Gua Bao- Taiwanese Braised Pork in Sliced Buns

NIBBLEDISH CONTRIBUTOR

Ingredients

Sliced Bun Ingredients:

- 1 cup water
- 40 grams (6 tablespoons) white sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 500 grams high-gluten flour
- 1 tablespoon powdered milk
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2.5 teaspoons active dry yeast

Braised Pork Ingredients:

- 600 grams skin-on pork belly, cut into half inch slices
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- One Bunch of spring onions, cut into 3 inch segments (or 1 whole onion)
- 5 slices fresh ginger
- 2 red chili peppers (more if desired), sliced
- 1 Chinese spice bag
- 50 mililiters rice wine
- 3/4 cups soy sauce
- 3 to 4 cups water (enough to submerge the meat)
- 1/3 cups brown sugar
- Hard boiled eggs, peeled (optional)
  (To utilize your sauce to its fullest, you can add in some eggs to make another dish: Taiwanese Stewed Eggs!)

Gua Bao Ingredients:

- Steamed sliced buns (recipe above)
- Braised Pork belly (recipe above)
- Sweet peanut powder (or pulse peanuts and a little bit of powdered sugar into a powder with your food processor)
- Pickled mustard greens (??)
- Fresh coriander (replace with chopped spring onions if you don't like coriander)

Instructions

Sliced Buns:

1. For Bread Machine: place all ingredients in the listed order into your bread machine. Set the mode to "Knead and Rise" (this took around 1 hour and 20 minutes on my bread machine).
2. If kneading by hand, you can also place all ingredients in the listed order into a big bowl and knead for 15 - 20 minutes until the dough forms a smooth ball. Put the dough in a bowl, cover and let rise in a warm place for 1 hour, or until doubled in size.
3. Remove the dough and separate it into 50 gram pieces (around 14).
4. Form the dough into a ball and with a rolling pin, roll it out into a long oval shape.
5. Lightly brush one surface with vegetable oil and fold the dough in half. Place the dough on cut-out baking paper or a cheesecloth to prevent sticking. Let it rise for another 30 minutes, covered, in a warm place .
6. When the dough has risen after 30 minutes, place them inside the metal or bamboo cooking steamers that you are using. Make sure they do not touch, about 1 inch away from each other.
7. Turn on the stove to high heat until the water starts boiling.
8. Once the water has boiled, turn down to medium heat and steam for 10 minutes.

- Steaming TIPS:

1. Avoid opening the lid too soon-- the buns will collapse when met with cold air.
2. Make sure the water on the steamer lid does not drop onto the buns, as they will create rough surfaces.
3. If the buns harden up after leaving them out for too long, justquickly steam them again and they'll be soft and fluffy in no time.

Braised Pork:

1. To help the pork maintain its shape during braising, pan sear the sliced pork in a saucepan on medium heat, for about 1 minute on each side. [I pan seared the pork without adding any oil, but you can add about 1 tablespoon of olive oil if you'd like].
2. In a medium pot, make the braising sauce by adding garlic, onions/spring onions, ginger, chili peppers, Chinese spice bag, rice wine, soy sauce, water, and brown sugar. Add in the pork belly and eggs (optional) and bring to a boil over high heat.
3. Once it starts boiling, turn down to low heat and let it simmer and braise for 1.5 - 2 hours. Feel free to adjust the sauce to your liking but remember that the sauce will thicken as it cooks so don't go too crazy with the seasoning!

Assemble Gua Baos:

1. Once the buns are steamed and the pork braised, assemble the bun by adding the pickled mustard greens, braised pork, peanut powder and garnish with coriander