

London Cookery School Dim Sum Class

Yum Cha :: Dim Sum

Tea is at the heart of dim sum. You will often just be given the house tea when you arrive but you can ask what teas they have and choose your own. Most offer at least 3 of the following.

- 1. Bo-lei**, popular with the Chinese for its ability to aid in the digestion of rich food. Strong fermented black tea from Yunnan.
- 2. Jasmine**, fragrant green tea. Light fermentation, before roasting and rolling.
- 3. Wulong**, also known as oolong. Part fermented, clear, fragrant like a green tea, strong and refreshing like a black tea.
- 4. Sol-mei**, a type of white tea. Gentle, unfermented tea, high in antioxidants
- 5. Tie-guan-yin**, another type of oolong.
- 6. Long Jeng**, (Dragon Well) A popular green tea.

Tip: To indicate you're ready for a refill, just leave the lid ajar

Etiquette: Pour your dining companion's (or elders) tea before your own.

Do Gather a few people to go Yum Cha with. It is a social experience and having a few companions along means you can try more things!

Do Try to pace yourself. Dim sum is all about variety and sharing and trying lots of different things. Try a new thing each time you go!

Don't Save dessert for last. There's no set order to eating dim sum, so go ahead and grab those egg tarts or sticky-rice sesame balls.

Do Stick to your culinary comfort zone if you're not adventurous enough for chicken feet, or tripe or any number of delicacies.

Don't point at people with chopsticks.

Don't Stick chopsticks into rice or other food so that it sticks up. It looks like incense offerings to the dead.

Do Use communal chopsticks for picking things up e.g. a shared noodle dish. Or use the other end of your chopsticks to handle communal food.

MAKING YOUR OWN DIM SUM

EQUIPMENT: Steamer, small diameter rolling pin, pastry cutting ring

LETS GET MAKING!

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MAKE DOUGH

This dough turns translucent when steamed and is used in lots of Dim Sum!

Dough

A	Wheat starch	50 g
	Tapioca flour	10 g
	Corn flour	10 g
	Sugar	1/2 teaspoon
	Salt	a pinch
B	Boiling water	60 ml (¼ cup)
C	Sunflower / Vegetable oil	1 teaspoon

Making the Dough

- 1 Put all the dry ingredients **(A)** into a small plastic bowl. Mix Well.
- 2 Add the boiling water **(B)** & mix rapidly with a spoon for 35 seconds (45 seconds max), scrape off spoon, then cover for 2 minutes to 'cook' the flour
- 3 Finally add 1 teaspoon sunflower or vegetable oil **(C)** and knead to form a soft dough (3 mins)
- 4 Divide the dough into 10 equal **marshmallow shapes**.

FILLINGS: Har Gow 蝦餃 (Prawn Dumplings)

These are dainty parcels of steamed prawn dumplings. It takes some practice to get the correct texture and thickness for the skin. It should be thin enough so that its not too chewy or doughy.

Ingredients:

Filling

A	Raw King Prawn (deveined and shelled) ..	80 gram
	Water Chestnut, finely chopped	1 teaspoon
	Ginger, finely chopped	a pinch
B	Salt	1/3 teaspoon
	Sugar	1 teaspoon
	Cornflour	1 flat teaspoon
	White Pepper (CAREFUL!)	a tiny pinch

FILLINGS: Chiu Chow Fun Gwor 潮州粉果 (Chiu Chow Steamed Dumplings)

Ingredients:

Filling

A	Minced Pork (20% fat if available)	120 gram
	Baking powder (CAREFUL!)	1/2 teaspoon
	Sugar	1 teaspoon
	Light Soy	2 teaspoon
	Sesame Oil	2 teaspoon
	White Pepper (CAREFUL!)	a pinch
B	Salted radish (finely chopped)	1 teaspoon
	Chinese Mushroom (finely chopped)	2 teaspoon

Method:

- 1 Make the mixtures for the 2 fillings above
- 2 **Flatten** each dough **marshmallow** with your palm and roll into 3 inch circles
- 3 Add a suitable amount of filling. Fold and pleat.
- 4 Add to steamer tray. Make sure there is 2 cm spacing between each dumpling.
- 5 Steam for 8 minutes if 1 tier, 10 minutes for 2 tiers, 12 minutes for 3 tiers.

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Sui Mai 燒賣 (Open top Pork Dumplings)

Sui Mai and Har Gow are the two most popular, most ordered Dim Sum in the World! The King and Queen of the Dim Sum World. The Dragon and Phoenix. The... etc

Ingredients:

Filling

Minced Pork (20% fat if available)	120 gram
Prawn (minced)	20 gram
Chinese Mushroom (finely chopped)	2 teaspoon
Baking powder (CAREFUL!)	1/2 teaspoon
Salt	1/2 teaspoon
Sugar	1/2 teaspoon
White Pepper (CAREFUL!)	a small pinch
Sunflower / Vegetable oil	1 teaspoon

Dough

Egg	1 medium
Salt	3/4 teaspoon
All-purpose flour	2 cups
Water	1/3 to 1/2 cup water, as needed
Extra flour as needed	

Method:

Making the Dough

- 1 Lightly beat the egg with the salt. Add 1/4 cup water.
- 2 Add flour to bowl. Make a well in the middle and add the egg and water mixture and mix.
- 3 Add as much of the remaining water as necessary to form a dough. Add more water gradually if the dough is too dry).
- 4 Knead until it forms a smooth dough. (about 5 mins)
- 5 Cover and let rest for 30 minutes. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Roll out until very thin, and cut into 3 1/2-inch circles.

