

JANICE WONG AND MA JIAN JUN

DIM SUM

A Flour-forward Approach to Traditional Favorites
and Contemporary Creations

GATEHOUSE

I believe in sharing.



Sharing is the very core of the dim sum experience. More than just a series of small dishes served with tea and shared around the table, dim sum is a feast shared all around the world in today's global society.

Being Chinese—and from a Cantonese family, even more so—these delicious nibbles have always been a part of my life and my family's. Dim sum is an assemblage of everyday ingredients manipulated through sophisticated techniques and then steamed, seared, braised, boiled, baked or fried to perfection. I am fascinated by the countless varieties of dim sum dishes, the sheer number of variations born from a single dough, and the harmony of flavors found in one perfect bite.

After eating dim sum my entire life, I realized four years ago while at Arzak that I really didn't know the first thing about how to make it.

I decided to examine it a bit more closely, exploring ways to reinvent dim sum dishes with modern ingredients, knowledge, and flavors. I started with an introspection of my roots and culture. Not being an expert in cooking dim sum myself, I sought out classically trained Chef Ma Jian Jun, who cooks dim sum on a daily basis.

It was the flour that got me hooked. I was intrigued by the different types of flour used in making dim sum and how playing with the proportions of these flours creates entirely different doughs from which to form everything from dumplings to buns to pastries. Especially exciting were the exploding nest dumplings and steamed transparent skins.

Meeting Chef Ma gave me a new perspective on these familiar favorites. I realized that with Chef Ma's flawless dim sum techniques, I had a foundation and springboard for creating experimental dim sum dishes. Together, we have approached dim sum making with an entirely different thought process.

Dim sum convention pairs certain fillings with particular skins. After experimenting with the sliding scale of flours, we were inspired to break tradition and come up with new pairings to create an even wider array of contemporary dim sum creations.

We wanted to create a book that is a clear guide to the beautiful, edible art and science of dim sum, the result of months of filling, pleating, folding, twisting and turning. Beyond that, I hope that this book will ultimately challenge and change conventional perspectives on dim sum, and inspire you to make your own innovative versions of these dishes at home. Chef Ma and I are delighted to share our recipes and our insights with you.

Wishing you a joyful exploration.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Janice Wong', is positioned above the name.

CHEF JANICE WONG



Foreword by Chef Janice Wong	2-3
About Dim Sum	8-9
On Flour	10-17
DUMPLINGS	18-73
Crystal Skin	20-21
Shrimp Dumplings	22-23
Salmon Dumplings	22-23
Daikon and Lettuce Freeform Dumplings	24
Eggplant Dumplings	25
Scallop Dumplings	26
Tofu and Seaweed Dumplings	27
Dill Turbot Dumplings	28
Elastic Skin	29
Pork and Shrimp Dumplings	30
Chicken and Shrimp Charcoal Dumplings	31
Pork Dumplings with Garlic Sesame Sauce	32
Purple Potato Dumplings	33
Yuzu Cheese and Egg Yolk Dumplings	34-35
Chewy Skin	36-37
Pork and Preserved Turnip Dumplings	38-39
Matte Skin	40-41
Celery and Tomato Dumplings	42-43
Chili Crab Dumplings	42-43
Pork and Chive Dumplings	44-45
Fish Maw and Crab Meat Dumplings in Broth	46-47
Bean Curd Skin	48
Bean Curd Rolls with Fish Maw	49
Bean Curd Rolls with Shrimp	50
Bean Curd Rolls with Asparagus	51
Stretchable Skin	54-55
Pork Dumplings	56-57
Truffled Cheese Dumplings	58
Foie Gras and Cognac Dumplings	59
Crab Dumplings	59

