

Chinese Dumplings 101

A guide to help you before, during, and after our dumpling making class!

Agenda:

- (0:15) If you have specific questions about equipment or ingredients, I'll be online 15 minutes before the scheduled start. Additionally, feel free to drop in early to meet other participants.
 - 0:00 Introductions and Overview
 - 0:05 **Dumpling Dough**
 - Knead to Know!** Different types of dough for different types of dumplings
 - Demo:** Cold & hot water dough
 - Hands-on:** Mix and knead your cold and hot water doughs.
 - 0:15 **Dumpling Filling**
 - Demo:** Preparing a basic ground pork filling
 - Hands-on:** Make your filling. Knead your cold water dough
 - 0:35 **Dipping Sauces**
 - Demo:** Scallion-Ginger Oil
 - Hands-on:** Make your dipping sauce(s). Knead your cold water dough
 - 0:45 **Finishing our dough**
 - Demo:** Finishing the cold water dough, and making our combo dough.
 - Hands-on:** Final knead of cold water dough. Mix your combo dough.
 - 1:00 **Dumpling wrappers**
 - Demo:** Rolling dumpling wrappers
 - Hands-on:** Make your first 8-10 wrappers
 - 1:10 **Dumpling Folding**
 - Lots of demos and hands-on dumpling folding!
 - 1:50 **Cooking Dumplings**
 - Demo:** Boiling dumplings, setting up a steamer, & steam-frying dumplings
 - Hands-on:** Time to cook!
 - 2:20 **Nosh:** Tasting time!
 - 2:40 Done!
- Actual times may vary!

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Ingredient Notes

Ground Pork: Not all ground pork is made equally! In fact, what “modern” thinking often thinks of as better is actually not as good for dumplings. That is, a low fat, lean ground pork will not produce as good a dumpling as a higher fat option. Most regular grocery store ground pork, whether it is pre-packaged or sold from the butcher counter as “hand crafted” is still likely at most 15-20% fat. If you can find ground pork with 30% fat content, you’ll get better dumplings. Some grocers will have fatback available. You can use that to augment your ground pork to increase the fat content. If you purchase fatback, just make sure it is plain unadulterated fatback, and not salt pork or salted/cured so you don’t add lots of salt by accident to your dumpling filling mix!

Napa or Chinese Cabbage: Napa cabbage is the same as Chinese cabbage, and many grocers will label them interchangeably. These cabbages are long and not round. Similar to the difference between romaine lettuce vs iceberg lettuce. Similarly, the leaves of Napa cabbage or Chinese cabbage are leafier compared to a regular cabbage. If you can’t find Napa/Chinese cabbage, you can use substitute with Baby Bok Choy, Bok Choy, Savoy cabbage, or regular cabbage, in that order.



Chinese Cabbage



Baby Bok Choy



Bok Choy



Savoy Cabbage



Cabbage

Scallion or Green Onion: These are used a lot in Chinese cooking, and the two names refer to the same thing. You’ll also see references to spring onion which look a lot like scallions, but they have a much more pronounced bulb at the base. It’s harder to find spring onions than scallions, but if you can’t find scallions, spring onions will work too.



Ginger: When buying fresh ginger, look for smooth skin. If the skin of the ginger is crinkled, it’s a sign that it’s old and drying out. In the photo to the left, the ginger on the right is fresher while the ginger on the left is too dried out.

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Cilantro: Sometimes referred to as Chinese parsley, cilantro is also often known as coriander. In the U.S., coriander is commonly used to refer to the seed of the plant whether whole or ground while cilantro is used to refer to the plant itself. Cilantro is easily confused with Italian fat leaf parsley, and they are not, in my opinion interchangeable. If you can't find cilantro, just leave it out.

Additionally, for some, cilantro tastes like soap. If you are unfortunate to have won that genetic lottery, then leave it out. No need to make your dumplings taste like soap!



Cilantro

Italian Flat Leaf Parsley

Chinese Xiao Shin wine (Shaoxing or Shao Hsing): This is a cooking wine for cooking. Chinese rice wine (clear) will also work. If you can't find these, but you have some dry sherry, that will work as well as Mirin (a Japanese sweet cooking wine). It's an amber colored wine that is actually served as a drink (I wouldn't recommend it, personally). This article does a good job of reviewing all the variations of asian cooking wines: <https://malafood.com/en/the-ultimate-guide-to-chinese-cooking-wines>



Light Soy Sauce: Soy sauce, as found in most grocery stores is light soy sauce as opposed to dark. The term light does not refer to low sodium. When compared to dark soy sauce, you can see that the color of the light soy sauce is lighter, and dark soy sauce is so dark, that you really can't see light through it if you tip a bottle up to a light. There are many many different types of soy sauce. For our needs, simply stick with a regular soy sauce that you can find in the grocery store. Kikkoman is probably the most recognizable brand in U.S. grocers. It's a Japanese-style soy sauce, and it'll do just fine.

