



Marvelous "Mantou" Chinese Steamed Buns

By Dylan Sabuco

Prep Time 15 / **Cook Time** 12 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

mix: to thoroughly combine two or more ingredients until uniform in texture.

roll: to use a rolling pin to flatten dough; use your hands to form a roll or ball shape; or move a round food, like a grape or a meatball, through another food, like sugar or breadcrumbs, to coat it.

steam: to cook food by heating it in the steam from boiling water.

Equipment

- Oven
- Muffin pan
- Large mixing bowl
- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Wooden spoon
- Cutting board

Ingredients

Marvelous "Mantou" Chinese Steamed Buns

- 2 1/2 C all-purpose flour **** (for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free flour)****
- 1 T granulated sugar

1 pkg active dry yeast OR instant yeast

1 big pinch salt

1 3/4 C water, divided

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Gluten/Wheat: Substitute gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour

Instructions

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intro

"Nǐ hǎo" (Nee how) or "Hello" in Chinese! Mantou (MAN-toe) is a traditional bread bun commonly served as a side dish in China and other Asian countries. Often, these buns are served with sticky sauces to dunk them in. This bread is special because the yeasty dough is steamed instead of baked, resulting in an ultra-fluffy and (surprisingly) crispy bread. When you are ready to eat at the end of the recipe, be sure to tear your mantou open and dunk it in Savory Black Bean Sauce or any other favorite sauces you have.

measure + stir

Measure **1 tablespoon sugar**, **1 package yeast**, and **1 cup water** into a large bowl. Stir a few times and let stand for 5 minutes. Practice counting to 10 in Chinese while you stir: 1 yī (eee), 2 èr (arr), 3 sān (sahn), 4 sì (ssuh), 5 wǔ (woo), 6 liù (lee-oh), 7 qī (tchee), 8 bā (bah), 9 jiǔ (j-oh), 10 shí (shir).

scrumptious science

Even though yeast looks like large grains of sand, it is actually a living organism. Yeast is a label broadly used to describe about 1,500 different kinds of fungi. This means that yeast makes up about one percent of the fungus you would come across in the world. The type we are using today is called active dry yeast. It means that the yeast is alive but sleeping in its container. To "wake up" the yeast, you will need to feed it its favorite breakfast: sugar! Once the yeast begins eating the sugar, it creates a byproduct: carbon dioxide. (I like to think of the yeast as burping little, itty bitty burps from eating the sugar too fast!) This carbon dioxide will later be trapped inside the naan dough you are creating in this recipe, which is super important for making a light, fluffy texture.

measure + knead

Measure and add **2 1/2 cups of flour** and **1 big pinch of salt** to the bowl. Stir to combine, then pour the mixture onto a clean surface and start kneading. Kneading consists of pressing with the heel of your hands and folding the dough repeatedly for about 5 minutes until a smooth, stretchy texture is achieved.

measure + steam

Divide the dough into 12 to 14 equal pieces. Roll the dough into smooth balls. Then, add **1 tablespoon of water** to each well of the muffin pan. Preheat your oven to 375 F. Place the muffin pan in the oven while it preheats. Once the oven is preheated, carefully remove the pan and add each dough ball to the water-filled wells. Slide the muffin pan into the oven and cook for 12 minutes or until the mantou puffs can come cleanly out of the pan.

dunk + munch

Dunk the mantou in the sauce of your choice, like **Savory Black Bean Sauce**. You can also rip the buns open and fill them with sauce. Either way, "Chī hǎo hē hǎo" (Chuh how huh how) or "Enjoy your meal" in Chinese!

Featured Ingredient: Baker's Yeast!

Hi! I'm Baker's Yeast!

"Did you know that I'm a living organism? If you add baker's yeast to dough, it will cause your bread, cinnamon rolls, doughnuts, and more to rise up! Just add me to warm water with a little sugar (which I love to eat) and wait at least five minutes until I burp some gas bubbles (excuse me!) and get foamy at the top before adding me to your flour and other ingredients!"

Yeasts are single-celled, microscopic members of the fungus kingdom. Baker's yeast is from the species *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. It is the strain of yeast used to leaven (or raise) bread and other types of dough. It is also used in beer and winemaking.

There are several varieties of baker's yeast: active dry yeast, compressed yeast, cream yeast, deactivated yeast, instant yeast, and rapid-rise yeast. Home bakers and Sticky Fingers Cooking chef instructors generally use active dry yeast, instant yeast, or rapid-rise yeast when baking.

Active dry yeast must be activated by adding a warm liquid, like water or milk. Its granules are larger than the other dry yeasts, instant and rapid-rise, which do not have to be rehydrated (or proofed).

The word "yeast" comes from the Old English "gist," of Germanic origin, from an Indo-European root "yes-," meaning to "boil," "foam," or "bubble."

Baker's yeast has some protein, fiber, B vitamins, and potassium; however, the amount you would get from a packet of active dry yeast distributed throughout a dough would be minimal.

Nutritional yeast, a deactivated yeast, contains more protein, fiber, B vitamins, and potassium than active dry yeast. People who eat a vegan or vegetarian diet often add nutritional yeast to foods to supplement these nutrients and add a nutty or cheesy flavor to foods.