

**Pimento
Challah**

Cheese-Stuffed



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Challah**

Oh. Hi there. Remember me? No? Me either.

JUST KIDDING! I'm back . . . a little. To be honest, I haven't really left. I've just been guest posting over at Busy in Brooklyn and writing for Interfaithfamily.com (recipe round-up for them is coming). I've also been knee-deep in adolescent mental health as the school year is in full swing and therefore, I'm back in the mix at the day job as a Director of Counseling at an area high school. I've also been trying very hard to leave some space this year for self-care, which started out really well. I joined a gym and subsequently actually attended the gym for a whole full 10 days . . . and then the kids got sick and my husband's work/PhD-writing schedule took over and I haven't been in 2 weeks. I miss it. I don't miss the intensity of some of the other patrons or the feeling that I'm not quite pushing myself hard enough as I enjoy my treadmill stroll while I watch other members just barely hold on while participating in their spinning class, but I do miss it. I had finally discovered the key to motivating myself into getting on the elliptical machine and really getting into it. What's the secret, you ask? Two words:

Beyonce Videos.

That's right, I'm the chick on the elliptical wearing outdated yoga pants from the early 2000s watching Beyonce music videos on Youtube while I sweat buckets onto the nicely polished gym floor. I'm telling you though, IT WORKS. I'm all, "Shoooooot, I can do this! I'm as fit, limber and coordinated as Beyonce! Heck, I have so much rhythm on this here elliptical machine, I could be one of her backup dancers!" And yes, once off the elliptical and back in my real life, I realize the power of endorphins and how they can play tricks on the mind, like convincing a 36 year-old Jewish white woman she is as fit, limber and coordinated as Beyonce. But hey, whatever works.



But enough about my meager attempts at self-care, we've got a challah to talk about. I want to acknowledge my homegirl, Molly Yeh, here as her Brown Sugar Challah with Pomegranate Glaze absolutely inspired this challah. I made it several weeks ago for the first time and fell in love with the ease of the dough recipe and wanted to experiment with fillings. I also wanted to make a challah that represented me and my flavor profiles and what's more Southern Jewess than pimento cheese-stuff challah!?!?! I get that the pimento cheese might not be everyone's favorite but I'm telling you, the feedback from husband and co-workers who enjoyed this loaf at work the next day was some of the most positive, re-enforcing feedback I've ever received on a recipe. So I say to you out there who is in doubt, give it a try. Just once. And if it's not for you as is, slice it up and make some bada** grilled cheese with it

or a savory stratta. Whatever you do, keep the dough recipe. It's so user-friendly. Enjoy and Shanah Tovah!!!





Recently, on the Jewhungry Instagram page.





Makes One Loaf of Challah

3/4 c warm water

1 tbsp dry yeast

1 1/4 c brown sugar

3 c all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting

1 tsp kosher salt

1 tsp of cayenne pepper

1/3 c sunflower oil

3 eggs

Pimento Cheese recipe from previous Jewhungry post

Method

1. In a measuring cup or small bowl, combine the water, yeast, and 2 teaspoons of brown sugar. Let sit for a few minutes until it gets foamy on top.

2. Meanwhile, in a large bowl or bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook, mix together 1/4 cup of brown sugar, the 3 cups of flour, salt, and cayenne. In a separate bowl, mix together the oil and 2 of the eggs.

3. When the yeast has proofed, add it to the dry ingredients, immediately followed by the egg mixture. Mix to combine and knead, either on a floured surface, or with the dough hook for 7-10 minutes, adding more flour as needed, until smooth (*please note I have never made this recipe with a stand mixer – only by hand so my results are based on the ol' fashion method of kneading by hand*).

4. Transfer to an oiled bowl, cover with a damp towel, and let rise until doubled in size, about 3 hours (*I like to preheat my oven to 500 and then turn it off and let the bowl sit on top of the oven with the oven door slightly ajar as it lets the heat escape and helps my dough rise, baby, RISE!*)

5. While challah is rising, make your pimento cheese and let sit in a cover bowl in the fridge for roughly 2 hours. You want it to be nice and chilled as the cheese is more manageable that way.

6. Turn onto a lightly floured surface, and roll the dough out into a large (approximately 10-inch by 14-inch) rectangle. Using a flat icing spatula or spoon, spread about 1/2 to 3/4

of your pimento cheese mixture onto the dough leaving about a 1/4 inch frame of uncover dough around the cheese (if you cover the dough completely in the cheese, it will be a messy disaster once baked). Next, roll it up like a jelly roll—rolling dough from one long edge to another as tightly as possible. Pinch the edges to seal them shut and then coil into a swirl shape with the seam side down. Place it on a baking sheet lined with parchment. Beat together the remaining egg with a splash of water, add another 1/2 tsp of cayenne and brush it lightly onto the challah. Let it rise for 30 more minutes while you preheat the oven to 375.

6. Bake the challah until it's golden brown and cooked through, about 45 – 50 minutes. Because this challah is round and stuff with delicious pimento cheese, it will take slightly longer to bake than a typical loaf. It may look done on the outside after about 20 minutes, but it will still be raw on the inside. You WILL need to tent the loaf with foil after 20 minutes to prevent it from getting too done on top.

7. Once done, expect that some of that gooey, delicious cheese has escaped. That's OK. There's more deliciousness inside!

8. Enjoy and don't forget to use the leftovers to make grilled cheese or cheese croutons!! Shanah Tovah!!!