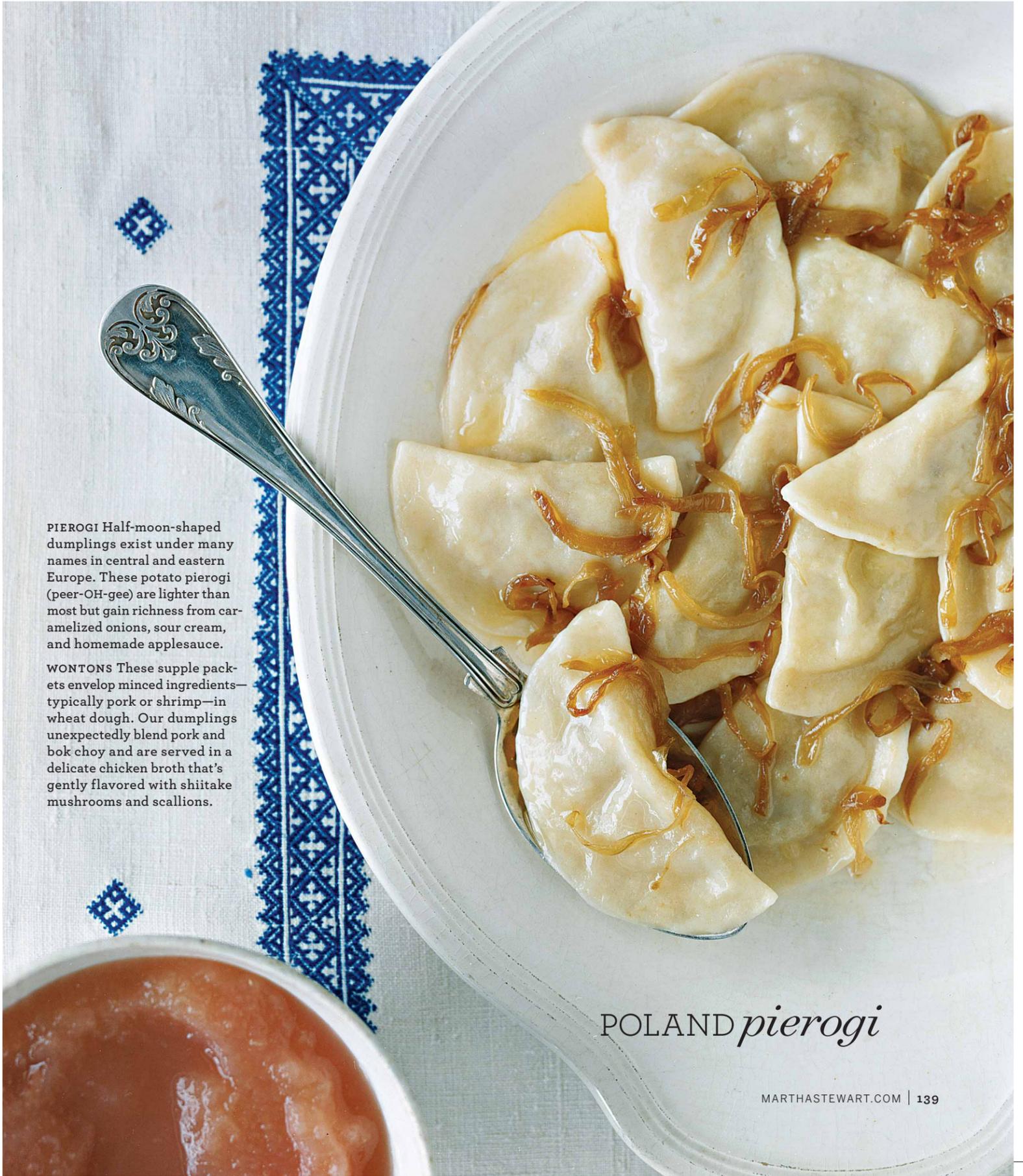


CHINA *wontons*

*A World of*  
**DUMPLINGS**

VIRTUALLY EVERY CUISINE HAS ITS OWN  
VERSION OF THE *beloved dumpling*,  
WHETHER STEAMED OR FRIED, STUFFED WITH MEAT  
OR VEGETARIAN, SAVORY OR SWEET.

•  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN KERNICK  
TEXT BY JONATHAN HAYES



**PIEROGI** Half-moon-shaped dumplings exist under many names in central and eastern Europe. These potato pierogi (peer-OH-gee) are lighter than most but gain richness from caramelized onions, sour cream, and homemade applesauce.

**WONTONS** These supple packets envelop minced ingredients—typically pork or shrimp—in wheat dough. Our dumplings unexpectedly blend pork and bok choy and are served in a delicate chicken broth that's gently flavored with shiitake mushrooms and scallions.

