

80 Diapers' Pork Dumplings

2 cups minced cabbage (make sure this is very finely minced, so it doesn't break the wrappers)
1 T minced garlic
1 carrot shredded
2 T soy sauce
2 tsp salt
1/2 lbs ground pork
2 T peanut oil (you can sub in sesame oil or regular vegetable oil if allergies are an issue)
1 tsp Chinese 5 Spice seasoning
2 tsp chicken bouillon
1/3 c green onion, finely chopped

3 c all purpose flour
1 c (plus a bit) cold water

Combine flour and enough water to make a fairly stiff dough. Knead dough for 2-3 minutes. Dough should be smooth, very elastic and dry enough to roll without sticking too much. Let the dough rest 15 minutes while you make the filling

In another bowl, thoroughly combine all remaining ingredients. Combine using a wooden spoon, mixer or the traditional method, your hands. Tear off rounded tablespoons of dough and roll out very thin (1/8 inch) circles about 3 inches diameter on floured board or counter. (You can also use a biscuit cutter if you want them to be very uniform.

Place 1 rounded teaspoon of meat mixture in the center of each circle. Don't overfill! Now comes the tricky bit. You don't want to simply create a half circle, you want your dumplings to have a distinctive shape. The reason dumplings are considered to be good luck for CNY is that their shape resembles that of an old-fashioned Chinese coin purse, so they are believed to bring prosperity in the New Year.

To create this shape, fold the dough over the filling and pinch together the center of the circle. Do not press the edges together. Instead, fold the edges in to create an arched shape to the dough between the edge and the center, like this:



One side is "flat" while the other bumps out. You should see the filling through the opening. Repeat on both sides, then pinch once more in the middle of the arch. Your dumpling should have two "ears" on each side. Now seal up the ears, creating pleats where each ear is folded over and sealed. Your finished dumplings should "stand up" instead of laying flat, because of the pleated edge.

Dumplings cook fast! Bring a large wide pot to a rolling boil, and quickly slip 10-12 jiaozi into the water using a slotted spoon or a spider strainer. Reduce heat to medium and cook jiaozi at a slow boil for about 5 minutes. Jiaozi will sink to begin with, and you need to stir very gently to make sure they don't stick to the bottom of the pot, but as they cook they will float to the surface.

After 5 minutes, skim the dumplings out with your strainer or slotted spoon and let them drain for one minute in a colander over a plate (so they don't get soggy). Start the next batch of dumplings and move the draining ones to a plate or platter for serving. Serve hot with Chinese black vinegar and soy sauce.