

## Chinese Dumplings

There are two kinds of dumplings in China. The one like half moon is “Jiao Zi”. The one like ball is “Tang Yuan”. They are the most popular food during Spring Festival. Chinese make and eat “Jiao Zi” on the New Year’s eve and New Year’s day and eat “Tang Yuan” on the fifteenth day of the first month. That day is the last day of the Spring Festival. We call it “Lantern Festival”. The stuffing in Jiao Zi usually consists meat, vegetables, herbs and spices. The stuffing in Tang Yuan may be sesame or bean paste or different kinds of nuts. Most Tang Yuans are sweet. The dumpling we learn to make (half moon shape) is Jiao Zi.

If you want to make Jiao Zi at home during Chinese New Year but don’t have a recipe in hand; I have a simple recipe for you. You can buy wraps in a Chinese grocery store. Shanghai wrap is good. Here is the recipe.

### Materials:

1 lb. minced pork (or beef, chicken, turkey, shrimp)  
¼ lb Chinese cabbage (or spinach) chopped fine  
4 stalks of scallion, chopped fine  
1 oz. ginger, chopped fine  
1 tablespoon. cooking wine  
1 tablespoon. sesame oil  
½ teaspoon salt  
pepper

### Mix the stuffing:

Put the chopped cabbage in a large bowl. Mix well with 1 tb salt and let it stay for 10 minutes. Compress the cabbage and drain the liquid. Then mix well all the materials together. The stuffing then is ready.

### Make Jiao Zi:

Put a portion of stuffing in the center of a wrap and fold the dough over it. Pinch the edge together to seal the Jiao Zi. Put all the Jiao Zi on a tray or a board before cooking.

### Cook Jiao Zi:

Put a large pot with 10 cups of water on high heat and bring to boil. Gently put the Jiao Zi into the boiling water. The quantity of Jiao Zi that you boil at one time should let each Jiao Zi stay away from another. To avoid Jiao Zi to stick on the bottom of the pot you should use a ladle to push the water along the pot and make the Jiao Zi move. When it boils again add half cup of cold water. Stop pushing water only when the Jiao Zi starts to float. Add half cup of cold water again when it boils and the third time. Let the Jiao Zi boil for two more minutes after they all float to the surface. Use a strainer to get the Jiao Zi out of the water and serve. You can use the water to cook Jiao Zi again. You’d better change the water if some Jiao Zi broke and the water doesn’t look clear.

### Sauce:

You can find dumpling sauce in a Chinese grocery store. Or you can mix soy sauce, vinegar and sesame oil together to make your own dumpling sauce.

Every family in China has its own dumpling recipe. Many like to say: “My mother makes the best dumpling!” As a matter of fact Chinese creates dumpling recipes all the time. There were more than three hundred kinds of dumplings in a restaurant in Xi’an City, China. You can absolutely create you own recipe according to your taste.