Transparent Skin	60-61
Carrot Dumplings	62
Beetroot Dumplings	63
Sticky Skin	64
Chewy Five-spice Dumplings	65
Nest Dumplings	66-73
Salted Egg Nests / Basic Nest Dough	68
Durian Nests	69
Anchovy Scallop Nests	70-71
Passion Fruit “Jellyfish” Nests	72-73
BUNS	74-95
Longevity Buns with Lotus Seed Paste	76
Plain Steamed Buns	77
Flower Buns	78-79
Steamed Buns with Confit Pork Neck or Miso-braised Beef Cheek	80-81
Taro Buns	82
Chinese Sausage Buns	83
Custard Buns	84
Salted Eggs	85
Salted Egg Custard Buns	86-87
Pork and Vegetable Buns	88-89
BBQ Pork Buns	90-93
Minced Meat Buns	94-95
NOT FLOUR	96-129
Black Cloud Ear Fungus with Peas and Roe	98-99
Tofu with Century Egg	100-101
Spinach Egg Tofu	102-103
Stir-fried Eggplant	104
Porridge	105
Jellyfish Salad	106-107
Crab with Mentaiko and Savory Cracker	108
Crispy Shrimp Balls in Vermicelli	109
Crispy Squid with Mentaiko Mayonnaise	110
Squid with Satay Sauce	111
Barbecued Pork	112

Roasted Pork Belly with Crispy Skin	113
Glutinous Rice Dumplings with Five-spice Pork and Salted Egg	114-115
Spare Ribs with Black Bean Sauce	116
Spare Ribs with Passion Fruit Sauce	117
White Chicken Feet in Vinegar	120-121
Braised Chicken Feet	122-123
Smooth Tripe with Chili and Ginger	124
Honeycomb Tripe with Ginger and Onion	125
Honeycomb Tripe with Yuzu	126
Beef Balls	127
Braised Beef Brisket	128-129
PASTRIES	130-161
Radish Cake	132
Yam Cake	133
Water Chestnut Cake	134
Steamed Cake	135
BBQ Pork Pastries	136-137
Stuffed Scallion Pancakes	138
Beef and Onion Cigars	139
Flaky Scallion Pancakes	140
Dough Fritters	141
Puff Balls	142-143
Pumpkin Puffs	144
Chocolate Peanut Butter Puffs	145
Chewy Puffed Pastry Squares	148-149
Egg Tarts	150-152
Goji Cheese Tarts	153
Red Bean Pancakes with Chocolate Sauce	154
Sweet Black Sesame Dumplings	155
Emperor’s Rolls with Sweet Red Bean or Truffled Chocolate	156-157
Snow Skin Popcorn Balls	160-161
Glossary	164-169
About the Chefs	174



A TASTE OF HISTORY

One cannot begin the story of dim sum without defining the phrase itself, which literally translates as “a little bit of heart” or “to touch the heart.” Dim sum is an assortment of Chinese dumplings, pastries and small dishes—from steamed or fried, to sweet or savory, to vegetarian or entirely carnivorous—accompanied by an endless flow of hot tea and lively conversation.

It is commonly believed that dim sum originated with the trade caravans along the Silk Road. Having found tea to be a digestive and restorative drink, small snacks of all sorts were served to weary travelers who stopped at teahouses and taverns to recharge for the journey ahead.

Although traditional dim sum is often considered the hallmark of Cantonese cuisine, today’s dim sum spreads actually include a vibrant mixture of treats from throughout the Middle Kingdom. There are over 2000 dim sum dishes that have been created since the 10th century—the variety is vast and vastly delicious. It’s no surprise then that dim sum has established itself as a staple of Chinese communities across the world.

ON FLOUR

Types of flour

In dim sum making, flour is more than just an ingredient—it is the basis of the entire cuisine and craft.

Flour is central to all the different variations of dim sum dumplings, buns and pastries. A single variety of flour can be used in a tremendous number of ways to create a range of textures, elasticities and tastes.

Each of the flours has different protein and gluten levels, which when combined, yield different types of dough, each geared towards a different function and end result.

The trademark snowy white dough and skins of dim sum pastries are achieved by using bleached flour. The names and characteristics of these flours may differ slightly depending on geography and manufacturer.

