



Chinese Vegetable Dumplings (Jiaozi / 餃子)

Makes approximately 7-dozen (84) dumplings. Enough to feed 4-6 adults depending on appetite! Please visit the [blog page](#) for step-by-step photos and links to video tutorials.

Ingredients:

For the Dough (can be made a day ahead to rest overnight at room temperature; makes about 2lb of dough):

4 ½ C (635g) Unbleached, organic all-purpose flour (un-sifted, just scoop and level off; or better yet, weigh on kitchen scale)

1 1/3 C (315ml) tepid water, plus 2-4 tbsp more as needed

For the Filling (makes about 6 cups):

Oil for sautéing (I use avocado oil)

1 lb (450g) snow pea leaves/tips, tougher stalks pulled off (can substitute baby bok choy)

1 lb (450g-pack) organic extra firm tofu, squeezed dry in a nutmilk bag or cheesecloth

1 lb (450g) fresh shiitake mushrooms, stems trimmed off and chopped small

¼ lb (115g) Chinese chives, chopped (can substitute 7-8 scallions plus 2-3 cloves minced garlic)

1 tbsp tamari (can substitute light soy sauce)

2 tsp sesame oil

¼ tsp white pepper powder

Kosher salt to taste, starting with 1 tsp and work up (I use Diamond kosher salt, about 1.5-2 tsp)

Optional for Dipping, amount per person: 2 tbsp Chinese black vinegar, 2 tsp Chinese chili oil, ½ tsp toasted sesame oil



Method:

Make the dough (skip if using store-bought wrappers): Place the flour in a large mixing bowl. Put bowl on top of a moist kitchen towel to help it stay in place while you stir. Slowly drizzle the 315ml of water in a steady stream while mixing with your hand or pair of chopsticks. Once incorporated, the dough should still look a bit scraggly with some loose, dry bits throughout. Start kneading the dough with your hands, only sprinkling teeny bits of water over very dry areas as needed. Knead for 8-10 minutes until very smooth. Shape the dough into a ball and allow to rest 15 minutes under a tea towel. Knead again for 3 minutes. Drizzle a tiny bit of oil into the mixing bowl and roll the dough ball around to lightly coat all over. Cover with tea towel again and this time, rest for at least 1 hour or up to overnight (use food wrap to wrap tightly if resting overnight). The longer the dough rests, the softer it gets. Softer dough is easier to handle but you also want the dough to retain some chewiness. Meanwhile, make the filling.

Prepare the filling: Preheat a wok or large cast iron pot over medium heat. Drizzle some oil, add snow pea leaves and sauté until just wilted but still bright green, about 1-2 minutes. Do in batches if needed and do not overcook. Place back in colander to cool. Next, drizzle a bit of oil and sauté the chopped chives about a minute and add the chopped shiitake mushrooms to brown, about 3-4 minutes. Set into large mixing bowl. The sautéed snow pea leaves should be cool to touch now. With the colander set in the sink, grab handfuls of the greens with both hands and squeeze excess water out. Repeat until all of it has been squeezed. Add these to the bowl of chives and mushrooms. Finally, add the squeezed tofu, tamari, sesame oil, white pepper powder and kosher salt to taste. Mix well. Taste a bit of filling and adjust seasoning to your taste. Filling should be on the saltier side since it will be wrapped inside unsalted dough.

Wrap the dumplings: Set up your wrapping station. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper to hold the wrapped dumplings. Set out the bowl of filling and a small dish of cold tap water for sealing edges. Have some flour on hand for dusting as you roll out dough. A kitchen scale is useful to weigh out dough pieces to ensure you end up with same-sized wrappers (but don't worry if you don't have one, you can also eye ball it). Roll wrappers and fill and fold them in small batches, as the rolled-out wrappers dry out quickly.



Cut the dough ball into 6-8 more manageable pieces. Take one cut piece (re-covering the rest under the tea towel) and roll it with your hands into a long rope about 1" in diameter. Cut into 1 tbsp sized pieces, about 10g each. Dust pieces with flour and also your work surface. With one cut-side facing up, flatten the piece of dough with the palm of your hand. Dust a small rolling pin to roll the dough into circles approximately 3½" in diameter, with the edges thinner than the centre of the wrapper.

You can roll dumpling wrappers in one of two ways: (1) roll forward and back while rotating the dough 45 degrees after each pass, exactly like you would when rolling out pie dough, OR (2) left hand rotates the dough simultaneously while right hand rolls the rolling pin over the right edge of the dough (or vice versa for Lefties). I actually do a combo of the two. I start with method 1 because I find it easier to create a nice round shape that way. Then once I've reached about 80% of the desired size, I switch to method 2 to achieve the thinner edges all around. Don't worry, it needs not be perfectly circular. And practice makes perfect! Dust lightly with flour as needed. Roll out 3-5 wrappers at a time, then move to the next steps.

