

Pot stickers

Each option makes 20+ pot stickers
and serves 4 as a starter

Preparation time: 2 hours

Cooking time: 10 mins



Ingredients:

20 thin, round pot sticker wrappers (or 60 if making all 3 fillings)

one or two eggs, lightly beaten

a few tbsps peanut oil

approx ¼ pint water or chicken stock

Filling option 1: Prawn

8 medium sized raw prawns

¼lb / c.115g minced pork (or less)

handful finely chopped coriander

1 spring onion, finely chopped

1 tsp minced garlic

6 tsps light soy sauce

1 tsp sesame oil

Filling option 2: Pork

¼lb / c.115g minced pork (or more)

handful finely chopped Chinese cabbage

1 spring onion, finely chopped

1 tsp minced garlic

1½ tsps minced fresh ginger

6 tsps light soy sauce

1 tsp very hot chilli oil

1 tsp sugar

Filling option 3: Beef

¼lb / c.115g minced beef (or more)

6 finely chopped water chestnuts and/or some finely chopped Chinese cabbage

1 spring onion, finely chopped

1 tsp minced garlic

2 tsps minced fresh ginger

3 tsps light soy sauce

3 tsps rice wine

1 tsp sesame oil

1 tsp very hot chilli oil



Quick and easy dipping sauce:

6 tbsps rice vinegar
6 tbsps dark soy sauce
green leaves of a spring onion, minced

Fancier dipping sauce:

5 tbsps rice vinegar	1 tbsp sesame oil
2 tbsps light soy sauce	1 tsp very hot chilli oil
3 tbsps dark soy sauce	2 tbsps minced ginger
3 tbsps warm water	2 tsps minced garlic
1½ tbsps sugar	thin ring slices of red chilli to garnish

Method:

1. Finely chop the vegetables and mince the garlic and ginger. Reserve some of the spring onion's green leaves for the sauce. Mix all the filling ingredients together thoroughly. Chill the mix in the fridge for 1 hour or more to let flavours infuse and combine.
2. Meanwhile make the dipping sauce by simply combining all the ingredients and mixing well. If making the fancy dipping sauce dissolve the sugar in the warm water before adding the other ingredients. Be sure to chop everything very finely. The sauce will keep in the fridge for at least a week.
3. To make the pot stickers, take a wrapper and brush around half of its rim with a little lightly beaten egg. Place a teaspoon-sized dollop of filling mix in the centre. Fold over the wrapper to make a semi-circle and seal the rim by squeezing tightly around the round edge. Then pinch little pleats into the rim to create the typical pot sticker shape. Pat the base of the pot sticker on the work surface and gently press down so that it plumps up and can stand upright (see pics). To prevent the pot stickers drying out while you make the entire batch keep them under a slightly damp tea-towel.
4. To cook the pot stickers, heat the oil in a frying pan. Place the pot stickers in side-by-side to fill the pan. (You may need to do several batches, depending on the size of your pan.) Fry for approx 3-4 mins so that the bases of the pot stickers go golden brown and crispy. Then add the water or stock to the pan – NB it will hiss violently! The liquid should only be approx 1cm deep. Immediately cover and cook on a medium heat for approx 3-4 mins so that they steam. Remove the lid and cook further until all the liquid has evaporated, approx 2-3 mins. Serve immediately with the dipping sauce.



There are hundreds of different recipes for pot stickers. The Japanese version tends to use thinner wrappers, which I prefer to the more doughy Chinese version. I was inspired to experiment with different fillings and wrappers by the delicious pot stickers you can get in little dim sum restaurants in San Francisco's Chinatown. I couldn't decide which of these three fillings I liked best, which is why you're getting them all.



Pot sticker facts:

- 'Pot sticker' is the North American name for the Asian dumpling called 'jiaozi' in China, 'gyoza' in Japan and 'mandu' in Korea.
- Traditionally *jiaozi* and other little steamed, fried and boiled dumplings are eaten to celebrate the Chinese New Year. The dumpling shape resembles a Chinese currency weight, so the dish symbolises good fortune for the new year. They are now commonly eaten throughout the year as street-food snacks, in dim sum restaurants and as a starter in Chinese and Japanese restaurants.
- The best ones I have found in San Francisco are made at Eiji, a tiny Japanese restaurant with a fantastic chef, fortunately less than a minute's walk from our apartment. Many restaurants do not make their own but buy them in frozen. Not so at Eiji's. The pork filling here is as close as I can get to the Eiji pot sticker.
- *Jiaozi* are said to have been invented around 1800 years ago by one of the greatest practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine - Zhang Zhongjing. Their name derives from the fact they were used to treat frost-bitten ears.

