



FEDERATION



HAFROSHAS CHALLAH – GET IT RIGHT

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The ShailaText team deals with a vast array of halachic queries, which cover a huge range of topics. Patterns do, however, exist; and at times it gets somewhat predictable. As the week draws to a close there will invariably be a few *shailas* on the details of the mitzvah of Hafroshas Challah. This *mitzvah*, which is a designated women's *mitzvah*, has its own set of details, and the pages of this wonderful publication afford an opportunity to highlight some of the less well-known points.

As always, if you've got a question on the halochos of challah don't hesitate to send a message to ShailaText on 07860 017 641



How much dough do I need to make in order to take challah with a bracha?

Learnt from the 'Omer' measurement – the amount of heavenly bread which each Jew received as his daily portion, we are taught that you do not need to take challah unless 43.2eggs worth of flour were used in the dough. Subsequent doubt crept in on a number of issues – and in practical terms, whilst ensuring to perform the *mitzvah* with the minimum possible amount required, we are taught to err on the side of caution when making *brachas*.

The minimum amount of flour to take challah without a bracha is 1.2 kg

The minimum amount of flour to take challah and make a bracha is 2.25kg.

I wanted to take challah with a bracha this week as a zechus for a friend of mine who is unwell, can I put together my cakes and challahs?

Two small doughs, neither of which has had challah taken, can be amalgamated into one large dough. This can be done in one of two ways – either by locking the two doughs into each other (*neshicha*), or by sitting them together in one basket/bowl. (Wrapping them into a cloth all over would be an adequate equivalent. The two doughs together become one and one must now take challah even if they later separate, and may make a *bracha*, if the total amount of flour has reached the required 2.25kg.

This technique for combining doughs will only work if there is a genuine similarity between the doughs. In a case where the doughs have two distinct tastes, and the owner would clearly be opposed to them really mingling, they remain separate entities and do not collaborate to make a dough obligated in *Hafroshas Challah*.

In a similar vein, attempts to join two challah doughs to make a *bracha* would not be valid if the two were

owned by different families who each want their own challah but are joining to make a *bracha*.

I am making cakes for a Kiddush – do I need to take challah?

There is a common misconception that challah only needs to be taken from bread dough. This is not the case; any dough which was made from one of the five grains needs to have challah taken if it contains the required amount of flour.

Dough made to be fried (doughnuts) or cooked (dumpling mixture) are subject to a halachic debate. As such, although challah must be taken, no *bracha* is made even if a large amount of flour was used.

It is worth noting that a dough which does not contain any water (or one of the seven liquids which have halachic '*mashke*' status – wine, date honey, olive oil, milk), is subject to a debate as to whether challah needs to be taken. This matter of doubt would demand that the *bracha* is omitted when taking challah from a cake batter which had no water in it at all. *Poskim* advise to avoid this issue by always adding at least a small amount of water.

I have already baked my challah for Shabbos but forgot to take challah?

The ideal stage at which challah should be taken, is once the dough has formed. Doing so out of habit will avoid unfortunate *shailas* occurring later. If the bread has already been baked, challah must still be taken. Often a housewife will be concerned that taking challah at this stage will render one of the loaves no longer '*shaleim*' (complete) and unusable for *lechem mishne*. In this instance, she should ideally choose a loaf intended for *Seudah Shlishis* – the third Shabbos meal – at which the obligation for *lechem mishne* is somewhat negotiable. If this is not possible, *poskim* allow the use of a loaf which had a small amount removed for *Hafroshas Challah* (even for the main meals) and consider it to still be technically *shaleim* – whole.

If Shabbos came in and you forgot to take challah, there are special provisions which allow the bread to be eaten, as long as the dough was prepared in *Chutz La'Aretz* – outside Israel, where the halachic status of challah is of a lower grade. In this case, he would be allowed to eat from the loaves which have been baked and leave over a small amount from which he will later be *mafrish* after Shabbos. An amount slightly larger than that normally used for the challah should be left over; this is to ensure that challah will be taken **from** some remaining dough.

I run a baking club in my home and send each child home with a small bun. Do we take challah if the dough used 3kg of flour?

A dough formed initially to be split **before** it gets baked does not need challah to be taken from it unless at least one person will receive the necessary amount. If you plan on baking the buns in your house and giving them out to the children only after the baking, you can take challah and even make a *bracha*. If you intend to send them home to be baked there, then challah cannot be taken unless you will leave yourself sufficient dough to be obligated in its own right. If each child has marked their bun before the baking and will be taking home their own designated bun, one should treat the dough as having been split already before the baking and challah will not be separated.

Is there a mitzva to bake challahs on Friday?

In today's commercial era, this practice seems to have become less prevalent in some homes. The Mishna Brura strongly encourages this practice. Kneading dough oneself is seen to be a display of honour for the holiness of Shabbos. In addition, an opportunity to fulfill the unique mitzvah of *Hafroshas Challah* should be seized if possible. Judging by the number of queries ShailaText receive on these points, this *minhag* must still be going strong!

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