

Jiaozi (Dumpling)

Jiaozi or dumpling is a traditional and popular food with a long history in China. There is a popular saying in China: "There is nothing more delicious than Jiaozi in the world." So you could imagine how much Chinese love it.

In the later years of Eastern Han Period, an official called Zhang Zhongjing created a kind of food to help poor people keep warm in cold winter. It was made with all kinds of fillings such as mutton, hot pepper and some medicinal materials. Afterwards people began to make dumplings as well.

Jiaozi is the food that will no doubt appear on tables during Spring Festivals. Generally, people prepare it before midnight on the last day of the passing lunar year and eat it after the New Year's bell is sounded.

Jiaozi looks like shoe-shaped gold and silver ingots so when people eat it during festivals, they really hope it could bring fortune and good luck to them, and this, of course, is their best wishes.

Sometimes people will add some sweets, Chinese dates and chestnuts in fillings of some dumplings to express their wishes. They hope those who get sweets could have a sweeter life.

Those who get dates and chestnuts could have babies early, because dates (Zao), are homonymic with early in Chinese, so are chestnuts (Zhenzi). Zi is homonymic with "children" in Chinese.

Today Jiaozi has already become an important part of Chinese cuisine.