

Steamed baked products from the Netherlands

The Trade Factory Bakery in the Netherlands specializes in producing bapao. These filled, steamed bread rolls are popular with young consumers. The baked products can be bought in the food retail, either fresh in a chiller display or as a frozen product.



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++ Three Rheon plants put the various fillings into the dough

+ In Asia, the subject of steamed baked goods brings to mind jiaozi, baozi, gyōza or mandu. These filled, steamed dumplings are very popular. In China there are said to be more than 40 jiaozi, also called Chinese dumplings, differing in size, shape, filling, wrapping type and cooking methods. The dough for gyōza, Japanese dumplings, is somewhat thinner compared to jiaozi/baozi. The crescent-shaped, baked dumplings are often served as a side-dish. However, there are also steamed and fried variants. The version from Korea is called mandu. It involves a steamed product served with or without filling. These Asian dough foods resemble Eastern European pelmeni, which are also boiled or steamed. Dumplings are another European product that can also be steamed or boiled. In Germany, Austria, South Tyrol and the Czech Republic there are dumplings as a side-dish, main dish or even as dessert and for adding to soups.

There are also bigger variants of steamed baked goods, both in Asia and in Europe. Germknödel, for example, a way of preparing yeast dumplings, are very popular in Austrian and Bavarian cuisine. Here again there are different variants, e.g. with plum or blueberry filling (South Bohemia/regions in the Czech Republic). Butter is poured over the warm germknödel, or they are served with a vanilla custard sauce. The dishes can also be sprinkled with ground poppy and icing sugar. In China, hom bao are described as steamed buns. These are sold filled with sweet red bean paste, for example, but savory fillings are also possible.

Bapao for the Netherlands

The Trade Factory Bakery B.V., CX IJmuiden, the Netherlands, has found a special niche: the company produces Bapao, a kind of steamed bun with various fillings. However, there is no particularly large Asian community in the

Netherlands that would create a demand for such products. The baked goods are bought especially by young consumers who want to eat a snack quickly and easily. Trade Factory manager Erwin Koopstra explains that this is why Bapao can be bought in many supermarkets as frozen products or as fresh goods.

The bakery began operation in 2006. The bakery's parent company group, Seafood Parlevliet, originates from the fishing industry. This is noticeable in the production planning and in the high hygiene standards. Production Manager Roel Heida explains that this is why the plants and the entire hall are wet-cleaned every day. The whole bakery was planned by the Kortlever Technical Bureau B.V., DJ Meerkerk.

Production of bapao starts at 06:00 hrs. every working day in a spiral mixer made by the Diosna company. The main raw material, wheat flour, is metered into the mixing bowl automatically. This is followed by water, sugar, yeast, salt and fat. Bowl tippers transport the fully mixed dough

into a pre-portioner. Conveyor belts then take the yeast dough into one of the three Rheon Corncopia KN400



++ The finished product with a beef filling

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encrusting machines. The Rheon has two hoppers. The dough for the steamed buns goes into one, and the filling goes into the other. Manager Erwin Koopstra says "For example, this can be chicken, beef or even a vegetarian filling." The respective filling is supplied to the Trade Factory already prepared ready for use.

The KN400 encrusting plant now forms the filled dough pieces from the mix/filling and the dough. There is an almost unrestricted choice of shape, depending on the portioner attachment and cutter aperture (iris). Creativity is almost unlimited,

thanks to a large number of several hundred possible attachments that have now been developed for the encrusting machines. In this respect, fillings extending to a consistency comparable to that of mayonnaise can be processed without any problems, as well as lumpy fillings and a wide selection of doughs. According to Master Baker Michael Kretschmann from the Rheon Automatic Machinery GmbH Company, Düsseldorf, Germany, "The



++ The filled dough pieces are deposited onto trays. Input and removal take place automatically. The entire project was designed by the Kortlever company

fillings can be either fully coated or half-coated, so they are visible at the top.”

The steam oven

The filled dough pieces now leave the Rheon plants and are aligned. A conveyor belt carries the dough pieces forward to the deposition station, where a station provides prepared trays covered with baking paper. A tray can accommodate thirty dough pieces each weighing 120 grams. The full trays now pass automatically into a rack trolley. One of the two production staff then pushes the fully filled racks into the final proof. This involves racks being input in pairs onto a transport system in front of the tunnel proofer. The proofer holds a total of four racks on two lines, so parallel operation can take place. After proofing for 60 minutes, most of the dough pieces together with the racks move automatically into the steam oven. Explaining the project, Gery Kortlever, Sales Manager of the Kortlever Technical Bureau B.V., says “The bakery also has the option to use one of the three Wachtel rack ovens.” As well as steamed baked goods, this also allows the bakery to offer browned products like a kind of pita bread with filling. This increases flexibility. However, only around 10% of the products that are manufactured end up in the rack ovens.

Around 90% of the production volume finishes up in the steam oven. It is loaded with two racks at a time and, like the proofer, holds a total of four racks. After 20 minutes the fully steamed buns leave the oven. This is followed by cooling and, if necessary, freezing. The packing department then awaits the products.

Production Manager Roel Heida and Manager Erwin Koopstra are satisfied with the workload on the production unit. The employees manufacture around 60,000



++ Pairs of rack trolleys are driven automatically into the proofing room, where they remain for 60 minutes

steamed buns per shift. A further production increase is still possible. The distribution channels include the national and international retail, and the food service market. Individually developed products can be manufactured under their own label if required. The pans and molds can be open, closed, circular or elongated, and weight ranges from 40 to 200 grams are possible.

The quickest way to prepare the steamed products is in a microwave. Simply put the fresh goods (packed under protective gas, minimum shelf life: 90 days) with the packing into a 700 watt microwave to heat up for around 40 seconds. Steaming is also an option. If the customer wants a browner baked product, the consumer can also bake the product at home in an oven at 170°C for 14 minutes. The Trade Factory plans further expansion in the future, and there have already been enquiries, e.g. from Belgium and Germany. For example, the bakery could also produce steamed hamburger buns. +++