

Ukrainian Pascha/Paska/Easter Bread: To be placed into the basket along with other foods (eggs, sausage, ham, cheese, butter, salt) and taken to the church to be blessed.

Ingredients:

8-9 cups of unbleached white flour

2/3 cup sugar

1 Tbsp salt

2 ½ cups milk, scalded

2 -3 packages of granulated yeast (about 4 ½ teaspoons of yeast)

3 eggs, beaten

2/3 cup of butter, gently melted

After scalding the milk, set it aside to cool, but take ½ cup of it, cool to lukewarm, add 1 tsp of sugar and the granulated yeast—and let the yeast rise until foamy.

When the rest of the milk is cooled, add to it the melted butter, sugar, beaten eggs, and foamy yeast and mix gently in a large mixing bowl to dissolve the sugar. To this liquid, gradually add the flour, stirring until a smooth dough forms and is no longer sticky.

Knead this dough on a lightly floured surface for about 10 minutes until the dough is lovely, smooth, and easy to work with. If you want to make two loaves, you should now cut the dough in half, make each half into a ball, and place both into large buttered bowls to rise. Cover with waxed paper which has been sprayed with cooking spray or buttered so that the dough when risen doesn't stick to it.

Place the bowls in a warm spot away from cool drafts and let rise until doubled (about an hour and a half). Gently punch the dough down, cover it again, and let it rise until doubled once again.

Gently punch down the dough a second time. Prepare 2 bread-baking pans or round baking pans with sides at least 3 inches high (a small Dutch oven works well). You could also use parchment paper for the bottoms of the baking pans (cut it to fit the bottoms exactly). Gently trim some of the dough from around the sides of the dough balls for making dough designs to be baked on the breads.

Gently shape the 2 dough balls and place into the greased/buttered baking pans. Make the dough designs with the remaining dough (for instance, braid the dough and place on the top of the breads in any configuration you want). Then beat one egg, mix with a very little bit of water, and paint the tops of the dough with the liquid egg. If you put the dough designs on top of the egg mix which you spread on the bread tops, this will help the designs stick. You may also paint the designs' tops with the egg mix. This will produce a beautiful shiny top to the finished breads.

Set the oven to 375 degrees.

After the dough has "rested" for about 10-15 minutes, and the oven has heated to 375, place the bread pans in the oven. Bake at 375 for about 8 minutes, then put the temp down to 350 for 30 minutes. At this point, cover the baking breads with foil if the tops seem to be getting brown. Bake the breads for another 10 minutes. Take them from the oven, gently remove the breads from the baking pans and tap the bottoms. A hollow sound indicates that the breads are done. Cool on racks **completely** before gently cutting into the breads. -Then think about what designs you might make next time! Enjoy.