

# Baba's Paska

Addend to  
*Baba's Kitchen: Ukrainian Soul Food*  
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[www.ukrainiansoulfood.ca](http://www.ukrainiansoulfood.ca)

*This recipe may be downloaded to your computer, or printed.*

*Baba's Kitchen: Ukrainian Soul Food* have entire Velyk Den' chapter plus many recipe great for this time of year. This Paska recipe is extra. I will teach you to make sacred Paska with several trick learned over many years.

## How to:

- Determine when dough is kneaded enough
- Prevent dough from falling while rising
- Make decoration Lazy Way
- Keep decoration from falling off
- Settle Paska so is even crumb throughout
- Add authentic citrusy flavor, if you like
- Make raisin extra delicious and stop from burning
- Make crispy brown crust

You ready? Let's go!

**Making Paska is ancient, sacred ritual. This recipe make two large Paska or several small (coffee can size).** Read whole recipe first.

Just like with pysanky, start your day with meditation and peaceful heart. Shoo kid and noisy roommate from house to assist with both this and keep dough from falling.

**Crumble and stir 2 cake yeast into 2 1/2 cup lukewarm, scalded whole milk with 1 teaspoon white sugar.** Let sit 5 minute while you say more prayer. If you do not plan to add citrus juice later, make it 3 cup whole milk. Your call, dorahenka.

**Baba Alert:** check expiry date on yeast first. Is most common cause of Paska Fail. Second cause is not scalding milk, or boiling milk.

### **How to scald milk:**

Pour into sauce pan. Turn on medium low heat. Stir continually until bubbles form on edge of milk. If milk boils, throw away. When Baba say **stir continually**, she mean this. Scalding milk add to good density of Paska, as it activate a protein.

**Stir in 3 cup flour to milk/yeast** with wood spoon. Beat till smooth.

Give kid and roommate final warning to vacate. **Cover dough with loose plastic and two towels**, and leave heck alone to double in size. About 2 hour.

Baba know you was hoping this was time to put feet up and read about Kardashian get paid for doing nothing. Sorry.

**If you like raisin, now is time to soak two cup in boiling water for 30 minute.** Drain and pat dry. Baba strong recommend organic raisin. *Newman's Own* is finest. Very juicy and tasty. If you soak them, they are far less likely to burn.

Baba hope you can divide brain in half and use both hand. Is also time to **melt 3/4 cup butter, and beat up 5 egg** in special way that make Paska paradoxical taste of both fluffy and substantial. Is it bread? Is it cake? Only you will know!

**Separate egg. Beat yolk with 1 cup white sugar** until is fluffy like you wish your hairstylist make you look.

**Beat egg white separately.**

Save egg shell. In Ukraina, we hang shell from bush and tree on Holy Thursday to demonstrate generosity and prosperity.

If neighbour turn up nose, tell her, "Oh yeah? You leave up Christmas light till August!"

**When two hours is up:** If this your first time, you will be dismay at sight of dough. Will be goopy. Don't be worry, poopchik. We fix.

**Mix egg yolk and egg white into dough.**

**Mix in 1/2 tablespoon vanilla, 1 teaspoon salt, 3/4 cup butter, and 7 cup flour.** Put 1/2 cup flour aside for kneading.

**If you like citrusy Paska,** add 2 tablespoon fresh lemon juice and 1/3 cup

fresh orange juice. If you used extra 1/2 cup of milk (as above), is too late. Oh well. You can still add 1 tablespoon orange zest and 1 teaspoon lemon zest. This is fancy name for grated fruit rind. Again, organic is best. If you was organized from beginning, add both citrus juice and zest. Will be zingy flavor like I don't know what.

**Add in your raisin.** Mix well.

**Baba Secret:** Ancient Ukrainian custom is to make three Paska, yellow for sun, white for ancestor and black for *Syra Mata Zemlya*, Moist Mother Earth. For now, drop in saffron to invite sunshine, happiness, good harvest and healthy children (and pets) into your Paska. Traditionally, we use pollen from first spring flower, Crocus. If you got it, use it. Saffron is Crocus.

### **How to use saffron:**

Buy reddish thread. Saffron powder is usually crappy. Genuine saffron stamen is red in body, and more orange on top. If is red all over, is bad Knock Knock joke. Actually, is con artist. It means they dye bad saffron. Aren't you glad your Baba teach you all about life?

**Soak 2 teaspoon of saffron** in 6 teaspoon water for two hours.

**Mash into paste** with back of spoon before mix into dough.

**Grease large bowl real well with butter.**

Uh oh. Is freak out time. You going to **knead dough on flour surface about 10-15 minutes** until it feel right. If you did not have personal Baba to show you, you have to trust me. Dough should feel just like when you caress Kozak's satin dance pant!

This is secret of Ukrainian always smiling and sometime do something stupid like surrender weapons under Budapest Memorandum.

Once you have your cooking and romantic life together, world is like oyster with big fat pearl in middle. Only you have no weapon to hold back stinking Muskoli, grandchildren of Neanderthal. Is historical fact. Slav is Indigenous European, genuine human come up from Rift Valley 44,000 year ago. We chase Neanderthal up to northern Europe, where ones who don't go complete extinct from stupid, become Viking criminal and Nazi.

