

Bao Buns

Learn to make fluffy homemade bao buns with this easy recipe. Perfect steamed Chinese buns for any filling. Step-by-step guide included.

3h	10 min	3h 10min	8	Hard
PREP	COOK	TOTAL	SERVINGS	DIFFICULTY

Bao Buns

Ingredients

- 300 g flour
- 1 cup corn flour
- 5 tbsp powdered sugar
- 1 tsp yeast
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 3 cup water
- 1 cup sunflower oil

Instructions

- 1 Make the dough**

Combine 300g flour, 1 tsp instant yeast, 1 tsp sugar, and 1 tsp salt in a large mixing bowl. Whisk together until evenly distributed.
- 2** Add 1 cup warm water (37-43°C/98-110°F) and 5 tbsp oil to the flour mixture. Mix with a wooden spoon until a shaggy, sticky dough forms, about 2 minutes.
- 3** Knead the dough on a lightly floured surface for 10-12 minutes until it becomes smooth, soft, and elastic. The dough should spring back when pressed with your finger.
- 4** Place dough in an oiled bowl and cover with damp kitchen towel. Let rise in a warm place for 60-90 minutes until doubled in size.
- 5 Shape the buns**

Punch down the dough and knead on work surface for 2-3 minutes to remove air bubbles. Roll into a log and divide into 8 equal pieces.
- 6** Roll each piece into a 10cm oval, about 3mm thick. Brush lightly with oil, then fold in half to create the classic bao shape with rounded edges meeting.
- 7** Place each bun on a 10cm square of parchment paper. Arrange on baking trays with 5cm space between each bun.
- 8** Cover with clean kitchen towel and let rise for 30-40 minutes until noticeably puffed and soft to touch.
- 9 Steam the buns**

Fill large pot with 2-3cm water and bring to boil. Place steamer basket inside, ensuring water doesn't touch the bottom of basket.
- 10** Reduce heat to medium. Steam buns in batches on their parchment squares for 10-12 minutes until puffed and cooked through. Turn off heat and let sit 2 minutes before removing lid to prevent collapsing.

Tips

Use instant yeast (also called bread machine yeast) for best results, as it doesn't require activation in warm water and provides more reliable rising than active dry yeast.

Knead the dough thoroughly until it passes the windowpane test - you should be able to stretch a small piece thin enough to see light through without tearing.

Ensure your steaming water stays at a gentle simmer, not a rolling boil, to prevent the buns from becoming soggy or collapsing from too much steam pressure.

Place each bun on its own small square of parchment paper to prevent sticking and make transfer to the steamer easier without deflating the risen dough.

Don't overcrowd the steamer basket - leave at least 1 inch between buns to allow for expansion during steaming.

Never lift the steamer lid during the first 10 minutes of cooking, as the sudden temperature change can cause the buns to collapse.

For perfectly white buns like those in restaurants, use bleached all-purpose flour instead of unbleached, which gives a slightly yellow tint.

Test doneness by gently pressing the center of a bun - it should spring back immediately when fully cooked through.