Wheat Flour

Also known as wheat starch, wheat flour is made from ground and processed wheat grains. The fine white powder is a basic ingredient for pastry creation all over the world. Also known as all-purpose flour or plain flour, this basic building block is ubiquitous in most dumpling recipes. Wheat flour dumpling dough turns translucent or even transparent upon steaming or boiling. When pan-fried or deep-fried, wheat flour pastries are exceptionally crisp and light.

GRADES OF WHEAT FLOUR

Wheat flour is sold in different grades. Each grade reflects the gluten content and protein content in the flour. A dough made with low-gluten flour is ideal for buns, medium-gluten flour is best for dumplings, and high-gluten flour should be used for bread. The lower the gluten content, the lighter and more delicate the resulting pastry. Even changing the gluten level by 1-2 percent can result in an extremely different end product.

LOW-GLUTEN FLOUR

Low-gluten flour is soft, finely milled flour that has a significantly low protein content, usually ranging from 6-9 percent. It is almost always smooth and velvety to the touch. Bleaching helps to toughen the protein, enabling it to hold more sugar and liquid without collapsing. Such flour is usually used in crafting buns, as the flour is strong enough to contain the delicious, rich fillings, yet still retain its soft, tender texture. Low-gluten flour is also widely used in making pastries. Types of low-gluten flours include cake flour, top flour, pastry flour, Hong Kong flour and Narcissus flour.

MEDIUM-GLUTEN FLOUR

Also known as medium-protein flour, all-purpose flour or plain flour, medium-gluten flour typically has a protein level of 10-11 percent, giving it exceptional durability while allowing it to retain elasticity and texture. As a general rule of thumb, this flour is used for dumplings, as the dough is soft and stretchable when steamed, but crispy and light when pan-fried or deep fried.

HIGH-GLUTEN FLOUR

Typically high-gluten flour contains 12-14 percent protein, rendering it harder and more absorptive than other flours. Also called hard flour or bread flour, high-gluten flour can absorb more water per volume than other flours. It is used to make crustier and more structured pastries such as breads, bagels, and pizzas. Its higher gluten content yields dough with a very high elasticity, resulting in pastries that are sturdier and chewier.

Glutinous Rice Flour

Fine but grainy, glutinous rice flour is made from milled short-grained sticky rice. This flour is perfect for savory dumplings, sweet glutinous rice balls, Emperor's rolls, and sticky rice cakes. The name is deceptive as glutinous rice flour is typically gluten-free. Glutinous refers to its texture, not the gluten content. Due to its high starch content, the flour is able to withstand heat and humidity, making it a popular binding agent. When compared to other doughs, dough made from glutinous rice flour is tough and amazingly durable.

Rice Flour

Fine, loose and surprisingly aromatic, this flour becomes opaque when combined with water and heated. Conventionally made from milled medium-grain or long-grain rice, rice flour is an excellent gluten-free substitute for wheat flour. Rice flour is the flour of choice to give structure and considerable bite to finished pastries. It is commonly used to whip up radish cakes, yam cakes, and rice rolls. Pastries made from rice flour are also famously light.

