

# Cooking with Julia: Potstickers



**JULIA HANSEN**

Travel to Japan and you are sure to find a popular dish called gyoza, dumplings, Jiaozi or potstickers in restaurants. No matter what you call these little packages of scrumptiousness, you will want to eat them often and share the recipe with everyone you meet. According to the Web site foodsleuth.com, gyoza originated in China and was later introduced to Japan, where it now is quite popular. The dish is cooked in a variety of ways including pan-frying, steaming, boiling and deep-frying. Typically it

is served with a soy-based sauce, but gyoza also can be eaten unaccompanied.

I first learned about what my family calls potstickers when a friend's mom, who is Chinese, taught my sister how to make them at least a decade ago. My sister came home and introduced the dish to my family, who instantly became addicted. On occasion we make a special trip to the grocery store to purchase wonton wrappers and ground pork, and my family and I sit down together and wrap up these tasty dumplings. We call them potstickers because they literally stick to the pan when cooked in a pan on the stove only in water.

Last weekend when I was in Denver, Colo., my friends and I went to a Japanese restaurant called Sushi Hai where we ate gyoza and sushi. This time the dumplings were fried, so they were crunchy and delectable. Eating at the restaurant reignited my enthusiasm for gyoza and made me want to share this wonderful dish with all of you. Maybe in a future column I will dare to attempt making sushi. Gyoza might be slightly challenging, but sushi would be extremely tricky. For now I will continue cooking gyoza and leave sushi to the experts.

## Ingredients:

1 tablespoon sesame oil  
2 cups chopped cabbage  
1/4 cup chopped onion  
1 clove garlic, chopped  
1/4 cup chopped carrot  
1/2 pound ground pork  
1 egg  
1/4 cup vegetable oil  
1 (10-ounce) package wonton wrappers  
1/4 cup water

## Sauce:

1/4 cup soy sauce  
2 tablespoons rice vinegar

## Directions:

1. Heat sesame oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Mix in cabbage, onion, garlic and carrot. Cook and stir until cabbage is limp. Mix in ground pork and egg. Cook until pork is evenly brown.
2. Place about a tablespoon of the cabbage and pork mixture in the center of each wonton wrapper. Wet finger, and moisten halfway around the edge of the wrapper. Fold dry half of wrapper over moistened half to form half-moon shape. Seal using thumb and forefinger of one hand.
3. Preheat vegetable oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat.
4. In the preheated vegetable oil, cook gyoza about one minute per side or until lightly browned. Pour water into skillet and reduce heat. Cover, and allow gyoza to steam until the water is gone.
5. In a small bowl, mix soy sauce and rice vinegar. Use the mixture as a dipping sauce for the finished gyoza.

Recipe slightly modified from epicurious.com and allrecipes.com



## Carefree lifestyle differs from U.S. traditions

There's nothing like going to another country to make it exactly clear how spoiled I am — or, to teach me to adapt to unexpected situations.

All the little luxuries I've always had — endless hot water, my own washer and dryer, drive-through everything, the right-of-way as a pedestrian — in Mexico, I've learned to live without.

Every one of my fellow study abroad students has his or her own horror story, from one whose apartment was without water for four days to another whose luggage never arrived. Some complain of the general lower efficiency of the country, but I embrace it! There's something to be said for the less hectic way of life and for not expecting the red carpet to roll out in front of my every step. I once arrived at my 4 p.m. class at 4:02 and was the only one there. When another student followed, I asked, "Was class cancelled?" She looked at her watch and responded, "No, we're a little early. We still have another five or 10 minutes." Group projects often include a meal and a break, and I can't count the number of times a professor has said to the students, "Don't worry about it" or "Just get it to me when you can."

I don't want to give the impression that Mexico is a lazy or careless country. Perhaps a better word for the people is carefree, or at least less uptight than typical citizens of the world,

and honestly, to make it here I've had to adapt.

One example: Last week my passport went missing. It was in the Mexican university's possession, and then suddenly it wasn't. We still don't know what happened to it, whether it was stolen or somehow misplaced, but it didn't really matter. I could have given the expected reaction, an American take-me-to-your-boss throw down, but that wouldn't have solved anything. I just got over it. I asked the university to cover my expenses, they gladly accepted, and took my friend/identity witness on a little trip to the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City. We had a nice time, I got to chat with some friendly Americans and that was that.

During the weekend, bad weather actually led us to the best trip I've ever taken. A group of 15 or so students went to Veracruz to take part in the city's famous celebration of Carnival, and the weather was miserable. We stood on the shore behind our hotel, ready to go to the beach and saw the way the gray sand, gray waves and gray sky blended together knowing we wouldn't be enjoying the surf anytime soon. So after breakfast, we got back in the van for another hour to go to the pyramids of Tajin.

We drove through the low clouds in the mountains and arrived at a forest clearing oc-

cupied by ruins almost 2,000 years old. Some of the indigenous population still lived there, speaking their native language and selling oranges, sweet cane sticks and vanilla pods to visitors. Unlike the more touristy ruins at Teotihuacán or Chichén Itzá, only a handful of people meandered around the grounds, taking pictures of the ancient stone structures and crumbling walls. I would have given up any day at the beach to see that secret Mexican gem.

The next day, despite the parade's morning rain cancellation, Carnival was back on schedule in the evening. After walking the port city's main street and bracing the crowds of strangers in masked faces, many of whom shouted "güerita!" (which basically means "whitey"), I sat in the stands with my friends from Germany, Chile and Mexico. We ate mango-on-a-stick as the rows of salsa dancers and floats adorned with lights passed to the incessant beat of the music. Some of the most beautiful children I've ever seen were dancing along, and no one seemed to mind the driving wind too much. It might not have been the sunny day on the coast we had expected, but it was even better, and when I returned home hours later my hair was still sprinkled with confetti.



**Kelly Schute**



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