

Homemade Pork Belly Bao Buns

Serving Size: 2-4

INGREDIENTS:

Gua Bao Bun Dough:

- 4 cups (600g) all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons (7g) instant yeast
- 2 teaspoons (6g) baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon (3g) salt
- 3 tablespoons (40g) Granulated sugar
- 1.5 cups or (360ml) whole milk

INSTRUCTIONS:

Dough Method:

1. Mix in instant yeast and granulated sugar with whole milk that's around 95F. Let sit for 5 minutes.
2. In a large bowl, mix all dry ingredients together.
3. Add milk-yeast mixture to the dry ingredients and mix until a rough dough forms. Knead for 3 minutes.
4. Cover with plastic wrap and let rest for 10 minutes. Remove from the plastic wrap and knead for another 1 minute or so. Gently roll into a ball and place in a greased bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and let it rise for 1 hour at room temperature.
5. Cut 20 pieces of parchment paper in the shape of a square.
6. Once the dough has risen, punch out all the air and cut it into 15-20 pieces (50-70 g). Form into light balls and cover with a damp towel.
7. Shape on a lightly floured work surface by rolling out into 2 ¼-inch x 4 ½-inch and ¼-inch thick pieces.
8. Brush one side lightly with oil and fold over taco-style and place on a piece of parchment.
9. Place on a baking sheet and cover with a greased plastic wrap. Proof for 15 minutes at room temperature.
10. To steam, set a steam basket over a pot of gently simmering water and transfer the bao buns on the parchment paper into the steamer. Cover and let steam for 10 minutes. After 10 minutes, cut the heat but leave the lid on and let sit in the steamer for 4 more minutes.
11. Place on a baking sheet or plate covered with plastic wrap to prevent drying.

Smoked Pork Belly:

- 4-5 pound pork belly skin removed
- 2 teaspoons (2g) Sichuan peppercorns
- 4 star anise
- 2 teaspoons (4g) ground cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons 4g ground fennel seeds
- 1/4 cup (64g) palm sugar
- 2.5 tablespoons 22g kosher salt
- 1/3 cup dark 95g soy sauce
- 1/2 cup 103g white distilled vinegar
- 1/2 cup 110g granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup 62g gochujang
- 1/4 cup 60g sambal oelek
- 3 tablespoons (40g) honey
- 2 tbsp corn starch
- 2 tbsp water
- fresh green onion
- fried shallot

Smoked Pork Belly Method:

1. For the spice mix, start by crushing the palm sugar real fine and place it into a blender along with star anise, Sichuan peppercorns, fennel seeds and blend into a powder. Add to a medium bowl with ground cinnamon and kosher salt. Whisk together.
2. Cut pork belly into rectangular pieces, about 2-3.5-inches wide. Season generously with the spice mixture. Place on a wire rack.
3. Place into a 275F smoker and smoke for 3-4 hours.
4. For the sauce, combine white distilled vinegar, dark soy sauce, granulated sugar, sambal oelek, gochujang, honey and mix together set over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil and reduce the heat to low and a simmer. Let it reduce for 2 minutes.
5. Separately, whisk together cornstarch and water. Slowly add slurry into the sauce as needed until the desired consistency.
6. Remove pork belly from the smoker and let rest for 15 minutes. Using a serrated knife, slice into separate pieces.
7. Add pork belly slice to a bao bun, add a generous coat of sauce, and top with dried shallots and thinly sliced onions.