Cornstarch

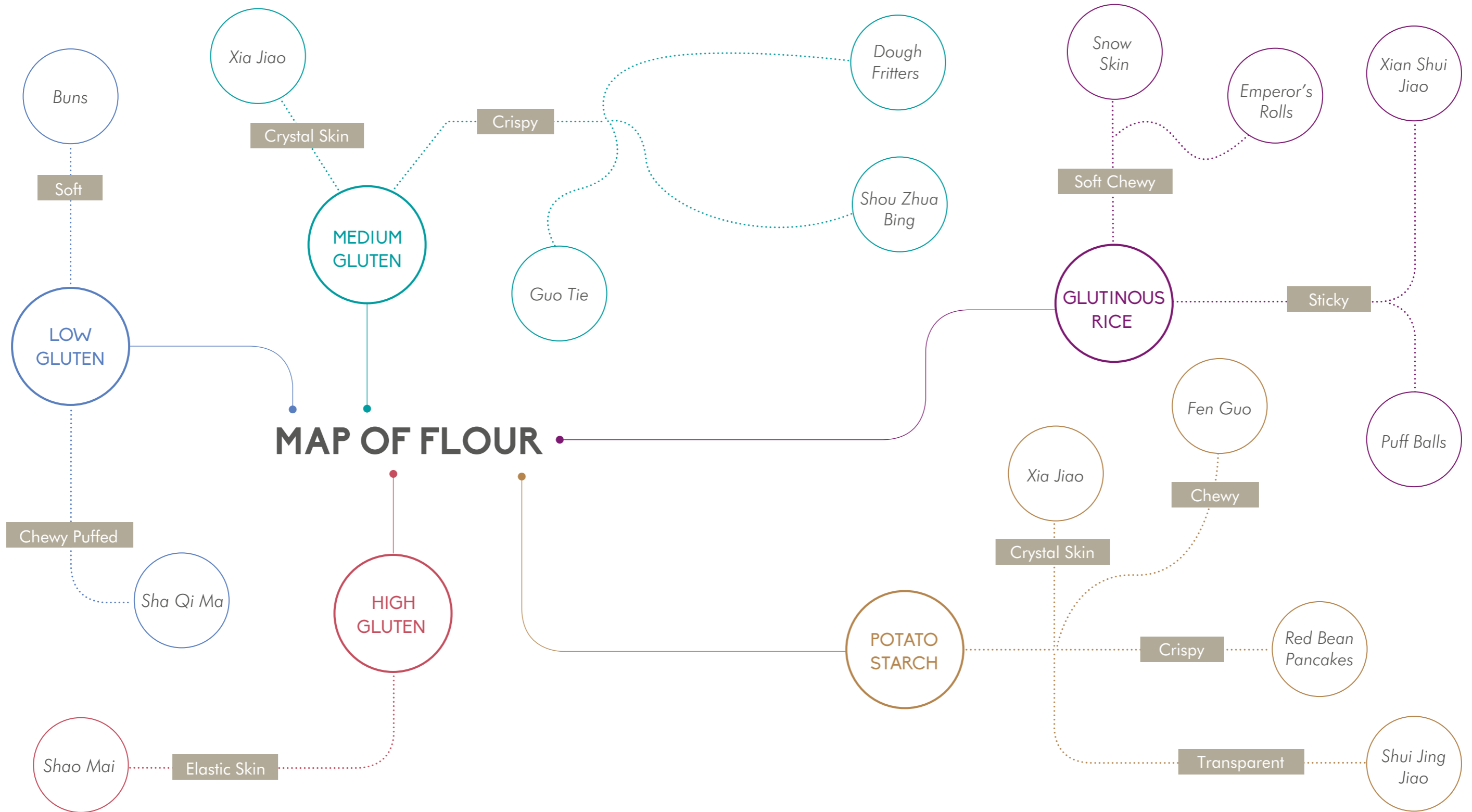
Super fine and silky to the touch, this flour is made from processed maize. Occasionally referred to as corn flour, it is particularly absorbent and is commonly used as a thickener for fillings, soups, and sauces. When cornstarch is used as a thickener, the resulting liquid is viscous but clear. It is also gluten-free and is used to bind and add body to the custard centers of pastries and buns.

Potato Starch

Peeled, dehydrated potatoes are milled into this fine flour that resembles wheat flour in terms of its appearance and feel. Similar to cornstarch, potato starch is great for thickening soups and sauces. These thickened sauces are thick and viscous but clear and shiny. Potato starch retains moisture well and produces soft, moist pastries. It is essential for making crystal dumpling skin and thickening savory fillings.

Mung Bean Flour

Mung bean flour is made from the modest mung bean, a small, green-skinned legume found in cuisines throughout Asia. The flour is a household staple for nutritious, allergy-free cooking. It is a particularly fine-grained starch used to create glass noodles or bean thread noodles which become translucent when cooked. Mung bean flour is used to make the popular mung bean cake that is consumed at traditional Chinese festivals, however it is not used in the recipes featured in this book.



