

Many Australians celebrate Chinese New Year, also known as the Spring Festival or the Lunar New Year. In 2014, celebrations for the 'Year of the Horse' start on January 31. Chinese New Year celebrations last for about 15 days and include festivals, markets, dancing, music, colourful costumes and fireworks. During this time families gather together for a festive meal and the two recipes that follow can be easily made with the children for an afternoon tea snack.

STEAMED DUMPLINGS (Jiaozi)

These round dumplings signify family reunion. In northern China families traditionally spend New Year's Eve together preparing the dumplings which are eaten at midnight. Crescent-shaped Jiaozi are a symbol of wealth and prosperity because of their resemblance to ancient Chinese money.



Ingredients

300g (2 cups) plain flour
125ml (½ cup) warm water

Filling

100 grams pork mince
100 grams raw prawn meat, coarsely chopped
small bunch garlic chives or 2 spring onions (green parts only), finely sliced
2 tablespoons finely diced bamboo shoot
1 tablespoon finely diced ginger
½ tablespoon finely diced garlic
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 teaspoon sesame oil

Method

- Mix the flour and water in a food processor until incorporated. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth. Cover dough with a damp cloth and rest for 30 minutes.
- Roll dough into long cylinders, about 3cm thick. Cut cylinders into 1cm pieces. Flatten pieces with the palm of your hand to form discs, then roll out to about 7cm diameter.
- To make the filling put all ingredients in a bowl and mix well to combine.
- Place a small spoonful of filling in the centre of each dough round. Fold the two sides together to enclose the filling and pleat edges to seal.
- To cook, grease the surface of a large steamer (or line the steamer with cabbage leaves) and preheat. Steam dumplings for about 6 minutes or until cooked.
- Serve the dumplings (Jiaozi) hot accompanied by a dipping sauce.

<http://www.sbs.com.au/food/recipes/steamed-dumplings-jiaozi> accessed 17 January, 2014

PEARL BALLS

Pearl balls are frequently served at Chinese New Year celebrations. The round meatball signifies reunion, and this is traditionally a time for families to come together.



Ingredients

3/4 cup glutinous rice (also called sweet or sticky rice, available at Chinese or Asian markets)
500 grams pork mince
1 large spring onion, minced
2 water chestnuts, minced
1 large egg white
1 tablespoon light soy sauce
1 teaspoon salt
Black pepper, to taste
1 teaspoon cornflour (or as needed)

Method

- Soak the glutinous rice in water for at least 6 - 8 hours (preferably overnight). Drain well in a sieve or colander. Spread out the rice on a baking sheet. Note: Drain and spread out the rice just before making the pearl balls so that the rice doesn't dry out too much.
- In a large bowl, combine the pork, soy sauce, spring onion, water chestnuts, salt, pepper, egg white and cornflour.
- Prepare the steamer for steaming.
- Take about 1 tablespoon of the pork mixture and form into a ball. Roll lightly over the glutinous rice and place on a heatproof plate. Continue with the rest of the pork mixture, placing the balls 2-3 centimetres apart.
- Place the plates in a steamer container or on a bamboo basket in a wok. Cover and steam the pearl balls over boiling water for between 25 - 35 minutes until they are cooked through. Steam in two batches if needed.
- Serve the pearl balls hot with soy sauce.

<http://chinesefood.about.com/od/rice/r/pearlballs.htm> accessed 17 January, 2014