After several thousand year, Viking figure out how to build rudimentary "boat" and invade Kyivan Rus'. Then they mate with Genghis Khan barbarian, who is grandson of Neanderthals from Ural Mountains. Now you have double Neanderthal barbarian, who soon move to Muskovy swamp after they rob Slav blind and murder many. Then in 1700's, they rename themselves "Rus'yan" (Slavic) to make more fraudulent claim our property. Is now 1100 year of them steal from and murder Slavs. Pah! I spit on them!

**Back to sacred task. Caress dough once more**, just to make sure it feel like good quality pants.

**Plop!** beloved dough into greased bowl **and cover with plastic wrap and two towels**. Now you can put feet up, because you leave dough alone till it double, about 2 hour.

**Once dough double**, punch it in the middle and allow to rise yet 1 more hour.

**Baba Secret:** this is where you make dough reservation. **Put 1/3 of dough to make your cross decoration in separate greased bowl.**

**Divide rest of dough into butter-greased baking pans.** Pyrex is very good. Pan should each be only 1/3 full, because this Paska dough rise rise rise like new life and Resurrection it symbolize.

**Baba Tip:** many people make Paska in buttered coffee can, like their mamas. This is great. Another option is using ceramic insert from Old School crockpot. You can find them pretty cheap at thrift store everywhere.

For any kind pan, **make super nonstick** by first greasing, then pressing silicone parchment paper against sides. No need to butter inside of parchment.

You is probably getting tired. Too bad. **Cover dough again and give another 30 minutes to re-rise.**

**Baba Secret:** Trying to braid 3 pieces for cross decoration is main cause of decorative failure. Unless you is Dumbledore, at least one piece will fall apart.

Next thing you know, you is on kitchen floor crying. Listen your Baba. **Just roll out 2 piece dough into ropey shape. Cross them over.** Almost anyone can do this, okay?

**Next Baba Secret:** Pin down arms of cross with toothpicks for baking so they don't fall off. Remove before serving, and don't tell nobody. Use whole box, if you need. Really.

**Unbelievably,** dough must rise another 30 minutes with cross on top. Use plastic and towel again. Do not get absorb in meaningless task and go past 30 minutes, or cross will go blooey! You want cross to retain shape, to respect its meaning.

Yes, is true. **Paska must rise 5 time! This is last time, so place oven rack in middle and preheat to 350 degree F.** Is now too late to clean oven.

**If you like nice brown glaze on Paska, make Egg Wash:**

**Beat two egg yolk with splash milk.** Use paint brush. If Paska get more brown than you like during baking, cover with aluminum foil tent.

**Baba Secret:** bake Paska only **10 minute at 350 F. Turn oven down to 325 F, and bake 40 more minute.** This allow for more even crumb. If you use those dark, nonstick pan, lower baking time by few minutes.

**Next Ukrainian tradition:**

Have soft pillow or towel waiting to welcome sacred Paska. Let it sit in pan 15 minutes. Then it need to settle another fifteen minute on soft surface. Turn Paska every five. This is very high maintenance bread.

Remove toothpick from cross before anyone see, or get tongue splinter and sue you. This is Easter tragedy.

Paska is symbol of your direct participation in both renewal of life in Spring, and in all steps of Crucifixion and Resurrection. Care for this bread as though

caring for baby and for your own faith. Baba make lots joke because that is her way, but she take communion serious. Whatever faith you choose, harder you meditate and work on Paska, bigger is blessing.

EAT with several pound good butter.

If you have any leftover, wrap in plastic or foil, and put in freezer bag. Baba herself never seen Paska leftover, but apparent is true for some people we don't talk about or invite for dinner second time.

When presenting Paska on table or in basket to take for blessing, is traditional to drape sides in *rushnyk*, Ukrainian cloth embroidered with sacred symbols.

Print Ingredients and take to farmer or stupormarket with you!

## **Ingredients:**

- Yeast cakes or active dry yeast, 2
- Whole milk, 3 cups. If adding citrus juice, 2 1/2 cups
- Fine quality pastry flour, 10 1/2 cups
- Organic eggs, 7. Five for recipe. Reserve 2 for egg wash
- Butter, 1 lb.
- Vanilla, 1/2 tbsp.
- Salt, 1 tsp.
- Toothpicks

## **Optional:**

- Organic raisins, 2 cups
- Organic orange and lemon, 1 each
- Saffron threads, 1 package

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This recipe is addend to **Baba's Kitchen: Ukrainian Soul Food: 200** traditional Ukrainian recipes and home remedies, and many outrageous stories from Stalinist survivors. 384 pages. **Purchase here:**

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Join thousands of people discussing Ukrainian culture on her **Facebook**:  
<https://www.facebook.com/BabasKitchenUkrainianSoulFoodBook/?fref=ts>

Also on website: instructions for making krashanky, **Ukrainian Easter eggs**,  
with vegetable dyes. <http://www.ukrainiansoulfood.ca/easter.php>



**Rosie's Rescue** is children's book with Ukrainian traditions. Is about Baba's family.