

THE MITZVAH OF SEPARATING CHALLAH

Edited February 2026

WHAT is this mitzvah?

The Torah states (Bamidbar 15:17-21) that when the Bnei Yisrael come to Eretz Yisroel they should separate a portion (known as challah) from the dough they knead and give it to a kohein. The mitzva of hafrashas challah still applies today, even without the Bais Hamikdash and kohanim in their state of purity. Since the challah cannot be eaten by a kohein, it is burned after separation.

WHICH INGREDIENTS require the separation of challah?

Any dough or batter made of flour from wheat, spelt, rye, oats or barley. It does not matter if the dough is sweet or contains additional ingredients. See the chart below for specific details.

WHO separates the challah?

While the owner is responsible for this mitzvah, another Shomer Shabbos Jew may be appointed by the owner to separate the challah.

HOW MUCH dough is separated?

It is customary to separate a k'zayis, an amount of dough equivalent to at least one fluid ounce.



BRACHA: WHEN?

While holding the dough just prior to the actual separation of the challah from the dough.

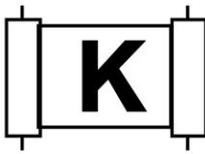
	Hebrew	Transliterated	Translation
The Bracha: (See chart below for situations when a bracha is not recited.)	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַפְרִישׁ Ashkenazic version: חֲלָה (מִן הָעִסָּה) * * Some add only if separating in dough form Sephardic version: חֲלָה תְּרוּמָה	Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech haolam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvosav v'tzivanu l'hafrish Ashkenazic version: Challah (min ha'isah) Sephardic version: Challah Terumah	Blessed are You, Hashem our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to separate challah (from the dough)
After the separation, it is recommended to say:	הָרֵי זוֹ חֲלָה	Ha-rei zu challah	This is Challah

WHERE do we put the separated dough (challah)?

The separated challah must be burned until it is charred. If it is being burned in an oven, it should be first wrapped with two separate layers of aluminum foil. After the separated challah is burned, it should be placed in a plastic bag and discarded.

COMBINING BATCHES:

During Baking: If one is making a large recipe but can only knead limited amounts of dough¹ at one time (i.e. less than the minimum required for this mitzvah), challah must still be separated if the doughs are combined. The doughs are considered combined in any of the following manners:



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1. They are placed in one container together.
2. The separate pieces touch each other.
3. The doughs are near each other and covered with one cover.

After Baking: If small doughs or cakes (of the same variety) are baked separately and the finished products are then placed together in an enclosed unit, challah must be separated. Examples of this would be rolls stored in a bin or basket after baking or finished products stored unwrapped in a refrigerator or freezer. However, a bracha is not recited if the finished baked goods do not touch each other at any point.

I FORGOT TO SEPARATE CHALLAH; WHAT DO I DO?

Weekdays: Separate challah as soon as possible, even if it has already been baked.

On Shabbos or Yom Tov: Outside of Eretz Yisroel, one should set aside a piece for after Shabbos or Yom Tov; the remainder may be eaten. After Shabbos or Yom Tov, challah should be separated from that piece.

	Challah must be separated?	Bracha recited?
A dough containing at least 16½ cups of flour (approx. 5 lbs. of wheat flour) and some water	✓	✓
A dough containing more than 8⅔ cups (approx. 2½ lbs. of wheat flour), but less than 16½ cups (approx. 5 lbs.) of flour and some water	✓	✗
A dough containing more than 8⅔ cups of flour, but no water, such as a cookie dough	1. If regular (non-whole wheat) wheat flour is used, water was used in the production of the flour. Refer to the previous two rows. 2. If the dough is made from a) whole wheat, or b) oats, rye, spelt or barley, and does not contain any water, wine, grape juice, olive oil, honey, or milk ² , challah should be separated without a bracha. The separated challah may not be burned. It should be left until unusable, then wrapped and discarded. 3. It is recommended to add a bit of water while making the dough to avoid this halachic issue.	
A dough that will be cooked (such as noodles), containing 8⅔ cups of flour or more (with or without water ³)	✓	✗
A liquid batter (e.g. cake batter) containing 2½ lbs. of flour (or more) ⁴	✓	✗

¹ When the small doughs are of different varieties of flour (e.g. a dough of wheat flour and a dough of oat flour), a Rabbinical authority should be consulted.

² Milk is generally not permitted in regular bread products.

³ If the product does not contain any water and is not cooked in water, see above.

⁴ If the product does not contain any water the separated challah should not be burned, see above.