

Ingredients

For the Dough

- 2 cups (250g) all-purpose flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (180ml) warm water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt

For the Filling

- 300g ground chicken (thigh preferred for juiciness)
- 1 tbsp light soy sauce
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1 tbsp Shaoxing wine (or dry sherry)
- 1 tsp grated ginger
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp white pepper

For the Broth Gelatin (Aspic)

- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups chicken stock (rich and unsalted)
- 1 tbsp unflavored gelatin
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp sesame oil

For the Dipping Sauce

- 2 tbsp Chinese black vinegar
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- Fresh ginger, finely shredded

Step-by-Step Instructions

Prepare the Broth Gelatin

1. Warm chicken stock in a pan (do not boil).
2. Stir in soy sauce, sesame oil, and gelatin until fully dissolved.
3. Pour into a flat dish and refrigerate for at least 2 hours until firm.
4. Once set, cut into small cubes — this becomes the “soup” inside your dumplings.

Make the Dough

1. In a bowl, combine flour and salt.
2. Slowly add warm water while mixing until a rough dough forms.

3. Knead for 8–10 minutes until smooth and elastic.
4. Cover with a damp cloth and let it rest for 30 minutes.

Prepare the Filling

1. In a large bowl, mix ground chicken with soy sauce, wine, sesame oil, ginger, garlic, sugar, salt, and pepper.
2. Gently fold in the gelatin cubes. Keep refrigerated while shaping the wrappers.

Shape the Dumplings

1. Divide dough into small pieces (about 10g each).
2. Roll each piece into a thin circle, about 3 inches wide.
3. Place a spoonful of filling in the center.
4. Pleat the edges with small folds, pinching the top to seal tightly (aim for 16–18 pleats like Din Tai Fung).

Steam to Perfection

1. Line a bamboo steamer with parchment paper or cabbage leaves.
2. Arrange dumplings evenly, leaving space between each.
3. Steam over boiling water for 8–10 minutes until the wrappers turn translucent.

Chef's Tips / Restaurant Secrets

1. Use **thigh meat** instead of breast for a juicier filling.
2. Keep everything **chilled** — warm filling can tear wrappers.
3. For extra silkiness, use **low-gluten flour** and **filter your chicken stock** before making the aspic.
4. Always steam over **rolling water** to maintain consistent heat.

Chef's Tips / Restaurant Secrets

Freezing Tips (for Uncooked Dumplings)

- **Freeze Immediately:** Once you've shaped the dumplings, place them on a parchment-lined tray (without touching each other) and freeze for 2–3 hours until firm.
- **Transfer for Long-Term Storage:** Move them into an airtight container or freezer bag. Label with the date — they stay fresh for **up to 1 month**.
- **Avoid Condensation:** Never freeze warm or moist dumplings — moisture creates ice crystals that can break the wrapper during steaming.
- **Don't Stack Directly:** Use layers of parchment between dumplings if you're stacking them in a container.

Reheating Tips (for Best Taste & Texture)

- **Steam from Frozen:** There's no need to thaw. Place frozen dumplings directly in a lined bamboo steamer and steam for **12–13 minutes** over boiling water.
- **Never Microwave:** Microwaving will cause the soup to leak out and make wrappers chewy. Steaming keeps the dumpling's broth intact.
- **Reheat Cooked Dumplings Carefully:** If reheating leftovers, steam for 5–6 minutes — this revives moisture and taste without drying the filling.

- **Restore the Aroma:** A drop of sesame oil brushed on top before steaming brings back the restaurant-style fragrance.

Pro Tips to Keep the “Day-One” Flavor

1. Always use **airtight containers** to prevent freezer burn.
2. Place a **damp kitchen towel** over the steamer lid during reheating — it traps steam evenly.
3. Use **bamboo steamers** instead of metal ones for a softer, more authentic texture.
4. If serving later, **keep cooked dumplings covered** to prevent drying out.
5. Pair with freshly made **ginger-vinegar sauce** before serving — it enhances even reheated dumplings beautifully.