

The Ultimate Babka for Tu Bishvat

A one-of-a-kind dessert featuring all seven species.

BY THE NOSHER | FEBRUARY 8, 2017

It's [Tu Bishvat](#) (also spelled Tu B'Shevat) – [the birthday of the trees!](#) And we are celebrating this year with the folks at [Jewish National Fund](#) and a brand new, one-of-a-kind babka made with the “seven species.” The Jewish National Fund is actually the original “tree people” and to date have planted 240 million trees in Israel, making Israel one of only 2 countries to enter the 21st century with a net- tree gain.

The seven species actually comes straight from the Torah: wheat, barley, grapes (or wine), olives (or olive oil), pomegranates, dates and figs. It is traditional in some communities to host a [Tu B'Shevat seder](#), where these foods are enjoyed as part of a Passover-like [seder](#).

To participate in Tu Bishvat Across America check out [Jewish National Fund's website](#) and consider planting a tree, hosting a seder or baking up one of these delicious babkas. (It tastes like a sophisticated Fig Newton!) And if you purchase a tree this Tu Bishvat with The Jewish National Fund, you will be entered to win a trip to Israel.

See our short video below about Tu B'Shevat and this special holiday babka.

Ingredients

For the dough:

1 Tbsp dry active yeast

1/2 tsp sugar

1/2 cup lukewarm water

3 1/2 – 4 1/2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour

1/2 cup barley flour

1/3 cup sugar

1 tsp vanilla

1 tsp cinnamon

1/2 cup milk or almond milk

3/4 cup olive oil

2 eggs

For the filling:

1 cup dried figs, cut in half

1 cup pitted dates

1 cup water

1/2 cup wine or grape juice

1 Tbsp pomegranate molasses

1/4 tsp salt

1 tsp cinnamon

For the topping: (topping is optional)

date honey (silan)

slivered almonds

Directions

Place yeast and sugar in a small bowl. Add lukewarm water and set aside until foamy, around 5-10 minutes.

In a stand mixer fitted with dough hook or a large bowl, mix together flours, sugar, vanilla and cinnamon. Start with 3 1/2 cups of flour, and add more later if dough seems too sticky. Add milk and olive oil.

Add the eggs one at a time.

When the dough begins to come together, after about 3-5 minutes, turn out onto a floured surface and knead vigorously for 5-10 minutes. Or if using a stand mixer, switch to high and mix another 4-5 minutes. Dough should be shiny, elastic and very soft when it is done. If dough is sticking too much, add more flour 1/4 cup at a time until dough is not longer sticking.

Place dough in a greased bowl with a damp towel on top. Allow to 1-2 hours.

While dough is rising, make filling.

Combine all filling ingredient in a saucepan over medium heat. Bring to a boil, then reduce for 10 minutes, until liquid has reduced to slightly more than half. Allow to cool slightly. Place in food processor and pulse.

*Note: you can also replace filling with store-bought fig jam.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Cut dough into two parts. Roll out each section of dough until it is a rectangular-like shape. Spread with filling. Working from the shorter side, roll up dough using quick fingers, like you would in order to make cinnamon rolls.

Once the dough is a long log, cut it straight down the middle so the filling is exposed. Secure the ends on one side, and twist both the pieces. Pinch and secure at the other end.

Place in a greased loaf pan. Allow to rise another 10-20 minutes. Sprinkle top with slivered almonds if desired (this step is optional).

Bake for 30-35 minutes.

Top with date honey if desired.

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