Sesame oil: Nowadays, you can find just about any type of oil in stores. When looking for sesame oil, look for toasted sesame oil. It should have a dark amber color.

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Chinese Black Vinegar (Chinkiang Vinegar): I've not found a substitute for Chinese black vinegar for our purposes of making a dipping sauce. You'll find online reference to using rice or wine vinegar, but since the sauce is all about the vinegar, I wouldn't bother trying to substitute if you can't find it.



Sichuan Chili Oil: The recipe for the chili oil in my cookbook uses a lot of aromatics that you may not have already in your home. There is no "right" recipe for this oil as different households will use different spice blends, and pragmatically, they'd use what they had.



If you can't find all of the ingredients, it's OK to leave out those ingredients. Two notes...there are a lot of spicy chili oils/condiments that are popular and more and more easily found in grocery stores like **Lao Gan Ma Spicy Chili Crisp**. If you like one of these (I certainly do), then I wouldn't take the time and effort to source all the ingredients you need to make your own unless that's part of the adventure you seek! It's not a difficult thing to make, but it won't taste like the spicy chili crisp sauce you buy at the store - partly because you likely will not add nearly as much MSG as the factory-made sauce has.

Also, know that Lao Gan Ma Spicy Chili Crisp, and its variants are not actually substitutes for Sichuan Chili Oil. Lao Gan Ma comes from Guizhou province in the southwest of China that is near to Sichuan province, but like the Carolinas in the U.S. southeast is near Texas, but you wouldn't say Texas barbecue is the same as Carolina barbecue.

Equipment

To make dumplings, we won't need any specialized equipment. To steam dumplings, you do not need to have a traditional Chinese bamboo steamer. In fact, if you've ever been to a dim sum restaurant, you most likely saw steamed dumplings



cooked in metal steamer baskets. If you have either, then use them, but there's no need to invest in them unless you discover that you make steamed dumplings so frequently that other make-shift solutions are bothersome. For class, if you don't have steamer baskets/trays, you can make one pretty easily. You'll need a



large pot that can contain a smaller plate or rack on which you will cook the dumplings. That plate or rack needs to be held above the boiling water. You can make this work by simply balling up some aluminum wrap or using a tuna fish can that has had its ends cut out. Additionally, even with a traditional bamboo steamer, you'll want to put something between the dumpling and the basket to prevent sticking. For a bamboo steamer, parchment paper, Napa cabbage leaves, or even coins cut from a carrot will work. If you are cooking on a plate or a metal steamer basket or rack, a light coating of oil will work.

To make your dumplings, you'll need a rolling pin to help with the wrappers, but otherwise we'll be doing everything manually! Additionally, you'll obviously need the usual stuff like a knife, cutting board, some mixing bowls, etc.



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Shopping List

Ingredient	Pork & Shrimp Dumpling Filling	Mushroom Dumpling Filling	Xinjian Lamb Dumpling Filling	Vinegar-Ginger Sauce	Ginger-Scallion Sauce	Hot & Sour	Sichuan Chili Oil
Ground pork	⅔ lb						
Shrimp (raw)	⅓ lb						
Ground lamb			1 lb				
Mushrooms (Shiitake, portobello, oyster, etc.)		2 cups, finely chopped					
Napa cabbage	2 cups, finely chopped	3 cups, finely chopped					
Scallions	4 stalks	4 stalks		1 stalk	2 stalks	1 tsp	
Fresh Ginger	2 Tbsp	1 Tbsp	2 Tbsp	2 tsp	2 tsp		
Light Soy Sauce (regular)	1 Tbsp	1 Tbsp	1 Tbsp	1 Tbsp		1 tsp	
Garlic		1 clove	2 cloves			1 tsp	3 cloves
White Pepper		½ tsp			¼ tsp		
Chinese 5-spice powder	¼ tsp						
Chinese Shaoxing wine	1 Tbsp						
Chicken Broth (or water)	½ cup						
Neutral Oil	2 Tbsp	3 Tbsp			¼ cup		1 cup
Carrots		2 large					
Red Onion			1 small				
Ground cumin			1 Tbsp				
Ground black pepper			1 tsp				
Ground coriander			1 tsp				
Bay Leaves							1 leaf
Black Cardamom							1 pods
Bread Flour							
Chili Oil						2 Tbsp	
Chinese Black Vinegar				1 Tbsp		2 tsp	
Cinnamon Stick							½ stick

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Cloves							1 tsp
Dried Sand Ginger							2 pieces
Salt					½ tsp		½ tsp
Sesame Oil						1 tsp	
Shallot							1 bulb
Sichuan Chili Flakes							½ cup
Sichuan Peppercorns							2 Tbsp
Star Anise							3 stars