

# BUSYCOOK



## Noodle cover-up

Crisp wheat noodles for a dimsum with a difference

**M**ANY people are intimidated by cooking, but if you take the trouble to understand basic cooking principles and the nature of your ingredients, you can dispel most fears.

I like cooking just as much as I love eating. My love for good food is a major motivation for my love for cooking since I get impatient of mediocre cooking and my blood pressure rises especially when I have to pay for it.

That's probably the reason why I choose to cook. That way, I have no one to blame except myself when my tastebuds are offended. :P

Last week, while thinking up recipes for the coming new series of HomeChef, I started playing around with our traditional dumplings.

Using a basic filling, I created four different dumplings – a sort of *ngoh hiang* roll using beancurd skin and mince chicken, a *gyoza* with roast duck as a filling, a more traditional wanton of prawns and peas and today's recipe, a dimsum dumpling wrapped up with thin strands of noodles.

Today's dumpling recipe was a happy accident. I had left-over

filling and extra noodles after cooking the wanton dish. It was too little to keep, and too wasteful to throw away. I'm sure you have faced this dilemma before.

The filling could have been deep-fried into little prawn balls, but looking at the noodles, I thought they may just add a different texture.

The result was so surprisingly pleasant that my taste panel walloped the noodle-wrapped dumplings before all the other dishes. And asked for more. Great beer food, they said.

So that's it, I've just developed a lovely little cocktail canape through happy serendipity.

You can do that, too. Don't be afraid to experiment in the kitchen. What could go wrong? I'm sure even if my noodled dumplings had fallen apart, they would still be edible, if not as pretty a presentation.

Try the recipe this week and play around with it. You can substitute the noodles with crushed rice vermicelli, for instance. Or you can use a different meat for the filling.

You can wrap up the filling with bean curd skin and make mini rolls, like I did. But that's the recipe next week. Drop me an email if you have questions. I'll try to reply as soon as I can.



by Pauline D Loh

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### SIDE SALAD

FRIED food is "heaty", our Asian mothers tell us, so they should be balanced with "cooling" side dishes. I'm not too sure about that particular aspects of culinary yin and yang, but I do like serving salads with fried foods for both taste and texture. Here's salad of apples, red peppers, water chestnuts and pecans. It's loosely based on a Waldorf Salad, but without the celery.

The apples are palate cleansers, and their light tartness will take away any oiliness in the mouth. Diced capsicum add colour and a little bite, while dried apricots sweeten the tastebuds.

Pecans I added simply because I love eating them. You can add your favourite nuts. The dressing is just normal mayonnaise. (I use the Japanese mayo in a squeeze bottle.) The recipe is very much cut, dice, toss and serve. Real easy.

### GREEN APPLE SALAD

1 green apple, cored and diced  
4 water chestnuts, peeled and diced  
A few dried apricots, diced  
1 red capsicum, seeded and diced fine  
A handful of pecans or walnuts  
Mayonnaise to taste  
In a large salad bowl, add apples, water chestnuts, apricots and red capsicum. Squeeze or spoon mayonnaise over. Toss well with a fork. Keep in refrigerator until ready to serve. Divide into little bowls. Top with the nuts.

### Noodle-wrapped Chicken & Prawn Dumplings

#### Filling Ingredients:

500 gm grey prawns, shelled and deveined  
1 piece chicken leg fillet  
Chives (*kuchai*), finely chopped  
1 eggwhite, slightly beaten  
1 tablespoon cornflour  
1/2 teasp each salt, pepper, sesame oil

1 bundle fresh thin noodles  
(Hong Kong noodles)  
Oil for deep frying

#### Make the filling:

1. Mince chicken leg fillet (deboned), making sure tough white tendons are removed. (Or, you can substitute with roughly minced pork.)

2. Chop prawns roughly or cut each piece in three, and mix with chicken mince. Mix in chives, eggwhite and seasoning, and add sesame oil and cornflour.
3. Stir the filling in one direction until meats are well blended. Set aside, and keep cool in the fridge.
4. Unravel the noodle bundle until the strands are straightened. Divide into six portions. Spread out strands and lay on a flat surface, keeping bundles separate.
6. Divide up chicken and prawn filling into six portions. Take one portion, place at the start of one bundle and slowly roll up, cover the filling completely. Tuck in loose ends under the dumpling. Repeat.
7. Deep fry each bundle in hot oil until fill-

ing is cooked and noodles crisp and gold-brown. Drain and serve hot!  
(Total cooking time: 30 minutes.)

#### Cooking notes:

You can buy the fresh noodles at the market. Each bundle costs about 50 cents. Or, you can buy the noodles at the supermarkets.

These are called Hong Kong noodles, but are basically your "mee kia" or "little noodles", like wanton noodles.

Make sure you cover the filling completely with the noodle strands. Don't worry if the noodles break in mid-wrap. Patch and repair with shorter strands.

This is a nice dish for family weekends, or as a tasty cocktail canape. For the latter, divide filling into 12 smaller portions instead.

