



Vietnamese Pho

As Hieu Nguyen from Dalat, Vietnam, taught Lindsay Sterling, in Falmouth, ME.

Note: Hieu loves to get the fresh herbs, bean sprouts, fresh ginger, fish sauce, spices, chilis, limes, rice noodles, packets of pre-mixed pho seasonings, and even Pho serving dishes (super large bowls) at Veranda Asian Market in Portland, Maine, 695 Forest Avenue, Portland, ME, 207-874-8001, (open daily 9am-9pm). Look for an Asian market near you and go - it's a great experience.

Makes: 8 servings

Cooking Time: 3-4 hours, with a lot of inactive time

Ingredients

For the marinade:

- 3 cloves garlic
- 2" ginger
- 1/2 Tbsp sugar
- 1/4 Tbsp salt
- 1 Tbsp fish sauce (he prefers Viet Huong brand)

For the broth:

- 1 whole chicken
- 2" ginger (okay to leave skin on)
- 2 Tbsp sugar
- 1/2 Tbsp salt
- 2-4 Tbsp fish sauce (he prefers Viet Huong brand)
- 1 tsp black pepper corns
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 3 cinnamon sticks (3" inches each)
- 10 whole cardamon pods
- 20 whole cloves
- 6 whole star anise
- 1 large carrot, peeled and cut into 1/3rds
- 1 large yellow onion, peeled
- 16 oz. chicken broth

For the soup:



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- 24 oz. rice noodles (1/4" wide)
- 1 bag (about 4 cups) fresh mung bean sprouts*
- 1 bunch Thai basil
- 1 bunch culantro
- 1 bunch cilantro
- 6-12 red Thai chilis
- 1 lime
- 4 scallions
- Hoisin sauce
- Sriracha sauce

Equipment:

- stainless steel spice ball (for infusing herbs in broth) or cheese cloth and string*
- sharp boning knife
- large cutting board
- 2 medium bowls
- 1 large soup pot or stock pot
- small handheld mesh strainer and small bowl
- large colander for noodles
- 8 larger-than-normal, pho-style bowls with base plates*
- 8 large, flat-bottomed spoons*
- 8 pairs chopsticks*

Instructions

1. Marinate the meat.

Rough chop garlic and 2" of the ginger. Put in a medium bowl. Take skin off whole chicken using a boning knife. Carve meat off the bones (breasts, legs, thighs and back muscles), trimming all fat off as you see it, and place meat in the bowl with the ginger and garlic, and the bones in a stock pot. Mix 1/2 Tbsp sugar, 1/4 Tbsp salt, and 1 Tbsp fish sauce into chicken meat with hands. Wash hands. Discard all chicken fat and skin. Wash cutting board and anything that touched the raw chicken. Cover chicken and let marinate.

2. Make the stock.

Place bones in a large soup pot or stock pot. Cover chicken bones with cold water by 2-3 inches and turn on medium. Add 16 oz. chicken stock, 2 Tbsp



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sugar, 1/2 Tbsp salt, and 4 Tbsp fish sauce. Enclose black pepper, cumin, clove, cardamom, star anise and cinnamon in a cheese cloth or a stainless steel spice ball. Roast whole onion and ginger over bare stove flame until ginger skin is black and onion is steaming and put both broth. Once broth begins to steam, turn heat to low. Don't let the broth boil or simmer at all. Once the broth has been steaming for about 20 minutes, swipe a handheld mesh strainer through the top three inches of broth, removing particulate matter and any oil. Discard the contents of the strainer and run it upside down under water as necessary to clean. The goal in the end is to have a clear broth, which is achieved by getting rid of floating particles and oil, and never boiling the broth. Repeat this process about every ten minutes over the course of an hour and a half to achieve clear broth. If you have oil on the top, skim off with large flat spoon.

3. Prep the fresh toppings.

Wash the bean sprouts, all the fresh herbs, lime and chilis. Dry with paper towels and place each on separate plates. Slice the lime into 8 wedges and then slice the wedges across into half wedges so you have 16 pieces.

4. Cook the chicken.

After the stock has been cooking for about an hour and a half, remove the ginger, onion, carrot, spices and bones. Slowly submerge the marinating chicken into the hot broth. Cook for 13 minutes, remove chicken and place in a clean bowl to drain and cool. Send the hand held strainer through the broth 4 or 5 times to get the ginger and garlic chunks out. Slice the chicken into 1/4 inch slices and put on serving plate(s).

5. Make the noodles.

Bring a full large pot of water to a boil (for cooking rice noodles). Add rice noodles to boiling water and cook for 8 minutes. Strain and run cold water over them so they don't stick together as much when they're cool.

6. Assemble the bowls. First put rice noodles in the bowl, then 4-5 pieces of chicken, sprinkle on sliced scallions. Ladle on broth so the noodles and chicken are surrounded. Pick leaves off Thai basil and cilantro leaves from stems. Add about 4 of each to each bowl. Break culantro leaf into 1 inch long pieces, and add to soup. Add a mountain of bean sprouts on top. Squeeze lime over top. Serve with fresh whole Thai chili on the side.



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7. Finish each bowl at the table. Diners squirt generous squiggles of Sriracha and Hoisin sauces on top of his or her bowl of pho. Before eating, toss the contents of the bowl with the chopsticks in one hand and flat-bottomed spoon in the other as you would a salad. Use chopsticks to help load up the flat-bottomed spoon, and go ahead and slurp the contents of the spoon and juice into your mouth. Take a nibble of the Thai chili (one of the hotter chilis in the world). When all you have is broth left, it's okay to lift your bowl to your mouth to sip the rest.