

# When is Challah Separated?

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**In order to determine whether our dough requires separating challah, and whether we should separate challah with a blessing or without a blessing, we must consider the type and the amount of flour used and the liquid contents of the dough.**

## Type of Flour

**The obligation to separate challah applies to dough made with flour produced from one of, or a combination of, the following five grains: wheat, barley, rye, oat and spelt.**

## Amount of Flour

**The amount of flour used determines whether challah is separated with a blessing or without a blessing, or is not separated at all.**

**These are the amounts of flour required for separating challah (according to the opinion of Rabbi Chaim Naeh; see [other opinions](#))**

- **Separate challah with a blessing:**

When using at least 1,666.6 grams (3 lbs. 10.8 oz.) of flour.

- **Separate challah without a blessing:**

When using flour weighing between 1,230 and 1,666.6 grams (between 2 lbs. 11.4 oz. and 3 lbs. 10.8 oz.).

- **Do not separate challah:**

When using less than 1,230 grams (2 lbs. 11.4 oz.) of flour.

All flour used when preparing the dough, such as flour used when rolling the dough, should be included in the calculations.

## When Measuring Flour in Cups

It is preferable to measure the amount of flour in units of weight (grams, pounds, ounces) rather than in cups, because different types of flour have differences in moisture content, and the manner in which the flour is measured affects the measuring results. When flour is measured in cups, it is best to avoid the “gray areas” in the diagram below.



\* The figures were calculated with a standard 8 oz. (230 cc) measuring cup containing sifted white flour. The figures were calculated based on the opinion of Rabbi Chaim Naeh.

### Liquid Contents

In order that challah be separated from the dough, the majority of the dough's liquid content must be one of the following: water, wine, milk, bee honey, or olive oil.

There is a difference of halachic opinions as to whether the obligation to separate challah applies to dough whose liquid ingredients are only fruit juice or eggs. It is therefore preferable to add a bit of water, wine, milk, bee honey, or olive oil to the dough and separate challah without a blessing.

### Different Types of Dough

The mitzvah of separating challah applies not only to challah or bread dough, but also to any dough that meets the requirements of flour and liquids as detailed above, such as the dough of cakes, cookies, and pizza.

If one prepares a dough or batter with the intention of cooking or frying it (such as doughnuts or blintzes), challah should be separated without a blessing. However, if one's intention is to bake even a small part of it, challah should be separated with a blessing.

### Combining Doughs

When preparing more than one dough, and each dough does not have the required amount of flour needed to separate challah, the doughs may be combined, and challah can be separated.

If one is concerned that the different doughs should not get mixed together (such as bread dough and cake batter), they should not be joined.

To combine the doughs, lay them next to one another so that they touch, and separate challah with a blessing. If it is difficult to combine the doughs, one may leave them in their bowls and cover them with a cloth or some other covering so that they appear to be one mass of dough.

### Separating Challah After Baking

Challah is usually separated from dough before it has been divided or shaped. In some cases, however, challah needs to be separated from the finished product, after the baking is done.

- When separating challah from cake batter, challah may be separated after the cake has been baked, since it is difficult to separate a portion of unbaked cake batter.
- If you have forgotten to separate challah from any type of dough before it was baked, you can separate challah after baking.
- If you are separating challah from baked goods, cover them all with a cloth or place into one container. Then take a piece from one of the baked goods and say the blessing if required.
- Remember not to partake of the baked goods until challah has been separated.

### Amount of Flour - Different Halachic Opinions

<i>Halachic Opinion</i>	<i>Separate Challah without a Blessing</i>	<i>Separate Challah with a Blessing</i>
Rabbi Chaim Naeh	From 1,230 grams 2 lbs. 11.4 oz.	From 1,666.6 grams 3 lbs. 10.8 oz.
Chazon Ish	From 1,200 grams 2 lbs. 10.3 oz.	From 2,250 grams 4 lbs. 15.4 oz.
Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu	From 1,666 grams 3 lbs. 10.8 oz.	From 2,486 grams 5 lbs. 7.7 oz.
Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef	From 1,615.3 grams 3 lbs. 9 oz.	From 1,666.5 grams 3 lbs. 10.8 oz.