## POLAND *pierogi*

MARTHASTEWART.COM | 139

**ONE OF THE GREATEST TRUTHS IN COOKING IS THAT THE BEST DISHES**

are not necessarily the most complicated. Perfection often comes from simplicity, and the most accomplished cooks, whether in the finest restaurant or in a home kitchen, understand that achieving a desired taste is not always the only objective. Memorable dishes reflect history and culture and often evoke an emotion—love, desire, a longing for home. These classic recipes, handed down through generations, endure because they’ve evolved to a state of perfection. And around the world, few things say “home” quite like the dumpling.

In fact, there’s such an array of dumplings, it’s sometimes difficult to identify one as such, let alone answer the question, “What is a dumpling?” A working definition would need to include everything from the unmistakable ravioli to the lesser-known Himalayan momo, from the Polish pierogi to the Southeast Asian dessert dumpling onde onde. It might read something like “a portion of dough, often bite size or smaller, that is sometimes filled and generally simmered, steamed, or fried.”

Most cultures yield several dumplings that can be divided into two basic categories: filled, which comprise ingredients encased in a dough or starchy wrapper, as with wontons, and unfilled, which are hardy enough to hold their shape without an outer covering. The latter can consist of potato, flour, and little else, such as Italian gnocchi, or can be lighter, more delicate versions that are essentially ravioli fillings without any packaging, such as gnudi.

Dumplings are first and foremost a comfort food. Having emerged from home kitchens, they tend to be humble dishes, prepared with staples such as flour and potatoes in the West and rice in the East. Dumplings were probably developed as a way to turn a soup containing meager amounts of meat and vegetables into a more robust meal. In England, early versions were no more than chunks of stale bread or small pieces of dough dropped into a boiling broth, the dough taking on the flavor of the liquid. Elsewhere, variations of dough that were stuffed with

## SWEDEN *kroppkakor*



herbs, meat, and other savory or sweet ingredients resulted in what eventually came to be known as the dumpling.

These recipes are an invitation to the world of dumplings. As is common with time-honored dishes, the ingredients and serving suggestions reflect custom, but are not limited to it. The essence of each dumpling is true to tradition, but some of the fillings and accompaniments have

been modified slightly, as they have been for centuries, passing from family to family, region to region. As you make the dumplings, feel free to take a little creative license with the choice of ingredients. And don’t save them for a particular occasion or course. Serve them at breakfast or dinner, as a snack or an entrée.

With its global reach and myriad shapes, sizes, tastes, and textures, the dumpling is undoubtedly one of the world’s greatest foods—and, perhaps, not so humble after all.

### HOW TO EAT A SOUP DUMPLING

*Pouches of dough bursting with savory liquid, soup dumplings often appear on Asian menus.*

1. Using a large soup spoon (ceramic works best), scoop a dumpling from the bowl.
2. Take a small bite out of the top of the dumpling. This will cause any broth to spill into the spoon.
3. Sip the broth from the spoon. The dumpling should now be cool enough to eat.



## NEPAL *momos*

**MOMOS** In the Himalayas, fluted purses of steamed dough are a cornerstone of almost every meal. Momos are commonly filled with mildly spiced meat and almost invariably embellished with a homemade hot sauce. The fillings vary, as do the condiments. This vegetarian version melds cabbage, potatoes, and mushrooms.

**KROPPKAKOR** Hearty potato dumplings crowded with bacon, onion, and allspice, kroppkakor (krope-KO-coeur) are eaten throughout the day in Sweden and are often served with coffee and lingonberry jam for breakfast or as a snack with beer in the afternoon.



TURKEY *manti*



**GNUDI** These wonderfully light, pillowy dumplings from Florence are basically ravioli filling freed from their pasta shells. In this recipe, ricotta and spinach gnudi (NEW-dee) are sauced with sage-infused brown butter, resulting in an intensely herbaceous flavor.

**MANTI** Tiny dumplings filled with lamb and dressed with melted butter and tangy yogurt, manti (mahn-TUH) are wonderfully aromatic, heady with cinnamon, mint, and crushed red pepper. In Turkey, legend has it that a worthy bride makes manti so minute that 40 can fit on a spoon.

ITALY *gnudi*



AUSTRIA *topfenknödel*



INDONESIA  
*onde onde*

**ONDE ONDE** A favorite found at pastry shops throughout Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, onde onde (ohn-DAY ohn-DAY) are coconut-coated sweets fashioned from rice flour. The elusive aroma and flavor come from pandan leaf, the surprise center from brown sugar that turns syrupy as the dumplings cook.

**TOPFENKNÖEDEL** Traditional in Austria and parts of Germany, topfenknödel (top-fen-NUDE-el) are spoonfuls of batter made with sweetened farmer cheese that are simmered and then sprinkled with bits of rich brioche. A lightly spiced plum compote offsets the dumplings' comforting creaminess.

SEE RECIPES SECTION | SEE GUIDE FOR SOURCES | CREATED BY JAMES DUNLINSON, ANNA KOVEL, AND MICHELLE WONG