Place about 1 tbsp of filling in the center of your dough wrapper, leaving a border all around. Adjust amount of filling such that you get a plump dumpling (nothing like a flaccid dumpling) but can still comfortably seal the edges without a risk for coming apart during cooking. Dab one finger in the water and run it around the outer edge of the wrapper to wet it. This helps to form a secure seal.

Wrap the dumpling however your wish – there are a myriad of styles! The quickest and simplest way is to fold it in half, into a half moon. My personal go-to is the symmetrical pleat, as pictured in this post.

How To Pleat like mine (see images and GIF): Start by attaching opposing ends of the wrap (i.e. the 12 o'clock to the 6 o'clock part of the circle) and press gently, at just that point, so it sticks together there. From that center point, begin working outward to the left of the half-circle all the way to the outer end, folding a series of 3 to 5 slightly-overlapping pleats. Repeat the same pleats on the right side, from center point to the outer end. Note that when making each pleat, only one side (the outward facing side) of the wrapper is manipulated i.e. the inward facing side of the wrapper does not move. Fold a



small pleat and press down to seal; repeat with another pleat slightly overlapping the first and press down to seal. At the end, pinch flat to close or, my way is to tuck the end in once, then pinch. It sounds a little complicated trying to describe in words – have a look at the step-by-step images and GIF for the visual.

Cook the dumplings: In this recipe, we are boiling the dumplings. It may not be as photogenic / Insta-worthy as the pan-fried way, but it is the coziest and my absolute favorite way to eat dumplings. Also, a practical benefit is you can boil a lot more dumplings at a time than pan-frying or steaming. To boil, set a large pot of water to a rolling boil. Place dumplings in gently, one by one or a few at a time with the aid of a handled-strainer. You can cook as many as 30 dumplings at a time, provided your pot is large and they are not over-crowded. Stir dumplings around regularly to prevent sticking to the bottom. Allow the water to come back to a boil and the dumplings to bob to the surface, about 2-3 minutes. Keep at a boil to cook until dough has become translucent, for a total cooking time of 5 minutes or so. [If cooking dumplings from frozen, add a couple of minutes to the cook time]. Test a dumpling for doneness. The filling should be heated through and the dough slightly chewy, tender and not raw. The beauty of this filling is there is no need to worry about raw meat. Everything in the filling is cooked. You just need the wrapper to cook through. Once done, strain right away. Don't walk away to do something else and risk overcooking the dumplings. Overcooked = soggy dough and nobody likes that. Serve fresh with dipping sauce. **To pan-fry:** You can still pan fry a batch. In fact, we often eat the first round boiled, followed by second round pan-fried! Best of both 😊 Heat a non-stick or well-seasoned cast iron skillet over medium to medium-high heat. Drizzle oil and place boiled/drained dumplings in skillet. Fry 3-4 minutes on each side, or until desired crispiness.

Enjoy! x

RECIPE NOTES

- 1. Scaling this recipe up or down:** This recipe can be scaled up for more dumplings or down for fewer. I personally love bigger batches when it comes to dumplings because they keep well in the freezer for future enjoyment!



- 2. A dry filling is key:** There are so many different filling options for dumplings. Really the sky is the limit. But in my opinion, the best dumpling filling (regardless of the ingredients) is one that has a firm mouthfeel and isn't flimsy and "loose" when you bite into it. To that end, especially with a vegetarian filling like this recipe involving leafy greens and tofu – two ingredients with a ton of moisture – properly squeezing out the excess water is CRUCIAL. I use a nutmilk bag for squeezing tofu but you can also use a cheesecloth, a *thin* kitchen towel or even a clean cotton t-shirt will do the job. For the cooked leafy greens, I simply grab with my hands and squeeze in batches over a large colander.
- 3. Homemade versus store-bought wrappers:** Hey, no judgement if you're short on time and need to use store-bought wrappers. I do it regularly, especially when I'm making 300-400 dumplings at a time! I will point out, that unfortunately most store-bought wrappers contain preservatives, even if they are kept and sold frozen. So annoying. I drive 20 minutes to a Japanese store to get my hands on frozen, preservative-free wrappers to keep in my freezer for future use. Defrost frozen wrappers overnight in the fridge. All that said, homemade wrappers as written in this recipe are rather easy to make. Only flour + water + time for the dough to relax. The dough is very easy to handle. And no yucky additives.
- 4. Boiling versus other method of cooking e.g. steaming or pan-frying:** Use hot water instead of tepid water in the dough if you plan to steam or panfry the dumplings. Alternatively, if like me, you like both boiled and pan-fried, boil all the dumplings first. Strain well and panfry 3-4 minutes on each side with a bit of oil in a sauté pan on medium to medium-high heat. Best of both worlds!
- 5. Freezing:** Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Set dumplings in a single layer, close together but not touching each other. Put in the freezer for about an hour, or until they are very firm. Gently place them in a ziptop bag, label how many, and store in the freezer for up to a month or so. When cooking frozen dumplings, there is no need to defrost them first. Cook them straight from the freezer. They take a few more minutes than fresh ones. Test to make sure filling is heated through and dough is translucent and no longer raw.