Making the Sui Mai Paste

- 1 Combine all of the filling ingredients and mix well.
- 2 Form a circle with thumb and forefinger. Place Sui Mai skin on top of your circle, add filling into the centre, wet all around the edges with water and push down. As you push down, the sides of the pastry gather up and it makes a cup shape. Rotate and squeeze to compact the mixture down.
- 3 Steam for 8 minutes if 1 tier, 10 minutes for 2 tiers, 12 minutes for 3 tiers.

Additional Notes

Steaming: the timings above are for cooking times for 1 tier of Dim Sum. Turn on your steamer until water is boiling. Then add the Dim Sum to steam and start timing. Always check inside one to ensure it is fully cooked before eating. For several tiers of food, add extra time (approx 3 minutes extra for each extra tier)

Preparing for Eating Later On

If you would like to make Dim Sum and eat it later in the day, put them in a deep metal roasting pan making sure to add a thin layer of oil the bottom of the pan first so that it doesn't stick. Place all the made Dim Sum inside, and cover with a damp cloth (Make sure cloth only touches the edges of the pan and not the Dim Sum)

London Cookery School Dim Sum Class

Freezing

If you would like to freeze Dim Sum, again make sure to oil the bottom of the pan / tray first, then add the Dim Sum, then freeze. Once frozen (approx 45 mins) you can gather up all the dim Sum, put it in a bag and back in the freezer to save space.

Cooking From Frozen

When cooking from frozen, roughly double the cooking time. So give it at least 13-15 mins. If cooking in several stacked layers always check one from the top layer to see if it is cooked.

Your equipment will vary so the timings are for a guide only. The cardinal rule of cooking applies – cook till its cooked. Always check before serving. Once you have the timings worked out for your particular steamer, then you can use those timings for future cooking.

Additional Ingredients and Preparation

Preserved Salted Radish can be found in Chinese Supermarkets. give them a quick rinse before using. These are the magical ingredient that adds another dimension to dishes.

Dried Chinese Mushrooms need to be reconstituted before use. Give them a quick rinse first. Then place them in a saucepan and pour freshly boiled water over them. Keep them submerged with a plate or saucer. They will soak up quite a lot of water so ensure there is enough water. Leave them to soak for at least an hour before use. When ready for use, grab an handful of mushrooms and squeeze out the excess water. Then they can be chopped as needed. You can retain the mushroom water and use it as mushroom stock - for cooking with, or making into a broth for noodles. Stems are great to use but if a part if it is still hard after a long soak, cut the hard bits off and discard.

Dough and Wrappers are made quite a bit thinner in restaurants compared to the ones we made in class. For example, the amount of dough we made in our recipe would be enough to make about 20-24 Dim Sum. (In comparison we cut into 10 balls, but after using these up and the scraps we probably made about 14-16 Dim Sum)

Sui Mai Wrappers can be made following the recipe given but can be bought instead for convenience. If you can't find them, Wonton wrappers are similar so you can substitute these instead. Wonton wrappers are square so you can make them round by using your pastry cutter.

Wheat Starch is different to wheat flour or other types of strong flour. It is a high gluten flour which gives the dough extra **elasticity and stretch, whilst retaining strength. Please refer to photo of the packet of starch used in class.**

Food Processors can be used if you are making in quantity. It works especially well for the salted radish and Chinese mushrooms. Cut into smaller pieces first before processing. If there are some harder stems in the mushrooms, cut them a bit smaller and then process first for a while.

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London Cookery School Dim Sum Class

Then add the rest of the mushrooms and whizz again. Be extra gentle with the raw prawns and don't process it too much. It is good to have some bigger pieces and some smaller pieces. (More interesting texture when eating). Don't have it processed so much that it becomes a homogenous paste.

Vegetarian Fillings

There is a wide variety of vegetarian fillings that work really well with making Dim Sum. The key is getting a good combination of textures, flavours and colours. Many types of mushrooms are now commonly available in oriental supermarket that add so much flavour and texture.

Eg: Oyster, Shiitake, Enoki, Eryngii, Chestnut

Other key ingredients that work really well:

Chinese Leaf

Pak Choi

Chinese Chives

Bell Peppers

Grated Carrot

Asparagus

Green Beans

Deep Fried Tofu

Bamboo shoots

Baby Corn

Following on from recipes in the class, instead of adding the meat component, you can substitute with a mixture of different vegetarian ingredients.

Eg, instead of 120g of pork, it is good to choose 3 vegetarian ingredients and have 40g of each one.

A sample recipe would be:

40g chinese leaf, 40g asparagus, 40g of oyster mushrooms

NOTE: Adjust the amount of cornflour so that the mixture sticks nicely together.

NOTE: For vegetarian fillings, baking powder should be omitted.

Recommended Dim Sum Restaurants

Golden Dragon, London Chinatown

Leong's Legends, London Chinatown

Imperial China, London Chinatown

Joy King Lau, London Chinatown

Do use these as starting points, and do explore other Dim Sum restaurants as they have different chef specials and dishes that are definitely worth trying.

For example, we were particularly impressed with the Deep-Fried Soft-shell crab at Lido (London Chinatown)

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In Haozhan (Chinatown, opposite Loon Fung Supermarket), we really enjoyed the Supreme Har Gow (giant snooker ball sized prawn dumplings)



GLUTEN FREE DOUGH:

A	Rice Flour	35 g
	Tapioca flour	20 g
	Corn flour	20 g
	Sugar	1/2 teaspoon
	Salt	a pinch
B	Boiling water	60 ml (1/4 cup)
C	Sunflower / Vegetable oil	1 teaspoon

Making the Dough

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