This is a dish that takes me back to late night street food in my host city, Kunming, China. We didn’t have pot stickers often, as most of our neighborhood restaurants didn’t make them—they’re more common in northern China. But on special occasions, or when the mood really hit, we would go to a restaurant across town to enjoy quite a selection of these delicious dumplings, often choosing dumplings with carrots or other flavors not common in Americanized versions or from Chinese take out common in the U.S.

But, to be honest, some of the best 饺子 in Kunming came from those street vendors at night. They were smaller in size and served in a thin plastic bag with small holes in the top for your fingers. They’d give you two wooden skewers and ask if you wanted the spicy sauce (to which the answer always is “Yes!”). They’d drizzle your sauce of choice over the dumplings, you’d slip the bag over your fingers, and use the skewers as chopsticks. They were gone in no time.

The rumor behind the creation of these iconic dumplings is that a Chinese chef intended to boil the dumplings in a wok. He walked away and returned to find all the water boiled off. The dumplings stuck to the pan and got crispy on the bottom, which is how the dumpling got the name pot sticker.

The Chinese Pot Sticker would eventually make its way to Japan to influence the popular Gyoza, made with finer chopped ingredients and varying flavors. Today, Pot Stickers are major dish enjoyed during the Chinese New Year.

### Equipment
- Knife/cutting board
- Large mixing bowl
- Wooden spoon (or chopsticks)
- Tablespoon
- Small bowl of water
- Plate or sheet pan, lightly floured
- Skillet with well-fitting lid (See Note 1)
- Spatula, tongs, or clean chopsticks
- Clean kitchen towel, slightly damp

### Ingredients

#### Dumpling Filling:
- ½ lb pork or chicken, ground (See Note 2)
- 1 Tbsp ginger, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp soy sauce (See Note 3)
- 1.5 Tbsp Shaoxing Rice Wine (could substitute with dry sherry, Mirin, white wine, or a mild vinegar... or omit, it will still be fine)
- 1 Tbsp sesame oil
- 3 Tbsp cold water
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp pepper
- 6 green onions, sliced
- 2 cups chopped baby bok choy, kale, spinach, green or napa cabbage

#### To Wrap & Cook:
- 1 package dumpling wrappers (see Note 4)
- 3-4 oz water, divided
- Vegetable/canola oil

#### Dipping Sauce
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 2 Tbsp light soy sauce
- 2 tsp rice vinegar (could substitute with apple cider or white wine vinegar... or omit)
- 1 tsp Sambal or chili oil
- 2 Tbsp green onions
- 1 tsp garlic, grated
Instructions

To make the filling:

Add ground pork to a large mixing bowl. If tenderizing (see note 2 below), add cornstarch and baking soda.

Finely mince ginger and garlic and add to the pork. Then, add soy sauce, Shaoxing Rice Wine, sesame oil, cold water, salt, and pepper. By holding two chopsticks together, or with a wooden spoon, stir vigorously in one direction until all the liquid is absorbed and the pork begins to bind to itself.

Finely chop the bok choy and green onions. Add to the pork mixture and stir, continuing in the same direction, until the filling is combined, but not over mixed.

You can use the mixture right away, or let it rest, refrigerated, for up to a couple days.

To make the dumplings:

Place a heaping teaspoon of filling into the center of each wrapper. Lightly wet the wrapper edges. Fold over into a half moon shape. Cradle the wrapper in one hand and use the other hand to create pleats along the edge furthest away from you, pinching the two edges together after each pleat as you go, to create a crescent shape. Avoid getting any filling on the edges and be sure to pinch firmly as you pleat to create a good seal.

Cook the dumplings in two batches of 16. Heat the oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Fry the dumplings flat side down for 2-3 minutes until a golden crust forms on the bottom. Add cold water no further than 1/3 the way up the side of the dumplings and immediately cover with a lid. Let the steam cook the dumplings for 3-5 minutes or until all the water has evaporated. Remove the lid and let the dumplings cook until they crisp and lift off from the bottom of the pan easily. You might need a spatula to help them along if they are a little sticky, being careful not to break the wrapper. Repeat with the second batch.

Notes

1. Traditionally, a stainless steel pan would be used to better allow the pot stickers to stick to the pan. After steaming and then re-browning, the dumplings should naturally release; however, a non-stick pan works almost as well and will add better peace of mind that the dumplings will come out of the pan easily. Don’t have a lid? Use a heavy plate or sheet pan the covers the entire pan.
2. Adding ½ tsp baking soda and 1 tsp cornstarch will tenderize the ground meat. Using a leaner meat, like ground chicken or turkey? Add a tablespoon of additional fat to help the cooked dumpling filling hold together and stay moist. A neutral oil, like vegetable, canola, or peanut oil is a good choice. Adding extra sesame oil is not a good idea—the flavors are too strong and will impact the final flavor of the dish.
3. Using only light soy sauce, such as Kikkoman’s Soy Sauce, will work just fine, but the sodium levels will be higher. For lower sodium and deeper flavors, use a mix of dark and light soy sauce.
4. Dumpling wrappers are round, and typically 3½ inches in diameter. They can be found at Asian grocery stores and many supermarkets. If they’re not easy to find, consider:
   - Substituting with Wonton wrappers. These are 3” square wrappers. Either cut into circles with a 3” round cutter or wrap filling in the squares creating wontons.
   - Making the dough from scratch by combining 300 g (2 1/3 cups) all-purpose flour and a pinch of salt with 6 oz boiling water. Combine dough and knead 10 minutes until soft and dough springs back. Wrap and let rest 30 minutes. Cut into 32 even pieces. Roll each to 3½ inch circles thinning edges as you go.
5. Dumplings can be frozen for quick meals. Before cooking, wrap the tray of dumplings in plastic wrap, ensuring the dumplings are not touching. Once frozen solid, transfer to a freezer-safe zip-top bag. Use within two months, cooking from frozen in the same manner, adding additional cooking time until the bottoms of the dumpling obtain that golden crust before you add the water to steam the dumplings.