DUMPLINGS

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Dumplings are de rigeur when it comes to Chinese cuisine, and especially so for dim sum. In their simplest form, dumplings are balls of cooked dough. The dough is often in the form of a delicate wrapper, enclosing a filling that is usually savory but sometimes sweet.

They may be cooked by steaming, boiling, pan frying or deep frying, and can be eaten in a multitude of ways—by themselves, in soups or stews, with gravy, chili or a dipping sauce.

The appearance of a dumpling's skin is as important as its dough and filling—the shape, size, and number of a dumpling's folds are the key to distinguishing what's inside. For example, the famous soup dumpling, or *xiao long bao*, has exactly 18 minute folds around its crown. Sturdier, more humble stuffed dumplings can be simply pressed together or have just a few folds along their crimped edges.

There is only one way to perfect the different shapes and folds when learning to make dumplings... practice!



CRYSTAL SKIN

XIA JIAO PI

Makes 20 dumplings

DOUGH

44g	medium-gluten wheat flour
51g	potato starch
103ml	boiling water
2g	salt
2g	shortening

Sift flour and 11g potato starch together, then add salt.

Pour boiling water into the dry ingredients, using a small spatula to mix into a dough.

Turn dough out onto table and cool to room temperature. Add 40g of potato starch and knead well.

Add shortening and knead again until smooth.

Roll dough out into a long rope about 2cm in diameter. Cut or break into 8g portions.

Press the individual portions with the middle of your palm to flatten.

Using a greased cleaver and a wooden board, press the flat side of the cleaver evenly down on dough to flatten it as much as possible.

Cover with cling wrap until ready to fill.



SHRIMP AND SALMON DUMPLINGS

XIA JIAO

SAN WEN YU JIAO



Makes 20 dumplings

DOUGH

1 recipe Crystal Skin, page 20

SHRIMP FILLING

300g	shrimp, shells and veins removed
30g	pork lard, sliced
30g	bamboo shoot, sliced
4g	salt
6g	monosodium glutamate
8g	sugar
4g	cornstarch
1ml	sesame oil
2ml	alkaline water

Place 2g salt, alkaline water, 4g sugar and shrimp in a medium bowl and marinate for 20 minutes.

Wash the marinade off with slowly running water for 10 minutes or until the prawns no longer feel sticky to touch. Drain dry in a sieve.

Cook the pork lard and bamboo shoots in boiling water. Drain dry in a sieve.

Put the shrimp, remaining salt, seasoning powder, sugar and cornstarch into a food processor and process for 3 minutes on medium speed. Add the lard, sesame oil and bamboo shoots, then process for another 2 minutes.

Press 20g of filling into the middle of each wrapper and seal the dumpling with small folds.

Steam for 4 minutes at 100°C.

Makes 20 dumplings

DOUGH

1 recipe Crystal Skin, page 20

SALMON FILLING

300g	salmon, 0.5cm dice
90g	celery, micro dice
10ml	soy sauce
2g	salt

Season salmon and celery with soy sauce and salt, mix to combine.

Press 20g of filling into the middle of each wrapper and seal the dumpling with small folds.

Steam for 4 minutes at 100°C.



DAIKON AND LETTUCE FREEFORM DUMPLINGS

SHENG CAI LUO BO JIAO

Makes 20 dumplings

DOUGH

1 recipe Crystal Skin, page 20
10ml beetroot juice

FILLING

200g daikon, peeled and
julienned to 10cm long and
0.3cm thick
200g lettuce stem or core,
julienned to 10cm long and
0.3cm thick
10ml lemon juice
10ml soy sauce
2g salt

Season daikon with salt and let it sweat moisture for 10 minutes, pat dry.

Mix together soy sauce and lemon juice, add daikon and lettuce. Let marinate for 2 minutes.

