

Traditional Beijing Doornail Dumplings



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4.5 from 4 votes

Ingredients

Ingredients for the flavorful sauce

- 1 tbsp of oil
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 2 tbsp of soy bean paste
- 1/2 tbsp of oyster sauce
- 1/2 tbsp of soy sauce
- 1 tsp of dark soy sauce
- 1/2 tsp of 5 spice powder
- white pepper powder to taste
- 2 tbsp of water

Ingredients for the filling

- 400 grams of ground beef at least 15% fat
- Aromatic water 2 pieces of garlic + 2 pieces of ginger + 1 tsp of sichuan peppercorn + 1/4 cup of water, blend and strain
- The flavorful sauce that we made
- 1 cup of diced scallion
- 1 egg
- 1 tbsp of sesame oil

Ingredients for the skin

- 350 grams of all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp of salt
- 110 grams of hot water
- 110 grams of cold water
- 2 tsp of olive oil to apply on the surface of the dough

Instructions

1. First, let's make a flavorful sauce. You will need 2 tbsp of fermented soybean paste, 1/2 tbsp of oyster sauce, 1/2 tbsp of light soy sauce, a drizzle of dark soy sauce, 2 tbsp of water, some freshly ground white pepper, and some five spice powder. Mix everything together. The 5 spice powder likes to float on the top of the liquid. Takes a while to cooperate it well. Next, we are going to cook the sauce to get rid of the raw tart taste from the fermented soybean paste.

2. Add some oil in a sauce pot along with 2 cloves of garlic that I grated. Stir until fragrant. Then pour in the sauce. Cook this for about 4 minutes or until you can see the oil appearing on the edge. It is hard to show on the camera but if you turn off the heat and let it cool down a little bit, you can see there is a layer of grease floating on the top of the sauce. That means your sauce is good.
3. Set it aside and let's make aromatic water. You will need 4 slices of ginger, 2 cloves of garlic and 1/2 tbsp of Sichuan peppercorn. This is the secret ingredient that makes your guests say: this is delicious but I can't tell what's in there. Add 1/4 cup of water and finely blend them together. Longtime subscribers probably know that I use this aromatic water often in all kinds of fillings. It adds lots of moisture and fragrance to the meat. Makes your dumpling really juicy and delicious. Let it go through a sieve to get rid of the soiled part.
4. Set it aside and we can put all the filling ingredients together: 400 grams of ground beef. I will suggest using 15% fat. A little extra grease makes the dumpling more flavorful. Follow up with the aromatic water and crack in 1 egg. Pour in the sauce that we made, and drizzle in a tbsp of sesame oil. Mix the filling within one direction for a few minutes or until you see some strength appearing. Set it in the fridge and let's make the wrapper.
5. Like all kinds of dumpling skins, we gonna start with some high protein content flour. Bread flour is a good choice. Add 1/2 tsp of salt. Pour in 110 grams of boiling hot water in batches. Hot water will denature the protein of the flour which provides you a really smooth and elastic tough. After that, we will pour in 110 grams of room temperature water in batches as well. Using half hot and half cold water to make the dough is a common technique in China which we call it 半烫面. It makes your dough really soft but also stretchy at the same time. It is good for making pan-fried dumplings. Then start gathering all the flour together. Make it into a dough. It is still pretty warm so the dough might be sticky. Doesn't need to roll it to super smooth now. Cover it and let it sit for 30 minutes. It will be much softer and less sticky. Put it on a working surface and Knead it for 5 minutes. You will get smooth shiny looking dough. Put the dough back in the bowl. Drizzle in 2 tsp of olive oil. Then apply the oil all over the surface. Cover it. Let it rest for 1 hour.
6. 1 hour later, take the dough out. You can feel that the texture of the dough is changed. Really pliable. Pull it open from the middle. Stretch it to make a big ring. Cut one side open, then you have a long log. Dust more flour and roll it even. The amount I gave is enough to make 12 dumplings so divide it into 12 even pieces. Dust more flour so they don't stick to each other. Flatten them into these little pancakes. Cover the pancakes with plastic wrap so they get dry while you are working with it.

7. We are almost ready to wrap the dumplings. Take the filling out of the fridge. There is one more ingredient we need to add - that will be some finely diced big scallions. I believe this is what they call leek in English. We call it da cong or jing cong in Chinese, which means big scallion or Beijing scallion. They are quite small, so we gonna use 3 pieces. Discard the end of it and slice the scallion in half, then quarter it. In this way, you can dice it finely. Of course, you can use regular spring onion. But since this is called Beijing scallion, why not, sounds more authentic. The reason we add it to the filling the last is that we don't want to lose the freshness. I like to roughly divide it into 4 large batches. That way I can eyeball 1/3 of each batch while wrapping the dumpling. So you won't have uneven buns.
8. Take one piece of the dough pancake. Coat it with a little bit flour because this dough has 60% of moisture. It will likely become sticky when you are working with it. Roll it flat. Then lift up one side of the sheet. Use the rolling pin to roll the edge all the way around to thin it a little bit. The size is about 5 inches across. Put some filling in the middle. Wrap it like how you wrap a Chinese steamed bun. Making pleats all the way around. Make sure to pinch the middle to close it because you don't want a leaking dumpling. I like to put the bun on the counter and shape it a little bit so it will be perfectly round. Do the same thing to finish the rest.
9. Next, we gonna pan fry it. You want to use a heavy duty cast iron skillet because it heats the food evenly. Add a generals amount of oil to cover the bottom of the pan. Don't need to wait for the oil to get hot. Just add in the dumplings. Leave some space between them. Cover it so the steam can also cook the top of the dumplings. Make sure you use low heat. This beef pancake is really thick. If you cook it on high heat, the skin will be burned before the inside gets cooked. It will probably take about 8 minutes on each side. The skin is vulnerable, so be very careful when you flip it over. Or else you might break it and then you lost the juice.
10. You might need to flip it a few times to get an even golden brown color. Take them out and you are ready to serve. Enjoy!