## Prayers for Hafrashat Challah

The moment of separating challah is an especially propitious moment for praying for family and loved ones. You may, of course, offer a personal prayer in your own words, or you can say one of the following.

Prayers to be recited before separating challah:

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁתְּבָרֵךְ עִשְׂתָּנוּ כְּמוֹ שֶׁשְּׁלַחְתָּ בְּרָכָה בְּעֵסוֹת אֲמוֹתֵינוּ שָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, וְיִקְיָם בָּנוּ הַפְּסוּק: "וְרֵאשִׁית עֲרִיסוֹתֵיכֶם תִּתְּנוּ לַכֹּהֵן לְהַזְבִּיחַ בְּרָכָה אֶל בֵּיתְךָ

May it be Your will, our G-d, the G-d of our Fathers, that You bless our dough, as You blessed the dough of our Mothers, Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah. And may we be blessed as in the verse: "You shall give the first yield of your dough to the kohen to make a blessing rest upon your home." (Ezekiel

44:30)

Some have the custom to recite the following verse twice before reciting the blessing for separating challah (*Sefer Chukey HaNashim*):

וַיְהִי נֵעַם אֲדָנִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ עָלֵינוּ וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ בּוֹנֵנָה עָלֵינוּ וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ בּוֹנֵנָהוּ.

May the pleasantness of the L-rd our G-d be upon us; establish for us the work of our hands; establish the work of our hands (Psalms 90:17).

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁהַמְצוּהָ שֶׁל הַפְּרִשַׁת חֲלָה תִּחְשַׁב כְּאִלּוּ קִבְּלָתָהּ בְּכָל פְּרִטְיָהּ וְדִקְדוּקָהּ, וְתִחְשַׁב הַרְמַת חֲלָה שְׂאֵנִי מְרִימָה, כְּמוֹ הַקְּרִיבָה שֶׁהַקְּרִיב עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ, שֶׁנִּתְקַבַּל בְּרָצוֹן. וְכִמוֹ שֶׁלְּפָנִים הִיְתָה חֲלָה נְתוּנָה לַכֹּהֵן וְהִיְתָה זֹאת לְכַפֵּר עוֹנוֹת, כִּד תְּהִיָּה לְכַפֵּרָה לְעוֹנוֹתֵי, וְאִז אֵהְיֶה כְּאִלּוּ נִוְלַדְתִּי מִחֲדָשׁ, נִקְיָה מִחַטָּא וְעוֹן. וְאוֹכֵל לְקַיֵּם מִצְוֹת שְׂבֵת קֹדֶשׁ וְהַיָּמִים הַטּוֹבִים עִם בְּעָלֵי (וְיִלְדֵינוּ), לְהִיּוֹת נְזוּנִים מִקְדָּשֵׁת הַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה. וּמִהַשְׁפָּעָתָה שֶׁל מִצְוֹת חֲלָה, יְהִי יְלִדֵינוּ נְזוּנִים תָּמִיד מִיְדֵינוּ שֶׁל הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, בְּרַב רַחֲמֵינוּ וְחֲסֵדֵינוּ, וּבְרַב אֱהָבָה, וְשֶׁתִּתְקַבַּל מִצְוֹת חֲלָה כְּאִלּוּ נִתְּתִי מַעֲשֵׂר. וְכִשֶּׁם שֶׁהֲנִי מְקַיְּמָת מִצְוֹת חֲלָה בְּכָל לֵב, כִּד יִתְעוֹרְרוּ רַחֲמֵינוּ שֶׁל הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְשִׁמְרָנִי מִצָּעַר וּמִמְכָּאוּבִים כָּל הַיָּמִים, אָמֵן