Divide dough in two. Tint one half red with beetroot juice.

Roll both the red and white dough out into separate flat sheets.

Cut dough into strips and line up alternating red and white strips next to each other. Roll dough again so that strips are now fused together into one striped dough.

Portion into 5cm x 5cm squares for wrapping.

Wrap 3 pieces of lettuce stem and 3 pieces of daikon in each 8g wrapper.

Steam for 4 minutes at 100°C.



EGGPLANT DUMPLINGS

QIE ZI JIAO

Makes 20 dumplings

DOUGH

1 recipe Crystal Skin, page 20

FILLING

3-4 small Japanese eggplants,
peeled and cut into 20 discs
1.5cm thick
10g salt
40g sugar
24g chili powder
24g garlic powder
200ml vegetable oil for frying

Combine salt, sugar, chili powder and garlic powder in a small bowl.

Heat oil in wok over high heat. Deep fry eggplant until golden brown, tap dry on paper towels then season with chili mixture.

Divide dough in four. Tint one piece with each of the following colors—red, blue, green and yellow.

Roll each individual colored dough out into separate flat sheets.

Cut dough into strips and line up alternating colors next to each other. Roll dough again so that strips are now fused together into one striped dough.

Portion into 5cm x 5cm squares for wrapping.

Wrap 1 piece of fried eggplant in each 8g striped wrapper.

Steam for 4 minutes at 100°C.



SCALLOP DUMPLINGS

SHAN BEI JIAO

Makes 20 dumplings

DOUGH

1 recipe Crystal Skin, page 20

BASIL OIL

50g basil leaves
100ml grape seed oil

Blanch basil leaves in boiling water for 1 minute then shock in an ice water bath and pat dry with towels.

Puree leaves and oil in blender on maximum speed for 2 minutes.

Strain through fine sieve and set aside.

FILLING

250g fresh scallop, diced
7g salt
28g cornstarch
180g celery, micro dice
15ml basil oil

Combine all ingredients together in a medium bowl and stir to mix well.

Press 16g of filling into the middle of each wrapper and seal the dumpling with small folds.

Steam for 4 minutes at 100°C.

TOFU AND SEAWEED DUMPLINGS

DOU FU HAI CAO JIAO

Makes 20 dumplings

DOUGH

1 recipe Crystal Skin, page 20

SEAWEED REDUCTION

50g dried kelp, soaked then blanched and diced
50ml light soy sauce
50ml rice vinegar
50g sugar

Put all ingredients into a small saucepan and bring to a boil.

Turn down heat to low and continue to reduce until a thick sauce forms.

FILLING

320g firm tofu, diced
80g seaweed reduction
20g seaweed powder, optional
vegetable oil for deep frying

Combine tofu and seaweed reduction. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours.

Press 20g of filling into the middle of each wrapper and seal the dumpling with small folds.

Heat oil and deep fry at 180°C until golden brown.

Dust with seaweed powder to garnish.

DILL TURBOT DUMPLINGS

SHI LUO DA LING PING JIAO

Makes 20 dumplings

DOUGH

1 recipe Crystal Skin, page 20

FILLING

265g	turbot flesh, roughly chopped
105g	potato, boiled and roughly mashed with a fork
40ml	olive oil
6g	salt
2 sprigs	fresh dill

Combine turbot flesh, mashed potatoes, olive oil and salt in a bowl.

Roll out dough wrappers until slightly flattened, arrange 4-5 small fronds of dill nicely on the wrapper and then roll out a few more times to press dill into the skin.

Press 20g of filling into the middle of each wrapper and seal the dumpling with small folds.

Steam for 4 minutes at 100°C.



ELASTIC SKIN

SHAO MAI PI

Makes 20 dumplings

DOUGH

72g	high-gluten wheat flour
20g	eggs
1g	salt
14ml	water
1-2 drops	yellow food coloring

Combine all the ingredients in a mixer bowl fitted with paddle attachment. Mix on medium until a uniform dough forms.

