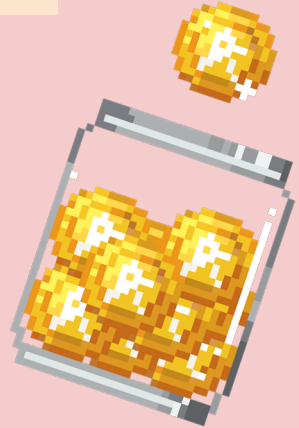


# *How to Make Chinese New Year Dumplings from 'Year of the Dog' by Grace Lin*



By Kenlie Rohrer



*Dumplings (or Jiaozi in Mandarin-Chinese) are oftentimes popular foods to eat during a Chinese New Year feast. They can be made using many different ingredients, ranging from vegetables and meats. Today, we will be making the traditional pork dumpling, just like the ones Grace eats with her family in "Year of the Dog" during their New Year Feast at the start and end of the book!*

*Ingredients:  
Chinese cabbage*

*- Pork*

*Toasted Sesame oil*

*- Soy sauce*

*- Garlic*

*- Scallions*

*- Ginger*

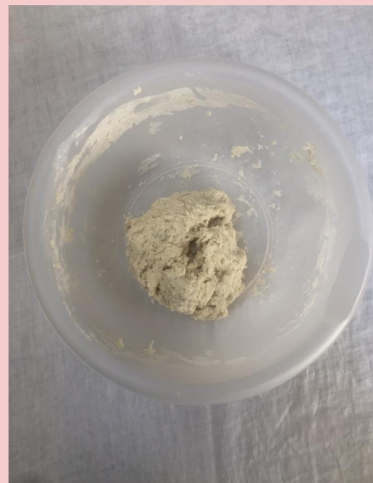
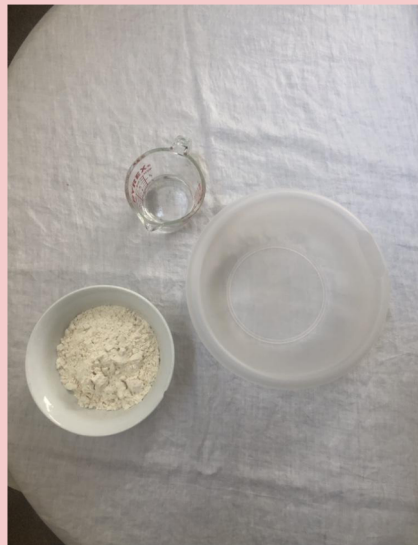
*- Flour*

*- Water*

# *{ Step 1: Homemade Dumpling Wrappers }*

*If you want, you can make your own dumpling wrappers! This is what I did, because (I could not find any at the store) they taste better than store-bought!*

- 1. Mix together 2 cups flour and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water in a large bowl.*
- 2. Continue adding water as needed, until a rough dough forms.*
- 3. Let sit for 15 minutes.*
- 4. Knead the dough.*
- 5. Let sit for up to an hour.*



## Symbolism

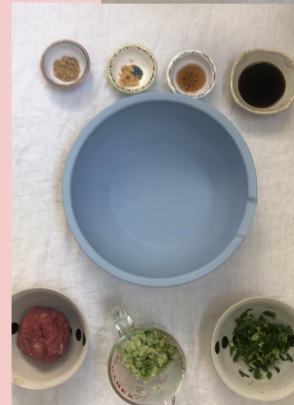
*At the beginning of the Year of the Dog, in the story, Grace and her family are all sitting down to eat their feast, after cooking all day. There are many different types of delicious food, but Grace's mother remarks that the dumplings represent coins, and if you eat lots and lots of them, you will become rich.*

*In the story, as Grace's mother says, the dumplings are a symbol of wealth and fortune. This helps us to get to know the character Grace better, because we can hear what she thinks about the dumplings and their symbolism, wondering if it might be true. This also drives the plot forward and acts as foreshadowing, making the reader wonder: Will Grace have fortune in her year? It makes the reader want to carry on reading, so that they will find out.*

*Many different foods symbolize things within the story, and create a useful and interesting pattern that should be noted when reading.*

## { Step 2: Make the filling! }

1. Chop 8 ounces of Chinese cabbage.
2. Mix salt and cabbage, then let sit for 10 minutes.
3. Mix 8 ounces ground pork meat, 2 teaspoons ginger, 1 clove garlic,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon toasted sesame oil, soy sauce, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped scallions.
4. Put the cabbage in a paper towel and squeeze out all the excess water.
5. Combine cabbage with meat mixture.



