

Slovak Christmas Bread Recipe - Vianočka

This recipe for Slovak Christmas bread or *vianočka* is a slightly sweet yeast-raised raisin bread similar to Jewish [challah](#), Polish [chalka](#) and Czech [hoska](#), among others. It can be simply or elaborately braided and is a staple on Christmas Eve or *štedrý večer*, which means "generous evening."



Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 1 hour

Rising: 2 hours

Total Time: 3 hours, 20 minutes

Yield: 1 loaf Slovak Christmas Bread

Ingredients:

- 1 packet active dry yeast
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 1/2 cups warm milk
- 4 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 large egg yolks (keep the whites for a glaze)
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) softened butter
- 1/2 cup raisins
- [Zest](#) of 1/2 lemon
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds (optional)

Preparation:

1. In a small bowl, mix together yeast, 2 tablespoons sugar and warm milk and set aside for 15 minutes.
2. In a large bowl or stand mixer, combine flour, sugar and salt. Add the egg yolks, softened butter, raisins and zest, and yeast mixture. Using a dough hook or by hand, knead until dough is smooth and elastic. Transfer to a greased bowl, cover with greased plastic wrap and let rise in a warm place until doubled.
3. Punch down dough and knead until all the air pockets are removed. Divide the dough into at least three strands. Cover and let rest another 15 minutes. **Braid the strands** and tuck the ends under. Place on a parchment-lined sheet pan. Cover with greased plastic and let rise until almost doubled.
4. Heat oven to 375 degrees. Bake for 30 minutes. Reduce heat to 325 degrees. Lightly brush bread with beaten egg whites and sprinkle with almonds, if using. Bake an additional half hour or until an instant-read thermometer registers 190 degrees. Remove from oven and let cool completely on a wire rack.

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