



Where we lived there was a water mill where they ground the corn, all the same formula. We ate *malai*, corn bread. It was made from ground corn and worked on the basis of a sour with only corn flour. It was crumbly, sandy, and sour. We ate that all week. *Mamaliga* [Romanian cornmeal mush] was the daily food for breakfast. For many people, *mamaliga* was a substitute for bread. Some people kept it a whole day for all their meals. We bought three kilos of white flour and made challah for Shabbos.

“For Shabbos we had challah until the war. Once in a while we could get white flour. Only the rich ones could afford white bread the whole week. I was poor; sugar at six dollars a kilo was a luxury—we never bought sugar; we couldn’t afford that. When you are hungry things are different. We didn’t add nothing but I adored the challah, it was so delicious. I know challah is better here. Ours was made from flour, yeast, and water. I never had nothing else. When I came to America I realized it is a different world. There is no comparison.”

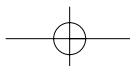
CHOCOLATE BABKA

From Ben Moskovitz

MAKES 1 LARGE AND 1 SMALL OR 3 SMALL BABKA LOAVES. (D OR P)

A *babka* is a high cake, but “babka” is also a word for grandmother in Polish, Russian, and Yiddish. My mother-in-law remembers her mother baking chocolate *babka* like Mr. Moskovitz’s for the Sabbath. “And if there was any left over,” she said, “my mother would slice it thin, sprinkle sugar and cinnamon on top, and bake it in the oven for breakfast. We didn’t have any toaster ovens then. Now that was a treat!”

When making Star Bakery’s *babka* recipe, I use imported bittersweet chocolate for the filling. I have also given choices to make this recipe pareve or dairy. You can make it with high-gluten and cake flour, as Mr. Moskovitz does, or simply use all-purpose flour. However you decide to fill your *babka*, this is a wonderful recipe.



THE CAKE:

1 cup lukewarm milk or water	butter or pareve margarine, at room temperature
1 scant tablespoon (1 package) active dry yeast	$\frac{2}{3}$ cup sugar
$5\frac{1}{2}$ cups unbleached all-purpose flour (approximately)	$1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons salt
$\frac{1}{2}$ pound (2 sticks) unsalted	5 large eggs
	$1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons vanilla extract

THE FILLING AND EGG WASH*

4 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) unsalted butter or pareve margarine	9 ounces good bittersweet chocolate, preferably imported
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup apricot jam or $\frac{1}{4}$ cup almond paste	1 large egg, beaten
1 cup leftover cake or pound-cake crumbs	1 tablespoon water
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped almonds (optional)	

THE STREUSEL:

3 tablespoons sugar	3 tablespoons unsalted butter or pareve margarine
6 tablespoons unbleached all-purpose flour	

THE CAKE:

1. Place the milk or water, yeast, and 2 cups of the flour in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle. Mix for about 1 minute on low speed until well incorporated. Transfer this "sponge" to another bowl. Cover with a towel and let it sit for 1 hour, until doubled in size.
2. Cream the butter or margarine and the sugar in the bowl of the electric mixer. Add the sponge, salt, eggs, and vanilla, and continue mixing at a low speed until incorporated, about 3 minutes. Gradually add the remaining $3\frac{1}{2}$ cups of the flour and work the ingredients for 12–15 minutes on low speed until the

*See also the apple filling on page 98.



dough is smooth, adding more flour as needed. The dough will be soft. Remove the dough from the bowl. Divide it into 3 pieces and dust the pieces with flour. Cover each loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

3. The next day, remove the dough from the refrigerator and let it sit for about 20 minutes while you prepare the filling. Dust a work surface with flour. Shape 1 piece of the dough with your hands into a rough oblong, adding more flour if needed, and roll it out into a rectangle about 8 by 12 inches, $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick.

FILLING AND ASSEMBLING THE BABKAS:

4. Melt the butter or margarine and place it in a food processor fitted with the steel blade. Add the apricot jam or almond paste and the cake crumbs and process until smooth. Spoon one-third of the filling onto one of the dough rectangles and spread it with a spatula, leaving a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch border all around. Sprinkle with one-third of the almonds. Grate the chocolate in the food processor and sprinkle one-third of it over the dough, leaving the borders. Brush the borders with the egg mixed with water to help seal the *babka*.
5. Roll the dough up like a jelly roll from the longer side, close the ends, and then gently twist the roll into a spiral. Fit this into a greased 9- by 5-inch loaf pan. Fill and roll up the other 2 rectangles of dough. Either twist them as above and put them in loaf pans, or make 1 large *babka*. To make a large *babka*, link 2 rolls (not twisted) end to end in a circle in a greased 9- or 10-inch *babka* or Bundt pan, seam side up, and press the ends together.

MAKING THE STREUSEL AND BAKING THE BABKAS:

6. Using your fingers, combine the sugar, flour, and butter or margarine and sprinkle one-third on top of each *babka*. Let the *babkas* rise over the tops of the pans, about 1 hour.
7. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
8. Bake the *babkas* on the middle rack for 45 minutes, or until the streusel is golden brown. Mr. Moskovitz says to press on the dough. If your finger goes in easily, the *babka* is not done.

**VARIATION: APPLE FILLING**

1 pound flavorful apples, peeled, cored, and coarsely chopped (about 2 apples)	2 tablespoons sugar ½ teaspoon cinnamon
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1. On a lightly floured board, roll out one-third of the dough to a rectangle 6 by 18 inches. Mix the apples, sugar, and cinnamon in a small bowl. Cover half of the dough with the apple mixture, leaving bare a rectangle 6 by 9 inches, and leaving a ½-inch border all around. Brush the border with the egg wash. Fold the uncovered half of the dough over the half with the apples, pinch the edges to seal, and gently twist the dough along the 6-inch ends, as you would wring out a towel.
2. Place the dough in a greased 9- by 5-inch loaf pan and proceed as you did with the chocolate *babka* in making the streusel and baking.

