

■ Taking Care of the SELF

Cooking with Bodhichitta: More Momos Please!



Above: Making momos at Nalanda Monastery, France, October 2011. Photo by Sonam.

Left: "Momo" by Matthieu Aubry via Flickr, Creative Commons Attribution.

DOUGH:

4 cups flour
(all white, or half white and half whole wheat)
1/2 tsp. baking powder
2 cups water
a pinch of salt

Pour flour in a mound on a counter or in a mixing bowl, making a hole in the center. Sprinkle baking powder on top. Pour 1 cup of water into the hole and hand mix by gradually working in flour from the top of the mound. Work in a circular motion until water is well mixed. Add second cup of water and repeat process until thoroughly mixed. Knead for at least 5 minutes. Cover, set aside and let rest for 1 hour. (Now's a good time to prepare the filling.)

After resting, roll dough into a long sausage shape about 2.5 cm (1 inch) in diameter. Cut into 1.25 cm (1/2 inch) pieces, or about the width of a finger.

Dust pieces with flour and flatten into rounds with the palm of your hand.

With rolling pin, roll out each piece to approximately 7.5-9 cm (3-3.5 inches) in diameter. The center should be a little thicker than the edges to prevent filling from leaking during cooking.

Eating is such a common activity that we often forget that it also has the potential to be a powerful way to benefit ourselves and others. With a proper motivation, cooking and eating can transform food into spiritual fuel.

If you are interested in Tibetan Buddhism, it won't be long before you come across momos, the popular dumplings that hail from the Himalayas and have become commonplace in the strongholds of the Tibetan diaspora, such as Nepal and northern India. Momos are an extremely versatile food, and while the basic dough is very simple, the all-important fillings are as diverse as there are people! What follows are two of Lama Zopa Rinpoche's ingredient lists for vegetarian momo filling – a rare treat from a culture accustomed to meat. We've also included a basic dough recipe and some instructions from The Kopan Cookbook, but we warn you, it's worth getting a lesson from someone who has made these before – they can be tricky!

LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE'S MOMO FILLINGS*:

Determine portions based on need and taste. Mince and mix together.

Vegetarian filling #1

Fake minced meat, celery, cabbage, tomato, onions and ginger

Vegetarian filling #2

Spinach, mushrooms, mint, onions, cheese (feta and mozzarella)

PREPARATION AND COOKING:

Put about 1 tablespoon of filling in the center of the momo wrappers, pulling edges up around the filling and pinching closed (there are many beautiful ways to do this). Place prepared momos with space between them in a greased steamer. Steam for 15 minutes. Enjoy hot with momo sauce! ♦

*These filling recipes were given by Lama Zopa Rinpoche to Ven. Anet Engel in Deer Park Buddhist Center, Oregon, Wisconsin, July 14, 2009.

Kopan Monastery offers recipes for momo sauce and dozens of other delicious dishes in Betty Jung's *The Kopan Cookbook: Vegetarian Recipes from a Tibetan Monastery* <http://monasteryshop.org/books/the-kopan-cook-book.html>