

Soup Dumplings (Xiaolongbao)

Yield: 20 dumplings 6 servings | **Rating:** 5/5 | **Prep:** 3 hr | **Cook:** 10 min | **Source:** thestranger.online

Xiaolongbao refers to a type of small Chinese steamed bun (baozi) traditionally prepared in a xiaolong, a small bamboo steaming basket, hence the name.

Ingredients

Jelly Broth:

- 3 lbs chicken (backs and necks)
- 1 tbsp oil (vegetable)
- 2" ginger (sliced)
- 4 Onions (spring chopped 3" pieces)

Wrappers:

- 120 g Flour
- Pinch of salt
- 35 g water (hot)
- 30 g water (cold)

Filling:

- 1 tbsp ginger (grated)
- 8 oz pork (mince)
- 1 tbsp soy sauce (light)
- 4 tsp shaoxing wine (or dry sherry)
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp sugar
- ⅛ tsp pepper (white)
- 4 onions (spring, finely minced)

Dipping Sauce:

- 1 Vinegar (Chinkiang)
- 1 Ginger (very thinly sliced)

Notes

Use a medium level of fat to pork ratio, circa 30:70. Lean pork works as well but the meat will be tougher when cooked.

Roll as thin as you can as they inflate. The small opening on the dumpling will allow the steam to release as you cook, to prevent the dumpling skin from bursting.

Prepare the jelly broth 1 day in advance.



Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C. Using a Dutch oven with a lid or a roasting pan that can be securely sealed with a lid or foil, add the oil to the pan and place it in the oven to heat up, 5 to 10 minutes.
2. Once heated, remove pan. Place the chicken back in the pan and spread the ginger and green onions on top of it. Add 1/4 cup water. Cover with the lid and return to the oven. Roast until you've collected a good amount of chicken broth in the bottom of the pot, circa 50 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven and cool for 5 minutes. Use a pair of tongs to remove and discard the chicken backs.
3. With a mesh strainer over a heat proof bowl, strain the broth. Once cooled completely, transfer the chicken broth to a sealed container and place in the fridge overnight.
4. For the wrappers, combine the flour and salt in a large bowl. Slowly drizzle the hot water over the flour while stirring with a fork. Mix until the water is fully absorbed.
5. Drizzle 25g of cold water over the flour while mixing. Once the water is fully absorbed the flour will turn into dough flakes, press with your hands to gather the dough together while gathering as much dry flour as you can. If the dough is almost formed but there's still dry flour left in the bowl, add the remaining 5g water and continue kneading. Once done, it should form a semi-soft dough and no flour is left in the bowl.
6. Transfer the dough onto a clean working surface and knead for 15 to 20 minutes, until the surface is smooth and the texture elastic. The dough should feel soft to the touch and not stick to your hands. Wrap the dough with cling film and let it rest for 45 minutes.
7. For the filling add the grated ginger into a small bowl and pour in 1/4 cup hot water. Allow to rest while preparing the other ingredients. The chicken broth will now be congealed with a layer of fat on top. Scrape off any fat and reserve it in a small bowl. Slice the chicken gelatin into thin strips, then cubes and coarsely mince it.
8. Weigh the gelatin, if less than 120g, add a few tsps of the chicken fat until it reaches 120g. Discard the remaining fat. Add the pork, ginger water, soy sauce, Shaoxing wine, salt, sugar and pepper to a small bowl. Beat with a spatula until fully absorbed and the filling becomes sticky, circa 5 minutes. Add the chopped chicken jelly and green onions. Mix until incorporated. Cover the bowl with cling film and store in the fridge until ready to use, no longer than 5 hrs or the liquid will seep out.

9. To form the buns, line a steamer rack with square parchment paper for steaming the dumplings. Place the rested dough onto a clean working surface. Roll it into a long log, about 1" in diameter. Cut the log in half, wrap one half with cling film and place it in the fridge while working on the other half.

10. Roll out the log a bit more. Divide it into two equal pieces, then further cut them into 10 pieces in total. Cover them with a few layers of wet kitchen roll to prevent drying out.

11. Work on one at a time. Shape a piece of dough with your fingers so it is a round piece, then flatten it with your palm. Use a small rolling pin to roll out the wrapper, spinning the dough after rolling a few times. Roll until the wrapper is about 4.25" in diameter and very thin.

12. Place 1 tsp of the filling onto the center of the wrapper. Fold and pinch the edges of the wrapper to create pleats or create in the shape of a pasty. When you are about to seal the pleats, leave a small opening on the top of the dumplings..

13. Place the wrapped dumplings onto the parchment paper. Cover loosely with a few layers of wet paper towels to prevent drying out. Work on the rest of the dumplings until you can fill the steamer rack - you should leave at least 2" between the dumplings.

14. To prepare the dipping sauce add 1 tbs of Chinese vinegar and a few strips of ginger to each small sauce plate. Bring a pot of water to a boil over a medium high heat. Cover the steamer rack with a lid and place it over the boiling water. Steam over a medium high heat for 8 to 10 minutes, depending on the number of dumplings you cook at a time.