

Luóbo Gāo (蘿蔔糕) - Radish Cake (Turnip Cake)

A dim sum favorite, this savory cake is made from radish, but is often translated into English as “Turnip Cake” even though it is NOT made from turnips!. Like most anything translated from Chinese, you’ll see lots of spellings based on different pronunciations as well. This is especially true as this is a Cantonese dish, so frequently it will be listed phonetically from Cantonese, lo bak gao or something similar.

Active Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: ~70-80 minutes

Ingredients

30g dried shiitake mushrooms | 1 cup

50g dried shrimp | ⅓ cup

1000g daikon radish | 2.2 pounds

90g Chinese sausage (Lap Cheong) | 2 links

50g scallions, green and white parts | 2 large

20g salt | 2 teaspoons

50g sugar | ¼ cup

120g rice flour | ¾ cups

25g wheat starch (or corn starch) | 3 tablespoons

2g ground white pepper | ¾ teaspoon

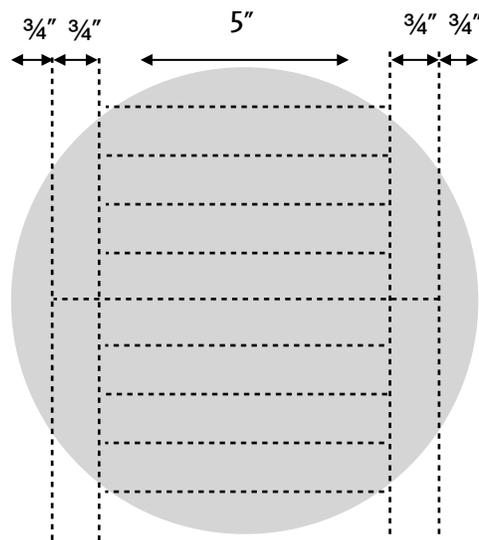
14g toasted sesame oil | 3 teaspoons

Instructions

1. Place the mushrooms and shrimp into a medium-sized bowl, cover with boiling water, and cover the bowl with an inverted plate. Let them sit for 20-25 minutes.
2. Peel and grate the radish. Transfer to a wok or large pot, add ½ cup of water, and cook over medium heat. Stir occasionally to make sure nothing sticks. You want some steam coming out of the radish. The intent is to generally steam the radish, not sauce it. Adjust heat accordingly. Cook for about 10-12 minutes. Drain in a colander. Use a wooden spoon to press the radish to press out most of the water.
3. Cut the sausage into small dice, and mince the scallions. Set them aside.
4. In a large bowl, add all the dry ingredients, stir to combine.
5. When the mushrooms have rehydrated, gently squeeze out the water back into the soaking bowl. There’s flavor in that water! Trim off the stems if they are seem stiff and not edible. Dice the mushrooms. Set them aside.
6. Strain the shrimp, reserve the soaking liquid. Mince the shrimp. Set them aside.
7. In a wok or frying pan, sauté the mushrooms, shrimp, sausage, and scallions over medium heat for 2 minutes or until the sausage has rendered some of its fat and the scallions are wilted and cooked.
8. Transfer the content of the wok/frying pan to the dry ingredients from step 4. Add the radish and sesame oil, and mix thoroughly.
9. Strain the soaking liquid through a fine mesh strainer, then add ¼ cup of the liquid to the bowl and mix to combine. If you need to augment with plain water, do so. You may want to add more of the soaking liquid/water (see notes) depending on the consistency you want in the finished cake.
10. Oil an 8” round cake pan or a standard bread loaf pan (8.5”x4.5” or 9”x5”). Transfer the radish mixture to the pan, level the mixture. Cover with plastic wrap, then cover that with foil, sealing the around the edges as best you can.
11. Steam the cake for 50 minutes. Allow to cool fully, remove the plastic wrap and foil, then run a knife around the edges of the cake. Invert to release the cake from the pan.

Notes

1. I've had very inconsistent results using rice flours I purchased at my local natural foods store (5 minutes from home). It wasn't until I picked up rice flour from my local Asian market (45 minutes from home) that I got the results I was looking for (a firm radish cake). So, your results may vary depending on the rice flour you use. I've had consistent and good results using Erawan brand rice flour (<https://amzn.to/3nVLo77>).
2. I prefer a firm cake, so I use only $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the liquid. You can increase the amount if you like a softer cake, try increasing the water $\frac{1}{4}$ cup and see how it turns out. Adjust from there. Draining the cooked grated radish in a colander and pressing to squeeze out excess water, my goal is to better control the final moisture level. If you start with cooked grated radish that isn't overly wet and sitting in an indeterminate amount of water, you can then add back a measured amount of the soaking liquid.
3. I use a round cake pan even though traditionally, Luóbo Gāo is served cut into rectangular slices. I find it much simpler to fit a round cake pan into a traditional steamer tray than attempting to find a way to steam a taller rectangular bread loaf pan. Either way, this recipe will fill an 8" round or most of a standard bread loaf pan. See diagram below for cutting suggestions for an 8" round pan.
4. To serve, cut into thick slices, usually $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1-inch thick, and pan fry in tablespoon of oil. Brown both sides over medium high heat (~2-3 minutes a side). Transfer to a serving dish, then brush with oyster sauce or a mixture of soy sauce mixed with a little sugar.
5. All links to ingredients are Amazon Affiliate links.



Cutting Suggestion