Main dishes / China

# Xiao Long Bao ( )

Thin, pleated dumplings cradling a pork and ginger filling suspended in aspic that melts to soup during steaming — the skin is so translucent you can see the filling shift when you lift it from the bamboo, and biting too eagerly will cost you.

**Time** 300 min **Servings** 4

## What you'll need.

- ☐ 100 parts All-purpose flour
- ☐ 55 parts Boiling water (for scalded dough)
- ☐ 80 parts Ground pork (30% fat content)
- ☐ 60 parts Pork skin aspic (dong), chilled until firm
- ☐ 5 parts Fresh ginger, minced
- ☐ 8 parts Scallions (spring onions), finely minced
- ☐ 6 parts Soy sauce
- ☐ 4 parts Shaoxing rice wine
- ☐ 3 parts Salt, sugar, white pepper
- ☐ 2 parts Sesame oil

## Let's make it.

**01** If making from scratch: simmer pork skin (or trotters) with water, ginger, and scallion for 2–3 hours. Strain, season, and pour the liquid into a flat tray to set in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours until completely firm. The gel should be solid enough to dice. Cut into 1 cm cubes when needed for the filling. If using gelatin: bloom, dissolve in hot pork stock, season, pour into a tray and refrigerate until firm.

**02** Combine ground pork, minced ginger, scallions, soy sauce, Shaoxing wine, salt, sugar, white pepper, and sesame oil in a bowl. Using chopsticks or your hand, stir and fold in one direction only for 3–4 minutes until the mixture becomes sticky and cohesive — the protein strands are aligning. Do not overmix or the filling becomes dense. Refrigerate 30 minutes.

**03** Pour boiling water gradually over the flour while stirring quickly with a fork or chopsticks. Once cool enough to handle (about 2 minutes), knead by hand for 8–10 minutes until the dough is smooth, elastic, and slightly tacky but not sticky. The hot water gelatinizes the starch, making the dough extensible enough to roll paper-thin without tearing. Cover and rest 30 minutes.

**04** Divide the dough into small pieces (about 10g each). Roll each piece into a thin disc 8–9 cm across — thinner at the edges, slightly thicker in the center to resist the soup weight. Place 1 tsp pork filling in the center with 2–3 aspic cubes. Pleat the edges with 18–22 folds, twisting and pinching the top closed. The pleat count is not vanity — more pleats means a tighter seal and less soup loss.

05 Line bamboo steamer with parchment or cabbage leaves. Place dumplings 2 cm apart — they expand. Steam over vigorously boiling water for exactly 8 minutes. Not 6 (filling undercooked), not 10 (skin tears). Serve immediately in the steamer. Accompany with Chinkiang black vinegar and thin-cut ginger.

**Recipe & provenance** ForkRecipe Kitchen / ForkRecipe / FoodML and contributors / CC BY-SA 4.0.
Original recipe and attribution CC BY-SA 4.0
Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
recipes.dvs-services.be / xiao-long-bao