

Yachae Mandu

Vegetable Dumplings

Like Japchae, vegetable dumplings really illustrate how to cook vegetables properly: Cooking each one separately is really important. Vegetables can contain a lot of water and for successful dumplings, you will want to cook some of the moisture out without over-cooking them, and the only way to make that happen is to prep them one at a time. To that end think of this recipe as a guide to make up your own fillings with whatever is on hand, in season, or about to turn in your fridge.

Note: To cook frozen dumplings, follow the same procedure above for fresh dumplings, but with 1/3 inch (8 mm) water so they steam a little longer and cook through.

Makes 50-60 dumplings

Grapeseed or olive oil, for pan-frying

1 large white onion, minced

¼ cup minced garlic

1/3 cup minced ginger

1 pound shiitake or crimini mushrooms, sliced

1 pound small green or savoy cabbage, shredded

1 medium carrot, shredded

2 cups kimchi (page 000), finely chopped and strained

1 pound garlic chives, chopped

1 bunch scallions, thinly sliced

3 cups cooked sweet potato noodles

1 16-ounce block firm tofu, drained and crumbled

¼ cup sesame oil

¼ cup cornstarch

1 tablespoon Kosher salt

Vegetable Dumpling Dipping Sauce, recipe follows

1. In a skillet, heat 2 teaspoons of the oil over medium heat and sauté the onions, garlic, and ginger until translucent and slightly caramelized. Transfer the mixture to a large bowl and let it cool.
2. Add another 2 teaspoons of oil to the skillet and cook the mushrooms with a pinch of salt, stirring occasionally, until they release all their liquid and the pan is almost dry. Add them to the bowl with the onions.
3. Add another 2 teaspoons of oil to the skillet and cook the cabbage with a pinch of salt, stirring occasionally, until it released all their liquid and the pan is almost dry. Add it to the bowl with the onions and mushrooms.
4. Add another 2 teaspoons of oil to the skillet and cook the carrots with a pinch of salt, stirring occasionally, until they release all their liquid and the pan is almost dry. Add them to the bowl with the vegetables. Set this aside to cool to room temperature.
5. When the vegetables have cooled, drain off any water that has accumulated in the bottom of the bowl, then add the kimchi, the chives, the scallions, the sweet potato noodles, the crumbled tofu,,

the sesame oil, cornstarch, and Kosher salt. Mix everything together well and taste for salt. (This mixture can be prepared up to 3 days in advance and stored in the refrigerator.)

6. When you are ready to make the dumplings, prepare a small dish of water and line several baking sheets with parchment paper. Place about 1 tablespoon of filling in each dumpling wrapper. Using your finger, paint a little water around the edge of the wrapper. Fold the wrapper in half and simply pinch the edges closed or make it slightly fancier with a few pleats. Place each finished dumpling on the baking sheet and repeat until you've used all the filling.
7. You can freeze them directly on the baking sheet until they harden, then pack them into plastic freezer bags. (They do not refrigerate well.) They will last for 3 to 4 months.
8. To cook fresh or frozen dumplings (see Note), heat a nonstick frying pan or well-seasoned cast-iron skillet with just enough canola oil to coat the bottom. Add just enough dumplings so that they are not overcrowded and don't touch. Brown the dumplings on one side, then add about 1/4 inch (6 mm) of water, cover the skillet, and steam the dumplings until nearly all the water evaporates.
9. Remove the cover and let the dumplings begin to fry again, just long enough to crisp them slightly, then serve them immediately with dipping sauce.

VEGETABLE DUMPLING DIPPING SAUCE

This will be enough for 20 to 25 vegetable dumplings. It can also be multiplied, though you'll want to start with slightly less vinegar and adjust to taste. Unlike the meat mandu dipping sauce, this sauce won't keep indefinitely, so you don't want to make too much of it at a time.

Makes about ¼ cup (60 ml)

1 tablespoon soy sauce

1 teaspoon vinegar

1 teaspoon brown sugar

Pinch sesame seeds

Pinch thinly sliced scallions

In a small bowl, whisk together the soy sauce, vinegar, sugar, sesame seeds, scallions, and 1 teaspoon water.