

Chinese Dumplings



These tasty dumplings are similar to ravioli but instead of being made from a large sheet of pasta each piece of dough is rolled by hand. This hot water dough is easy to handle as it is not as stiff as Italian pasta dough. It is also less costly to make as eggs are not used. The filling given here is a classic pork mince and salad onion but chicken, turkey or beef could be used instead. The Chinese also make a vegetarian filling from very finely chopped mushrooms, glass noodles (made with rice) and tofu. The variation on possible fillings is endless, once pupils have made this classic version they will be able to experiment freely.

Chinese dumplings are made with a hot water dough. Traditionally, after they have been boiled they are served with a bowl of light soya sauce or black vinegar (similar to balsamic) with freshly grated ginger. They are available as street snacks to be eaten at any time of day or night and usually served up ten at a time. Pot stickers are a name given to dumplings that have a longer narrow shape (made from an oval instead of a circle) which are fried on the bottom in a small amount of vegetable oil in a shallow pan prior to being steamed this gives the dumpling a crunchy texture on the bottom whilst still being moist. Potstickers often have finely chopped Chinese leaf added to the filling which gives it a crunchy filling. Water is added to the minced meat filling so that when you bite into a dumpling it releases a natural gravy.

Making filled pasta like this is a fun group activity and recipes are given for individual pupils to make their own batch or for the dough and filling to be made in advance and for pupils to assemble and cook in class. If short lesson times make it difficult for pupils to finish a recipe why not prepare the filling and dough prior to their arrival leaving more time for you to demonstrate how they are made and cooked. Then pupils can experience rolling and forming the dumplings themselves and trying the finished product. This works well for younger pupils or those with special needs. The dough lends itself to being made in a food mixer or processor.



Hot water dough (for 20 dumplings)

150g strong plain flour

60mls hot water (from a recently boiled kettle)

1 teaspoon vegetable oil

Method

1. Put the flour into a mixing bowl and select a metal dessert or tablespoon to mix (a wooden spoon won't work well here).
2. Pour over the hot water and mix well with the spoon cutting the dough with the edge as you mix to form a rough breadcrumb texture.
3. Drizzle in enough cold water to form a firm dough. Mix with the spoon until the water has been absorbed. Sprinkle some flour onto a clean work surface and turn out the dough. Knead for 2 -3 minutes until it is smooth. Lay a piece of cling wrap on the work surface and rub with the vegetable oil. Wrap the dough in the cling wrap and leave it to rest while you make the filling.

Pork dumpling filling

150g minced pork

2 green salad onions, washed and finely sliced

2 teaspoons sesame oil

2 teaspoons soy sauce

50g piece of fresh ginger, finely grated

2 dessertspoons water

Method

1. Mix all the ingredients together thoroughly. Chill until needed.

Now make the dumplings!

Assembling the dumplings!

1. Place the dough on a clean work surface and cut in half. Cut each half into ten equal size pieces. Dust the surface with flour to stop the dough sticking if necessary.



2. Get a pastry brush and some cold water as this will seal the dumplings as you fill them.

3. Roll the dough into a ball in the palm of your hand, then roll with a small rolling pin into a circle about 7-8 cm in diameter.



4. Place 1 teaspoon of pork filling just off centre, brush the dough with water and fold over so the edges meet. Press around the edge gently with your fingertip to seal. Put the finished dumpling on a lightly floured tray while you prepare the rest.





5. To cook potsticker style, choose a frying pan with a tight fitting lid. Put 2 teaspoons of cooking oil in the pan and heat. Add the dumplings so that each has contact with the base of the pan and fry for 2-3 minutes.

6. Pour in enough water so that there is a pool about 1 cm deep in the bottom of the pan the one shown in the image below had 125 mls added. Place the lid on the pan and reduce the heat to medium. Allow to steam until the water has evaporated this should take no longer than 8-10 minutes. Alternatively you can drop the dumplings into a pan of boiling water and cook for 8 minutes or steam for 10 minutes (use a non stick paper to line the steamer basket).

7. Allow to stand for a couple of minutes before removing with a spatula.

Eat hot with a dipping sauce of light soy and ginger (optional)

Uncooked dumplings can be frozen or chilled for later use.

To freeze; place a sheet of non stick paper on a baking tray or freezer proof tray that will fit in your freezer. Place the dumpling on this so they are not



touching. Freeze for an hour or until firm and transfer to a freezer bag. Cook as above when required.

If chilling dust the tray with flour first to prevent them sticking and use on the day they are made.

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