



Steps to make my delicious Vietnamese pho



Beef Broth (Makes 6 quarts)

Ingredients

Herb Package

8 sprigs fresh Parsley

6 sprigs fresh Thyme or 1 teaspoon dried Thyme

4 sprigs fresh Rosemary or 2 teaspoons dried Rosemary

6 African Blue Basil sprigs (or any Basil)

2 dried Bay Leaves

1 tablespoon whole Black Peppercorns

Here's a tip: The first time I prepared an herb package I did not have a cheesecloth to place the ingredients in. Instead, I used a large gauze pad unfolded and of course, unmedicated. It's just cotton cloth, the size was right, and it worked beautifully. I have since used cheesecloth.



Roasting Bones and Meat

- 1 pound Beef Stew meat, cubed
- 5 pounds Soup Bones, sawed into smaller pieces
- 1 large onion, peeled, large chunks
- 1 small package carrots
- 7 Jalapenos, halved deseeded
- 2 cups Red Wine (I use Sangria)

Pho (Vietnamese Soup)

Ingredients

Serves 4

- 1 pound Sirloin or Round Steak
- 1/2 package Vietnamese Rice Noodles (can be frozen or dried)
- 3 cups homemade Beef Stock
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 3 tablespoons nuoc mam nhi (premium grade) Fish Sauce



Fresh Vegetable Platter

Ingredients

2 cups fresh Bean Sprouts

1 small Sweet Onion, sliced paper thin

1 small bunch Scallions or little Green Onions, sliced into thin rings and use some of the green top in thin rings

1 small Jalapeno or Serrano Pepper, sliced thin like a match stick

1/3 cup fresh Cilantro Leaves

1/3 cup Thai Basil, coarsely chopped (Any kind of Basil, your preference)

1/3 cup fresh Mint, coarsely chopped

2 Limes, quartered

Asian hot Chili (Rooster) Sauce, (Srirrachi sauce but only a few drops to your preference, it is hot)



African Blue Basil

Clip small sections of African Blue Basil leaves from the plant. You might also want to use Thai basil.

Make sure that you are clipping at the joints so that it will not affect the growth of the plant. We will use the leaves to flavor the broth.



Rosemary

Clip a few branches from the Rosemary plant now.

Rosemary has a pretty strong essence so you don't need all that much.



Thyme

Clip few sprigs from the thyme plant. Make sure that you are clipping near the joint so that it will not affect the growth of the plant.



Parsley

Gather some parsley from the plant. Make sure that you are clipping at the bottom of the stem.



Washing the Herbs

Wash the herbs with cold water so that it will liven up the and clean the herbs.

Once you have washed the herbs, put them on to a paper towel and allow them to dry.



Tie the herbs in a cheese cloth

Not all of us have Kitchen Specialty stores handy so I suggest an alternative for cheese cloth which you can get nearly anywhere.

Use simple gauze pads, just make sure they are not medicated.



Spread the cloth and arrange the herbs on it.

Add few bay leaves on top of the herbs.



Sprinkle the peppercorns over the 'herb bag' and roll the cloth.



Tie both ends of the cloth with butcher twine.

I also tie one in the middle so that it will hold in the herbs and peppercorns.

Now that we have gathered all the herbs, let's talk about ingredients to make the beef broth.



Roasting the Bones

Take the soup bones, put them single layer in a heavy duty baking pan.

Cut a small bag of carrots in thirds and add it to the pan. Cut few large onions in quarters and jalapenos in half and add them to the pan too.



This part is pretty interesting!

Put the pan in the oven at 450°F degrees and cook it for about an hour and a half.

Turn the bones over every 20 minutes to make sure that the soup bones are not getting burnt, but are getting very brown (roasted).



Once the soup bones are cooked, remove the soup bones and the other vegetables and put them in a heavy soup pot.

Add red wine (I used Yago Sangria) to the roasting pan, scrape the left over browned bits from the pan and cook it until the wine mixture gets reduced to half.



Making the Beef Broth

Once the wine mixture gets reduced to half, pour it in to the soup pot that has the roasted soup bones and the vegetables in it.



Fill the soup pot with water so the soup bones and vegetables are completely covered with water.

(6 quarts of water or more to make sure bones are completely covered)



Start cooking the broth at a medium setting on your stove top. Skim off the foam that forms on top when the broth starts to reach a boil.

Always make sure that the bones remain covered with water.



Add the herbs tied up with the cheese cloth to the beef broth and press it down inside the broth.



Allow the broth to simmer for about 3 hours. The broth has to be a simmering boil and not a rolling one.

If the water level goes below the soup bones, just add more water.



After the broth has cooked, strain the mixture; remove all the soup bones, vegetables and the herb packet tied in gauze cloth.

Put the broth in the refrigerator and allow it to cool overnight.



I also use ziplock bags to put my broth in to save for whenever I want to have Pho. After it cools, I put it in the freezer with about 3 cups in each bag.



Preparing the Meat for Pho

Take very thin slices of meat, usually sirloin, cover it with plastic wrap and put it in a freezer.

Allow it to freeze for an hour so that the meat gets firm so that we can slice the meat in to thin pieces.



Slice the pieces an eighth of an inch wide, the pieces should be very thin so they will get cooked very easily.



Vietnamese rice noodles

(You can find them in the international section of your grocery store), put them in a bowl and soak them in warm water.

The nice noodles will soften.



Preparing the Pho Broth

Now let's make the actual Pho broth. Heat up the broth that we made by cooking the soup bones.

Add the water to it and allow it to come to a rapid boil.



Add the Vietnamese fish sauce (you can find it in the international section of your grocery store).

It adds a lot of flavor, but not fishy at all.

Bring the mixture to a full boil.



Add few sliced beef pieces to a bowl and put some Vietnamese rice noodles over it. (These ingredients are uncooked, the Pho broth will cook them.)

Getting hungry yet? You are almost there.....



Spoon or pour some of the boiling Pho broth over the rice noodles and meat.

Make sure that that beef and rice noodles are totally covered by the broth. They are going to cook in the boiling Pho broth....



Guest Participation

Add some beans sprouts, sliced jalapenos, thin cut scallions, thinly sliced onions, little bit of fresh cilantro leaves and some Thai basil over it. Squeeze some Lime, and add Rooster Sauce. Warning on the Rooster Sauce, add a drop at a time!



It's all coming together now...this is to your preference what you add from the vegetable platter.



The Vietnamese pho is ready to be served now!

I make myself a smaller bowl and my husband gets a large bowl and he adds a generous portion of bean sprouts, basil, scallions, onions....

Just as my Texas husband prides himself on his barbecue, Vietnamese cooks pride themselves on their Pho and it is a house specialty at most Vietnamese restaurants.

Now you can enjoy this healthy meal at your house any time you like! Enjoy.

From my Vietnamese Kitchen,

Ramona Werst