

## Recipe for Chinese Dumplings

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First, you must understand that the dish referred to in the Chinese version of English as “dumplings” does not correspond to what is meant in American English as “dumplings” (lumps of bread mixed-in with the gravy). The closest non-Chinese equivalent that I know of is the Italian dish of ravioli. That is to say, Chinese dumplings consists of pasta stuffed with various things, and constitutes a meal in itself (usually eaten with vinegar, that is you pick up a dumpling, dip it in your bowl of vinegar, and then deposit said vinegar-laden dumpling into your mouth).

Of course, you can buy prepared dumplings that you just heat up, just as you can buy other prepared foods, such as pizza that you just heat and serve, but of course if you take the trouble to make it from scratch, it tastes much better. It is making Chinese dumplings from scratch that I am discussing herein.

I do not know the details of the preparation of Chinese dumplings, but I am willing to share the limited knowledge that I have of the procedure. It goes like this:

1. Start with a Chinese wife.
2. Request dumplings.
3. Wait an appropriate amount of time.
4. Voila, you have dumplings!

The truth is, that even with these simple instructions I am taking some literary license. Can you guess where? If you said “#2. Request dumplings”, you are right. I have never actually requested dumplings. Every now and then my wife automatically prepares dumplings. If I were to actually request dumplings, I’m not sure what would happen. Likely as not I would get a fish-eyed look that would eloquently cut through the language barrier with the message, “This is not the time for dumplings, you dork!” So, in the interest of absolutely honest reporting, my recipe for Chinese dumplings would go like this:

1. Start with a Chinese wife.
2. Wait an appropriate amount of time.
3. Voila, you have dumplings!

I should mention that the dumplings-making process seems to take about three hours, monopolizing the coffee table for the duration, and also means a tub of dough sitting on my desk for about the same amount of time. And flour gets spilled randomly about the abode.

I like dumplings, but I’m not ecstatic about it like the Chinese are, who I guess were raised on them, or at least consider them to be a premier dish. I remember being puzzled at first when my students would invite me to go with them to a restaurant to “eat dumplings”. Anyway, regular Chinese food, or at least what my wife regularly prepares for me, is just as good, and usually even better, as far as I am concerned, than dumplings.

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