

Chinese Barbecue Pork Buns (*Char Siu Bao*)

<http://userealbutter.com/2011/12/15/chinese-barbecue-pork-buns-recipe/>

**filling from [Fine Cooking](#) issue #109 (I don't recommend using the dough from that recipe, so I don't include it below)*

**dough from [Chinese Snacks](#) by Huang Su-Huei*

filling

1/2 cup low sodium chicken broth
2 tbsps oyster sauce
2 tbsps ketchup
5 tsps granulated sugar
4 tsps cornstarch
1 tbsp dark soy sauce (this is not the same as regular soy sauce)
1/2 tsp kosher salt
pinch white pepper, freshly ground
2 tbsps peanut oil
1/2 cup yellow onion, diced (1/4-inch)
1 1/2 cups [char siu](#) pork, fine dice (I did 1/4-inch)
1 tbsps Shaoxing Chinese sherry
1 1/2 tsps sesame oil

Whisk the chicken broth, oyster sauce, ketchup, sugar, cornstarch, soy sauce, salt, and pepper together in a medium bowl. Heat the peanut oil over high flame in a wok or heavy-bottomed saucepan. When the oil is hot, add the onion, reduce the heat to medium-low and cook (stirring often) until golden brown – about 6 minutes. Turn the heat to high and add the pork, stir-frying for about 2-3 minutes. Pour the sherry in from the edges of the wok (or drizzle in a circle over the saucepan as I did) and stir together. Reduce the heat to medium and pour the broth mixture into the center of the wok or pan. Stir together until the filling is thickened. This takes only a few minutes. Remove from heat and stir in the sesame oil. Let cool and refrigerate the filling. Filling can be refrigerated for a few days before using. Do not freeze.

dough

1/4 cup sugar
1 3/4 cup warm water (105°F – 115°F)
1 tbsp yeast
6 cups flour
1 tbsp baking powder
2 tbsps shortening

In a medium bowl, dissolve the sugar in warm water and add the yeast. Let the yeast stand for about ten minutes or until it becomes foamy, floating to the top. Sift the flour (I never sift anything) into a large bowl. Add the baking powder, shortening, and the yeast liquid. Mix well. If the dough is dry, add a little water. If the dough is too wet, add more flour. Knead the dough until smooth (took me ten minutes by hand) Place the dough in a

large bowl and cover tightly with plastic wrap. Let the dough rise in a warm place for a couple of hours until it has tripled in size.

Do this: cut 24 squares of parchment or wax paper, 2 1/2-inches a side.

Assemble the *bao* : Knead the risen dough until it is smooth and elastic. Again, if it is too dry, wet your hand(s) and knead it – if it is too wet, add some flour and knead it in. Because I work on a finite area cutting board (i.e. not a long counter), I found it easiest to cut the dough into quarters and make a log from each quarter. Keep the unused dough under plastic or a damp kitchen towel to prevent drying out. Cut each log into 6 equal pieces and flatten each piece with your hand to make a disc. Use your fingers to pinch the outer inch of the disc thinner than the center. Then shape a sort of well in the thicker center of the dough. Spoon a tablespoon (or more, if you can handle it) of the pork filling into the center of the dough. Pleat the edges together, with the intent of gathering the edges to form a sort of bowl from the dough (use your thumb or spoon to push the filling down). If you care about the presentation (hey, some people don't) then wipe your fingers clean of any filling on a wet cloth before twisting and pinching the pleats together at the top. If there is excess dough, pinch it off. Set the *bao* on a square of parchment. Repeat for the rest and let them stand for about 10 minutes.

Steaming: Place the buns in a steamer with at least 2 inches between them as they will expand during steaming. You will not be able to fit them all in your steamer unless you have 1) a giant steamer or 2) a million layers – so be patient and don't cram them together, just steam in two or three batches.

If you have a wok, bring 2 inches of water to a boil and set your steamer over the wok (make sure the steamer doesn't actually sit in the water – that would be called boiling and we don't want that!). If you don't have a wok (I don't) then this is what I did: I found a stockpot that fits my generic bamboo steamer perfectly. The fit doesn't have to be perfect, just don't use such a large pot that the steam escapes. I filled the stockpot with 2 inches of water and then placed a small metal rack (you can find these in random Asian grocery stores) in the center. Bring the water to a boil, place the steamer on the rack.

Steam for 10 minutes. Serve hot. Makes 24.

Storage: Once cooled, you can seal these in an airtight container or ziploc bag and keep in the refrigerator for up to a week. To reheat, either steam them again for a few minutes or do the ghetto method: place the *bao* in a bowl, cover with a plate, and microwave for a minute or two. You can also freeze the *bao* in a sealed bag and reheat them by either steaming or nuking (just add more time than if they were refrigerated).