



## Sweet Braid Dough

*Adapted from King Arthur Flour*

### Sponge

- 1 ounce unbleached all purpose flour
- 3 ounces warm water
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons active dry yeast

### Dough

- all of the sponge
- 3 ounces plain low fat yogurt or buttermilk
- 2 ounces butter, softened
- 1 egg
- 1 3/4 ounces sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla or citrus zest
- 9 to 12 ounces unbleached all purpose flour

### Filling

- 5 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature
- 1 3/4 ounces sugar
- 2 ounces sour cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

To make the sponge, combine the warm water and 1 teaspoon sugar in a small bowl and stir to dissolve. Stir in the yeast and 1/4 cup flour. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside for about 15 minutes or until bubbly.

In a large bowl, combine the sponge, yogurt or buttermilk, butter, eggs, remaining sugar, salt, and vanilla. Add the remaining flour 1 cup at a time, until the dough pulls away from the sides of the bowl. Once the dough pulls away from the bowl, stop adding flour. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured counter and knead with lightly floured hands for 5 minutes until pliable and soft but not sticky. Spray the bowl you mixed the dough in with nonstick cooking spray while you let the dough rest. Continue to knead the dough until it is smooth and springy (if you gently make an indentation into the dough with your finger the dough will spring back).

Return the dough to the greased bowl, turn to coat it with the nonstick spray and cover the bowl with plastic wrap and a dish towel. Let the dough sit in a warm place for approximately 1 1/2 hours or until doubled.

Gently deflate the dough and roll into a rectangle approximately 10 x 14 on a sheet of parchment paper. Using a butter knife or plastic bench scraper, gently score the dough so that it is divided into thirds. Be sure not to cut through the dough, you just want to mark it for reference. Cut notches out of each of the four corners and then use your butter knife or bench scraper to cut 1" wide strips in the two outer thirds of the dough. The center of your dough will be "fringed" with the strips on each side. Try to get your strips to line up as much as possible on each side.

Stir 1 tablespoon all purpose flour into half of the prepared filling and spread over the center third of the dough, leaving 1" at the top and bottom uncovered. Reserve the other half of the filling for another use. Sprinkle 6 ounces chocolate chips over the filling.

Fold the top and bottom flaps down over the filling and then bring the strips of dough fringe across the filling on a diagonal, alternating from side to side. Press and pinch each strip into the side of the dough as you go until the loaf is braided.

Brush the top of the braid with an egg wash of one egg beaten with one tablespoon water and sprinkle the top with coarse sugar. Loosely cover the braid with plastic wrap and let rise for 30 to 45 minutes or until puffed.

While the braid rests and proofs, heat the oven to 350 degrees. Uncover the braid and slide the sheet of parchment onto a half sheet pan. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes or until golden brown and the internal temperature registers 190 degrees on an instant read thermometer. Transfer the braid still on the parchment to a rack to cool for 30 minutes before slicing.

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*chocolate filled sweet braid* was posted by wendi on 4 may 2011 at [bonappetit.com](http://bonappetit.com)