

Easter Paska (Ukrainian Daughters' Cookbook)

Easter Paska is a work of art produced especially for the blessing of the basket of foods at the church. The Paska is made with eggs, butter, and other good things to produce a fine, rich loaf, appropriate for the importance of this special bread. The Paska in the Easter basket reminds us that Christ is the Living Bread. Pride is taken in the ornamentation that decorates the top of the Paska – crosses, twists, rosettes, pine cones.

Combine until yeast is dissolved, 10 minutes:

½ cup warm water
1 ½ Tbsp yeast
1 tsp sugar

6 eggs, beaten	1 tsp salt
½ cup white sugar	3 cups lukewarm water
½ cup butter, melted	10-11 cups flour
½ cup oil	

Combine the softened yeast with beaten eggs, add sugar, butter, oil, salt and water. Mix in the flour and knead until smooth and elastic. The dough should be just a little stiffer than for bread. Cover, let rise in a warm place until double in bulk. Punch down and let rise again.

To make the loaves, decorations and doves:

Make a plain round base 1" thick, and cover the bottom of a round 9" greased pan (we usually skip this step)

Take 2 equal-sized pieces of dough, roll each to 36" lengths. Place side by side and starting from the centre, entwine each about the other, doing the other half in the same manner. Place the entwined length on the base in the round loaf pan. Roll 4 equal pieces of dough each to 10" lengths, entwine 2 lengths on the base to cross each other at the centre, curl each end. Let rise to almost double in bulk. Be careful not to let the Paska rise too long, as the ornaments will lose their definition. Brush lightly with beaten egg.

Bake in 325° oven for 15 minutes then bake at 350° for another 45 minutes.

Makes 3 or 4 Paska.

Easter Doves

In Ukraine, in early times, the return of the birds in the spring was celebrated with special spring songs. Birds made of dough were also baked, representing larks who were migrating back to the north. Today the bread "doves" are made for Easter. Save some of your Paska dough to make them.

To make the doves, you can do a simple knot or you can twist the dough around itself to create a more symmetrical shape. See the illustration from the cookbook:

Variation (as seen in the video):

Take 3 equal-sized pieces of dough and braid them. Place the braid in the circle pan by wrapping it around the base of the pan. Decorate with crosses, rosettes and doves. Allow to rise, brush with egg wash, and bake as instructed.