Turn out onto table and roll out the dough as thinly as possible with a wooden rolling pin.

Using a round cutter 8cm in diameter, cut as many wrappers as possible from the dough. Each wrapper should weigh 4g.

Take a wooden rolling pin and roll the edges of each wrapper slightly thinner than the center.

Cover with cling wrap until ready to fill.

Tip: Leaving the center of the wrappers slightly thicker than the edges ensures the dough will hold the filling better and the sides will fold more easily.

PORK AND SHRIMP DUMPLINGS

SHAO MAI

Makes 20 dumplings

DOUGH

1 recipe Elastic Skin, page 29

FILLING

200g	pork loin, diced
188g	shrimp, shells and veins removed, diced
48g	pork lard, finely diced
48g	dried mushroom, rehydrated in hot water, squeezed dry and diced
4g	salt
7g	chicken seasoning powder or bouillon powder
12g	sugar
5g	cornstarch
1g	white pepper
3ml	shallot oil
2ml	sesame oil
12g	water chestnut, chopped
2ml	alkaline water
40g	flying fish roe, tobiko, optional

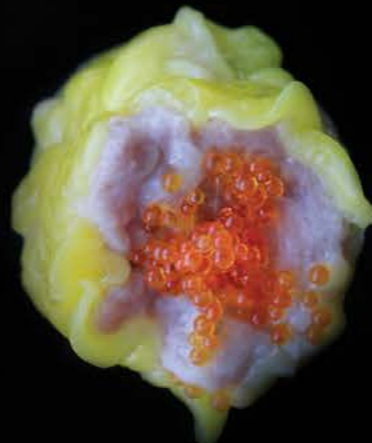
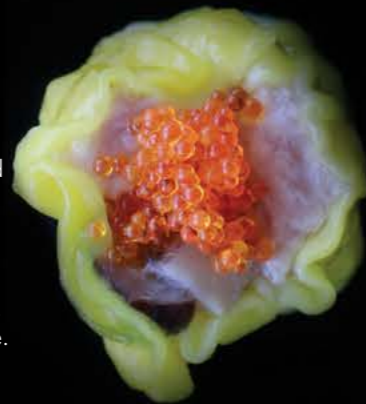
Add 2g salt, sugar and alkaline water to the shrimp and let marinate for 15 minutes. Wash under cool running water and strain well in a sieve.

Put the pork loin, shrimp and remaining salt into a food processor and process for 3 minutes on medium speed. Add the remaining ingredients and mix well into a paste.

Holding one wrapper in your hand, press 20g of filling into the middle. The dough will stretch to accommodate the filling.

Once the wrapper is filled to the top, use your thumb and index finger to make a small indent 1 cm below the surface of dough to create the dumpling's signature cylindrical shape.

Steam for 4 minutes at 100°C and top with roe.



CHICKEN AND SHRIMP CHARCOAL DUMPLINGS

XIAN XIA JI ROU MU TAN JIAO

Makes 20 dumplings

DOUGH

1 recipe Elastic Skin, page 29

2g bamboo charcoal powder, for color

FILLING

190g	shrimp, shells and veins removed, diced
150g	chicken, diced
55g	pork loin, diced
60g	bamboo shoots, diced
6g	salt
13g	chicken seasoning powder or bouillon powder
12g	sugar
1g	white pepper
5g	potato starch
2ml	sesame oil
3ml	scallion oil

Place the pork loin, shrimp and remaining salt into a food processor and process for 3 minutes on medium speed. Add the remaining ingredients and mix well into a paste.

Holding one wrapper in your hand, press 20g of filling into the middle. The dough will stretch to accommodate the filling.

Once the wrapper is filled to the top, use your thumb and index finger to make a small indent 1 cm below the surface of dough to create the dumpling's signature cylindrical shape.

Steam for 4 minutes at 100°C.