## *The Parable*

Grace expresses her skepticism at the symbolism of wealth by saying, "They don't look like gold coins to me!" (6) Her mother then alludes to a story of their grandfather, who got rich by doing a job for free. This story is one of the many parables within the book, a story illustrates a moral or spiritual lesson.

Parables are threaded throughout Grace's story. They oftentimes pop up when Grace is dealing with something tough, and always come at the right time to teach her a valuable lesson, while at the same time, connecting her to her heritage.

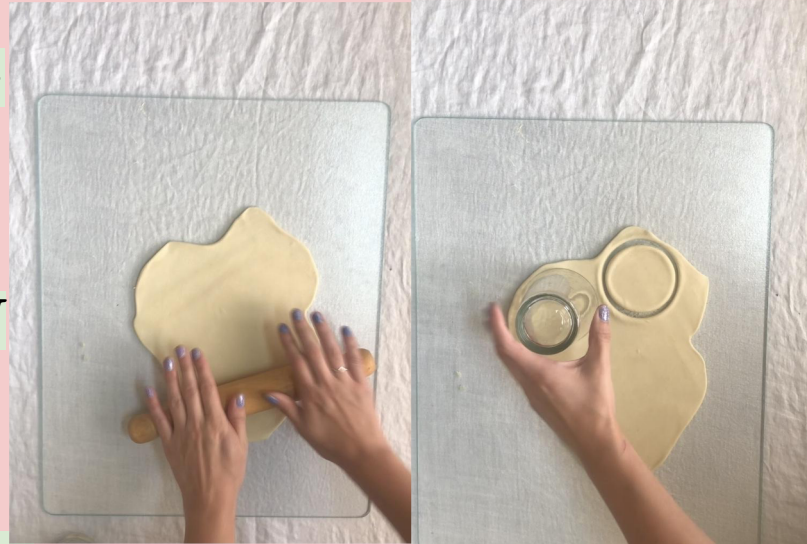
The story about her grandfather and how he got rich all contribute to the symbolism of the dumplings and how they represent gold coins. It is implied that they might be as successful as their grandfather if they eat many, many dumplings, because after all, their grandfather must have eaten a lot!

## *{ Step 3: Cut out the dumpling wrappers }*

*There are two ways to do this. One is more traditional, and involves forming the dough into sections by hand. To form little circles, use your left hand to rotate the dough ball, while gently rolling out with a rolling pin.*

*This is very difficult, and after trying I realized I couldn't make the dough balls into circles, I:*

- 1. Rolled out the dough (using lots of flour!)*
- 2. Punched circles through the dough using the rim of a glass as a cookie cutter.*



## <sup>33</sup>Parallels<sup>22</sup>

The beginning of Year of the Dog is started with gold-coin dumplings, and the end of Year of the Dog is celebrated with the same dumplings. However, the way the dumplings are viewed is a little bit different; at the beginning of the year, we can see our main character, Grace, helping out by filling a dish with Chinese candy. It is a tedious job, and her little sister keeps eating the candy as she is trying to fill the dish. She expresses her disdain at the Chinese candy not being <sup>33</sup>real candy<sup>22</sup>, and then hesitates when mixing the American candy and leftover Chinese candy. This shows her uncertainty at the beginning of book, and how she does not know who really is yet.

Towards the end of the book, Grace is actively helping her mother prepare the gold-coin dumplings for the end-of-the year festivities. The Grace at the end of the book and at the start of the book are parallel, and represent the contrast between who Grace was at the beginning, and just how much she has changed at the end. This definitely answers our question from before: Grace was especially fortunate that year.

## *{ Step 4: Fill and cook the dumplings }*

- 1. Place a generous spoonful of filling in the center of your wrapper.*
- 2. Dip your fingers in water, and brush the outsides of the wrapper with the water.*
- 3. Fold the dumpling in half, and pinch sides together around the filling.*
- 4. (OPTIONAL) Gently fold back the top layer of the wrapper onto the back, pinching to create a pleated fold.*
- 5. Heat up two tablespoons of vegetable oil in a pan.*
- 6. Place dumplings in the pan so they are not touching.*
- 7. Pour in  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of water.*
- 8. Cover and cook for 3 minutes, or until golden brown.*



the  
end

