Spicy edamame and roasted veggie steamed buns

Steamed buns are one of my all time favorite comfort foods and I particularly love making them for Chinese Food Christmas. While they're most commonly filled with meat, this version swaps that out for loads of veggies and edamame, meaning no animals are harmed.

by Molly Yeh

Ingredients

Makes 16 buns

Dough

2 cups (260 grams) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
1 cup (128 grams) cake flour
6 tablespoons (75 grams) sugar
2 1/4 teaspoons (1 packet) instant yeast
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1 cup (240 grams) warm water (105° to 110°F)
2 tablespoons (25 grams) neutral oil, plus more for the bowl

Filling

1 small yellow onion, thinly sliced
8 ounces (226 grams) bok choy or baby bok choy, thinly sliced
4 scallions, thinly sliced
1/2 small red cabbage, cored and thinly sliced
1 cup shelled edamame
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 tablespoon (9 grams) peeled and finely chopped fresh ginger (from about a 1-inch piece)
1 tablespoon (13 grams) neutral oil Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1/4 cup (10 grams) Thai basil leaves, chopped or torn (regular basil is great, too)
1 tablespoon chili crisp, or more to taste
1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
1 teaspoon soy sauce, plus more for serving
1 teaspoon unseasoned rice vinegar, plus more for serving

Instructions

1. In a large bowl or the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together the flours, sugar, yeast, and salt. Add the water and oil and use a stiff rubber spatula or wooden spoon to mostly combine into a shaggy dough. Knead, either on a work surface or with the stand mixer fitted with a dough hook on medium, adding more flour if the dough is too sticky to work with, until the dough is smooth and slightly sticky, 7 to 10 minutes.

2. Stretch the dough into a ball, pinching the ends under to form a taut surface, and transfer to an oiled bowl (or simply oil the bowl you used to mix the dough if it isn't too covered in dough), turning to coat the dough fully in a thin layer of oil. Cover with plastic wrap or a towel and let rise in a draft-free place until doubled in size, 1 to 2 hours. While the dough is rising, prepare the filling.

3. Preheat the oven to 425°F. Spread the onion, bok choy, scallions, red cabbage, garlic, and ginger in an even layer on a parchment-lined rimmed sheet pan. Drizzle with the oil and season with a good pinch of salt and a few turns of pepper. Stick in the oven for 45 minutes, until cooked down and roasty. Transfer to a mixing bowl, add the basil, chili crisp, sesame oil, soy sauce, rice vinegar, and toss to combine. Taste and adjust the seasoning as desired. Refrigerate until you are ready to form buns.

4. To make the buns, cut sixteen 3-inch parchment squares. Turn the risen dough out onto a clean work surface and divide it into 16 balls. Keep the dough balls covered when you're not working with them. Working with 1 ball at a time, roll out to a 4- to 5-inch circle, making the outside edges a little thinner than the center, and dusting with flour if needed to prevent sticking. Spoon 2 heaping tablespoons of filling in the center of the dough circle. Stretch the dough up over the filling and pinch the edges shut firmly to seal well. Place the bun on a parchment square, pinched end up. Repeat to make the rest of the buns.

5. Set the buns (on their parchment squares) in a bamboo or metal steamer, 11/2 to 2 inches apart. (If your steamer doesn't fit all the buns at once, keep the remaining buns covered on the counter or a sheet pan and steam in batches.) Cover and let sit 30 to 40 more minutes, until slightly risen and puffy. If any seams break open in their second rise, pinch them back together.

6. Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat (the water should come up high enough in the pot so that it is close to the steamer). Reduce the heat to medium high, place the steamer over the pot, and steam the buns until light and fluffy, about 20 minutes.

7. Remove the buns from the heat but keep the cover on for 5-10 minutes (this helps prevent them from deflating).

8. Optional: Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat and add a thin layer of neutral oil. When the oil is hot, peel the parchment from the buns, add them to the pan, and cook until the bottoms are golden, just about a minute or two. Check them frequently, since they can burn easily, and cook in batches so as to not overcrowd the pan. Add more oil if the pan ever gets dry.

9. Remove the buns to a paper towel to soak up any excess oil and serve with a dipping sauce of one part soy sauce to one part rice vinegar.

10. Leftover cooked and crisped (and fully cooled) buns can be frozen in an airtight container for up to 3 months and reheated in the microwave.