

Pork Shaomai

Makes about 20 or more dumplings. Plan on making more. They go fast. You don't have to just use pork. You can make this with anything you like - shrimp, chicken, turkey, or just vegetables.

For the dumplings

10 ounces ground pork
2 cloves of finely chopped garlic
1 tablespoon of finely grated fresh ginger
1 teaspoon of sea salt
2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
1 tablespoon chopped fresh mint
won ton wrappers

For the dipping sauce

1 cup chicken stock
2 tablespoons soy sauce, to taste
2 tablespoons mirin
1 teaspoon sugar
1 scallion sliced

Directions

Make the sauce first, so it's ready when the dumplings are finished. Combine all ingredients in a sauce pan and bring to a boil. Cover, turn off the heat and allow to stay warm on the stovetop. Take out the scallions before serving. Taste it. Add more soy sauce if you want more depth, or more sugar if you want it sweeter.

To make the dumplings, combine the pork, garlic, ginger and salt in a food processor. Pulse it for about 30 seconds or until well blended. Transfer to a bowl, add the cilantro and mint. Wet your hands and mix it all together. Go ahead, get dirty. You know you want to.

Place a won ton wrapper on your work surface (cutting board, etc.) and keep the rest of the skins damp with a wet kitchen towel (clean of course). Place 1 tablespoon of the pork filling in the center of the won ton wrapper and brush the edges of the skin with water. Gather the edges around the filling and bring to the top of the filling mixture, making an open basket. Give it a little squeeze so the filling is exposed through the top. Set on a tray and cover with plastic wrap. Continue doing this for the remaining dumplings.

Get your water boiling in a wok or pot. Place the bamboo steamer over the water (or whatever you're using for a steamer). I suggest lining the steamer with a piece of raw cabbage or parchment paper, so the skins don't stick to the steamer. It's a real bummer when you go through this much work and the skins stick to a hot surface. Makes a real mess, and you have to start over.

Cover and steam the dumplings for 10 minutes. When the skins look translucent and they're very delicate to the touch, they're ready. Serve with the dipping sauce.