


UKRAINIAN PASKA

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 1 large loaf

 3+ hours


Ingredients

- 2 1/4 teaspoons instant dry yeast
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 cup lukewarm water
- 1 cup whole milk
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly
- 5 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup golden raisins

*Egg wash is made with 1 egg and 2T water, whisked together.

*Optional icing for Paska is made by whisking powdered sugar and milk. Just enough milk to get the glaze to a thick, slowly pourable consistency. Let dry.

If icing your Paska, do so when the bread has completely cooled.

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1. In a large bowl, mix the first 8 ingredients together.
2. Add the flour and mix with a wooden spoon until a shaggy dough starts to come together.
3. Dump this dough onto a work surface and begin to knead all of the dough ingredients. This will take some time. The dough should be stiff, but not dry.
4. Knead until the dough comes together into a soft, smooth ball. The dough should not be sticky and when you poke your finger slightly into the ball of dough, it should come back to you.
5. Place the dough in a lightly greased bowl, cover, and set aside in a warm place, free of any drafts. Allow it to rise until doubled in size, which will take roughly 90 minutes.
6. Meanwhile, lightly grease your cake round pan(s) and set aside. For this recipe, I used 2 – 5” pans with higher sides for rising. Alternatively, you could use a springform pan, or even the traditional use of metal cans. The sizing doesn’t matter, as long as each pan is well oiled and your dough fills about 1/2 of the space within the pan.
7. Turn the risen dough out onto a lightly floured work surface. Set aside 1/4 of it if forming braids & shapes for the top. Shape the remaining dough into a smooth ball, and place it in the center of the prepared pan(s). Again, each pan should have enough dough to come up 1/2 of the pan of your choosing.
8. Cover the Paska with a towel once again and let rise for about 45 minutes, or until doubled in size. Near the end of the rising time, preheat the oven to 350 degrees F and place a rack in the lower middle of the oven.
9. While the Paska is on its final rise, use the reserved dough for decoration by rolling portions into strands – similar to making snakes in art class as a child. Use these strands to create braids, swirls, crosses, etc... Truly this is where you can have fun and get creative!
10. Once your dough has completed its second rising, adhere your dough designs to your loaf by brushing *egg wash onto the top of the loaf and using that egg wash as a ‘glue’ for gently sticking your dough designs.
11. Brush the entire top of the loaf with egg wash, making sure to get in the cracks and crevices.
12. Bake times will vary depending on the pans you use. Bake until the top is a very rich golden brown and an internal temperature reaches 190 degrees F.
13. Remove from the oven and let cool for 5 minutes. After 5 minutes, pop the bread out of its pan, place it on a cooling rack, and cool completely before cutting and serving.