May it be Your will, our G-d, the G-d of our Fathers, that the mitzvah of separating challah be considered as if I observed every one of its details. May my raising of the challah be considered as the sacrifice that was offered on the altar, which was willingly accepted. Just as giving the challah to the kohen in the past served to atone for sins, so may it atone for my sins and I shall be like a person reborn, free of sin and transgression. May I be able to observe the holy Shabbat and Festivals with my husband (and our children), and be nourished from the holiness of these days. May the influence of the mitzvah of challah enable our children to be always nourished by the hands of the Holy One blessed be He, with His abundant mercy, loving-kindness, and great love; and the mitzvah of challah be accepted as though I have given a tithe. And now, as I am fulfilling the mitzvah of challah with all my heart, so may the compassion of the Holy One Blessed be He be aroused to keep me from sorrow and pain always, Amen.

# How to Separate Challah

## 1. Place the dough in front of you, before it has been formed into any sort of shape.

If you are separating challah from a loose batter, or if you forgot to separate challah before baking, see “Separating Challah After Baking.”

## 2. Some have the custom to give charity or wash hands (netilat yadayim) without a blessing before fulfilling the mitzvah.

This is a favorable time for personal requests and prayers (see [prayers](#)).

## 3. Recite the blessing.

It is the custom to stand while performing this mitzvah.

**Ashkenazim:**

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,  
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַפְרִישׁ חֲלָה [מִן הָעֶסָה].

*Ba'ruch a'ta a'do'nai elo'hei'nu me'lech ha'olam, a'sher kid'sha'nu  
be'mitz'vo'tav ve'tzi'va'nu le'haf'rish challah  
[some add: min ha'i'sah].*

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to separate challah [some add: from the dough].

**Sephardim:**

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,  
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַפְרִישׁ חֲלָה תְּרוּמָה.

*Ba'ruch a'ta a'do'nai elo'hei'nu me'lech ha'olam,  
a'sher kid'sha'nu be'mitz'vo'tav ve'tzi'va'nu le'haf'rish  
challah te'ru'mah.*

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to separate challah terumah.

## 4. Remove a small piece from the dough, lift it, and say:

הָרִי זוֹ חֲלָה      *Ha'rei zo challah*      This is Challah

The piece of dough can be of any size. The custom is to separate a kazayit – 28 grams (approximately one ounce), or the size of a ping-pong ball.

## 5. Burn the separated dough or wrap it in two layers and discard it.

It is preferable to burn the piece of dough that has been separated, but not in the oven. If the challah is burned on the gas range, it should first be well wrapped in aluminum foil so that the dough does not touch the grate. Another option is to place the piece of dough inside a tin-can and burn it on a lit gas range.

If burning the challah cannot easily be done, it may be wrapped in two layers of a material such as aluminum foil or plastic bags and discarded.

## Customs and *Segulot*

**The following are some special spiritual benefits credited to the mitzvah of separating challah, along with some customs practiced while performing the mitzvah of separating challah:**

- While preparing challah and other foods for Shabbat, it is customary to say, “*lichvod Shabbat kodesh*,” “in honor of the holy Shabbat.”
- Some have the custom, while kneading the dough, to recite Psalms and pray for people who are in need of G-d’s help and salvation.
- Because of the great merit credited to the mitzvah of separating challah, it is worthy to bake especially for the sake of fulfilling this mitzvah at least once a year, ideally during the Ten Days of Repentance (*Siddur Kol Eliyahu*).
- The following custom has recently become common in Jewish communities: Forty women devote their prayers while separating challah to the merit of a person in need of salvation (such as recovery from illness, a worthy mate, or the birth of a child).
- The mitzvah of separating challah is recognized as a *segulah* for an easy, safe birth. It is customary to separate challah at least once in the ninth month of pregnancy.
- According to our Sages, the mitzvah of separating challah brings with it a blessing for a good livelihood into our home.