

Ingredients

Dough (≈12 buns)

- 500g flour
- 8g yeast
- 6g baking powder
- 30g sugar
- 270g room temperature water
- Parchment paper

Meat Filling

- ½ lb. ground pork
- ½ white onion
- 2 oz shredded cabbage
- 1 scallion
- 1 clove of garlic
- 1 inch of ginger
- 1 tbsp of soy sauce
- 1 tsp water/cooking wine
- 2 tsp of salt
- Black pepper to taste

Vegetable Filling

- 1 lb. bok choy, washed
- 2 spring onions or scallions
- 8 large, fresh shiitake mushrooms
- (optional) 4 ounces dried bean curd
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil (divided)
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- ½ teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Instructions

Dough

1. Mix all the dry ingredients (flour, sugar, yeast, baking soda) together.
2. Add water.
3. Mix until water has incorporated, creating dough.

4. Knead dough until smooth (≈10 minutes)
5. Shape into (≈12) buns by cutting apart dough and rolling into balls.

Mantou (plain steamed buns)

1. Shape buns as desired.
2. Place finished bao onto parchment paper and rest in a steamer for 20 minutes. Steamer should NOT be on.
3. After 20 minutes, bring water to a boil under the steamer.
4. Steam for 8-10 minutes. Leave covered for an additional 5 minutes to prevent falling.

Meat-filled bao

1. Finely chop the onion, scallion, and cabbage, set aside.
 - a. NOTES: This is essentially a vegetable filler to loosen the texture of the meat and provide flavor. You can use as many other vegetables as you want, but note that the mixture's texture will change. If you're going to add many types of vegetables, precook some of them to lower the water content going into the meat mixture.
2. Finely mince the garlic and ginger.
3. Combine the ground meat, shredded vegetables(onion, cabbage), aromatics(scallion, garlic, ginger) in a bowl.
4. Add soy sauce, salt, and pepper to the meat/vegetable mixture.
5. Mix until homogeneous and paste-like.
6. Add 1 tsp of water, mix until incorporated.
 - a. NOTE: We're trying to control the water content of our meat filling so that the meat is juicy, but the bun doesn't end up soggy. Water can also be substituted with cooking wine for flavor.

Wrapping the bao

7. Roll out dough balls into 4" rounds.
8. Use approximately 2 tablespoons of filling for each bao-- feel free to add more/less depending on what allows you to seal the bao.
9. Bring edges of dough around meat filling and pinch together at the top.
10. Place finished bao onto parchment paper and rest in a steamer for 20 minutes. Steamer should NOT be on.
11. After 20 minutes, bring water to a boil under the steamer.
12. Steam for 25 minutes. Leave covered for an additional 5 minutes to prevent falling.

Vegetable Bao

1. Bring a pot of water to a boil and set up an ice bath by filling a bowl with ice water.
2. Blanch bok choy by submerging in boiling water for approximately 15 seconds. Immediately transfer to the ice bath to cool.

3. Squeeze water out of the bok choy and chop finely. Transfer to a large mixing bowl.
4. Heat two tablespoons of vegetable oil in a pan or wok.
5. Finely mince shiitake mushrooms. When the oil is shimmering, add the mushrooms to the pan and fry for 3-4 minutes until fragrant. Set aside to cool.
6. Finely chop the scallions and dried bean curd.
7. Drain any remaining water from the bok choy bowl. Add chopped scallions, bean curd, and cooled mushrooms.
8. Add soy sauce, sesame oil, sugar, 1 tablespoon vegetable oil, and salt and pepper to the filling mixture.
 - a. NOTE: Since everything in the filling has been cooked, it is safe to taste the seasoned mixture and adjust seasonings to your liking.

Cooking the vegetable bao

9. Roll out dough balls into 4" rounds.
10. Use approximately 2 tablespoons of filling for each bao-- feel free to add more/less depending on what allows you to seal the bao.
11. Seal the bao by bringing the edges of the dough together at the top.
12. Place finished bao onto parchment paper and rest in a steamer for 20 minutes. Steamer should NOT be on.
13. After 20 minutes, bring water to a boil under the steamer.
14. Steam for 10 minutes. Leave covered for an additional 5 minutes to prevent falling.