### Assembly:

233 grams (⅔ cup) apple butter  
25 grams (2 Tablespoons) brown sugar  
2 grams (1 teaspoon) cinnamon  
150 grams (1 cup) golden raisins (optional)  
1 large egg, lightly beaten with 1 Tablespoon water  
25 grams (2 Tablespoons) turbinado or coarse sanding sugar

- 1 Make the dough in a stand mixer: Place 130 grams all-purpose flour, warm water and yeast in the stand mixer bowl and whisk briefly to combine. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and let stand at room temperature for 1 hour.
- 2 Add eggs, honey, and oil to the flour/yeast mixture. Use a spatula or wooden spoon to briefly mix everything together. Add 325 grams all-purpose flour, 195 grams bread flour and salt to the bowl. Continue mixing with spatula for just a minute. Place bowl on stand and fit mixer with dough hook. Mix on lowest speed for 7-9 minutes, until dough is smooth and satiny. It should be tacky but not sticky. If it is too sticky, add 1-2 tablespoons all-purpose flour.
- 3 Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead for a minute and then form the dough into a ball and transfer it to a large oiled mixing bowl. Turn dough until all sides are coated. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and set aside. Let it rise at room temperature for about 90 minutes, or until doubled in bulk. A good test to see if the dough has risen enough is to insert your finger to a depth of 1 inch and wait to see if the impression remains. If the impression fills in, wait another 15 to 20 minutes to let rising continue.
- 4 Make apple filling: In a medium sized skillet, melt butter or vegan butter over medium heat., Add diced apples, brown sugar and cinnamon and sauté over medium-low heat for about 5-6 minutes, until apples are tender. Set diced apples aside to cool.
- 5 Turn out the dough onto a lightly floured surface. Roll the dough out into a 16" x 20" rectangle. If the dough starts to shrink back, cover with plastic wrap and let it rest for about 5 minutes, and then continue

rolling. Using an offset spatula, spread the surface of the dough with the apple butter. Mix 2 Tablespoons brown sugar with 1 teaspoon cinnamon and sprinkle over the dough. Scatter cooled diced apples evenly over the dough. Scatter raisins over the dough, if using. Use your palms and press the apples and raisins into the dough.

- 6 Starting from the long side of the dough, roll up the dough into a tight spiral. Place on a parchment lined baking sheet, curving the sausage a little if needed. Cover with plastic wrap and freeze for 30 minutes.
- 7 Line a 10"round cake tin, springform pan or 10"cast iron skillet with parchment paper. On a lightly floured surface, straighten out the chilled sausage of dough. Using a sharp knife or pizza wheel, cut the sausage of dough in half lengthwise. Turn the halves carefully so the filling is exposed. Cross the dough halves over each other, repeating the process until you have a long, twisted piece of dough.
- 8 Cross one end of the twist over the other, and tuck the ends under, forming a knot. Gently shape into a round if needed (I found it easiest to practice with a rolled-up tea towel at first). Transfer to your prepared pan. Cover lightly with plastic wrap and leave in a warm place to rise for 60-90 minutes, or until puffy. While the bread is rising, preheat the oven to 350°F.
- 9 Brush the twist with egg wash, and sprinkle with turbinado sugar. Bake for 40 minutes. Tent the challah with foil and continue baking for a further 15-20 minutes, until golden brown and baked throughout, registering 190°F with an instant read digital thermometer inserted into the center of the bread. Remove from the oven and allow to cool slightly. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Do ahead notes: You could make the dough as well as the apple filling 1-2 days before you want to serve this. After kneading the dough, place it in an oiled airtight container and put it right away into the fridge. The apple filling can also be stored in the fridge. The day you want to serve it, proceed, beginning at step #5.