PORK DUMPLINGS WITH GARLIC SESAME SAUCE

HONG YOU CHAO SHOU



Makes 20 dumplings

DOUGH

1 recipe *Elastic Skin, page 29, cut into 8cm x 8cm squares instead of rounds*

FILLING

1 recipe *Pork and Shrimp Filling, page 30*

SAUCE

20ml	dark soy sauce
24ml	chili oil
140ml	chicken stock
12ml	oyster sauce
6g	salt
10g	sugar
12g	garlic, minced and fried
12g	white sesame seeds, toasted

Combine all sauce ingredients in a medium bowl and mix well.

Wrap 20g of filling in the middle of the squares.

Holding one wrapper in your hand, press 20g of filling into the middle. Seal the dumpling with big folds using your thumb and index finger.

Cook in boiling water until they float to the surface. Drain well in a sieve.

Serve each portion of 4 dumplings with 10ml of sauce.



PURPLE POTATO DUMPLINGS

ZI SHU JIAO



Makes 20 dumplings

DOUGH

1 recipe *Elastic Skin, page 29*

FILLING

200g	purple potato, peeled and cut into 2cm dice
40ml	whole milk
67g	white chocolate, chopped
2g	salt

In a pot of boiling water, cook diced purple potato until soft.

Drain well in a sieve and return to the pot with the rest of the ingredients.

Blend mixture in a food processor until smooth.

Wrap 15g of filling with 4g of dough.

Steam for 4 minutes at 100°C.



YUZU CHEESE AND EGG YOLK DUMPLINGS

YOU ZI NAI LAO DAN HUANG JIAO



Makes 20 dumplings

DOUGH

2 recipes *Elastic Skin, page 29*

FILLING

200ml cream
30ml yuzu or lemon juice
20 individual egg yolks
water for sealing edges

Combine cream and citrus juice in a glass baking dish.

Cook in oven at 40°C for 30 minutes.

Remove from oven and drain through a cheese cloth until it reaches the consistency of cream cheese.

Take two 8cm diameter wrappers. Leaving a small border around the perimeter, spread a thin layer of yuzu cheese onto one wrapper and place a raw egg yolk in the center of the filling.

Dab the perimeter of the bottom wrapper with water, then cover with the other wrapper.

Cook for 2 minutes in boiling water, gently scoop out with a slotted spoon being careful not to rupture the liquid center.

CHEWY SKIN

FEN GUO PI

Makes 20 dumplings

DOUGH

40g	potato starch
17g	medium-gluten wheat flour
84ml	hot water
4g	shortening
2g	salt

In a medium bowl, stir to combine potato starch and flour.

Add boiling water and knead well to form a dough.

Allow dough to cool to room temperature, then knead in the shortening and salt.

Roll out dough into a long rope about 2cm in diameter. Cut or break into 7g portions.

Cover with cling wrap until ready to fill.

PORK AND PRESERVED TURNIP DUMPLINGS

ZHU ROU WU JING FEN GUO



Makes 20 dumplings

DOUGH

1 recipe Chewy Skin, page 36

FILLING

67g pork belly, diced
10g dried mushroom, rehydrated in hot water, squeezed dry and diced
16g chestnut, chopped
16g dried shrimp
33g Chinese chives, chopped
25g fried peanuts without skins, chopped
12g salt
29g sugar
11ml light soy sauce
3ml dark soy sauce
33ml water
12g preserved turnip, chopped
8g medium-gluten wheat flour
1 hard boiled egg, chopped
1g five-spice powder
10ml vegetable oil for frying

Heat oil in wok over high flame. Add all the ingredients except chives, hard-boiled egg, five-spice powder and peanuts. Stir fry for 2-3 minutes.

Sprinkle wheat flour over the mixture then stir until liquid thickens.

Add five-spice powder and stir well, set aside to cool.

Once cooled, stir in peanuts, chives and egg into the filling.

Flatten each portion of dough as much as possible with your hands before rolling out thinly with a wooden rolling pin.

Place 16g of filling into the middle of the dough. Fold in half and seal by pinching folds with your thumb and index finger.

Steam for 4 minutes at 100°C.

