



FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Loan and Dai Huynh's  
**VIETNAMESE  
BEEF PHO**



# VIETNAMESE BEEF PHO

## **For the broth:**

- 3 pounds beef bones (a mix of oxtails cut into 2-inch pieces and shank bones preferred)
- 1 whole chicken
- 1-2 pounds of brisket flat (or boneless short ribs)
- 6 (16-ounce) cans of chicken broth
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 star anise pods
- 1 whole nutmeg (optional)
- 1 large piece of ginger, about 3 ½ -4 ½ inch
- 1 large yellow onion, peeled
- Kosher salt to taste
- 3-4 pieces of rock sugar – see note

## **For the pho:**

- 1 package of bo vien beef meatballs (optional) – see note
- 3 (16-ounce) packages of fresh rice stick noodles
- 1 pound of eye of round beef, sliced thin
- 1 small white onion, sliced thin
- 1 cup chopped scallions
- 1 cup chopped cilantro
- Ground black pepper
- 2 cups bean sprouts
- 2 handfuls of each: Thai basil sprigs and Culantro (Ngo Gai)
- 6 Thai bird chiles or 1 Serrano chili, very thinly sliced
- 2 limes, cut into wedges
- Fish sauce – See note
- Sriracha Sauce (optional)
- Hoisin Sauce (optional)

## **Make the broth.**

1. In a large stockpot, bring 12 quarts of water to a boil. Place beef oxtails and shank bones in boiling water; add more water if necessary to cover the meat. Allow scum to rise to the top, then drain the meat in a large strainer. Rinse meat with cold water; set aside.
2. Cut the chicken breasts off the bones. Set aside the two breasts to poach later in the pho stock.
3. Heat oven to about 500 degrees.
4. Meanwhile, return the beef oxtails and shank bones to the large stockpot, along with the chicken without the breasts and brisket flat. Add enough cold water to fill about half of the pot. Add four cans of chicken broth. Place the pot over high heat and bring to a boil.
5. While the stock is heating up, place cinnamon, anise, nutmeg, ginger, and onion on a cookie sheet. Broil in the oven just until fragrant and lightly golden brown. The anise will brown quickly; remove it after about 20-30 seconds in the oven. The cinnamon and nutmeg will brown after about two minutes. Do not burn the spices, or you'll have to start over. Remove the ginger and onions when caramelized.
6. Transfer the cinnamon, anise, and nutmeg to the stockpot. Allow ginger to cool, then slice it lengthwise. Add ginger and onion to the stockpot along with three rock sugar and about 2 heaping tablespoons of kosher salt. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to a simmer.
7. Remove scum as it rises to the surface while the broth is simmering. Avoid stirring the broth as much as possible while the broth simmers for about eight hours. Midway, about three-to-four hours, remove the brisket flat or when cooked until tender. Allow brisket to cool completely in the refrigerator before thinly slicing the brisket.
8. Add the chicken breasts to the stockpot. When chicken breasts are cooked through, remove from the broth, and allow to cool. When cool, slice the chicken into ¼-inch slices. Arrange on a plate and set aside in the fridge until ready to use.
9. After about six hours of simmering the broth, you can top off the broth with remaining canned chicken broth. Adjust seasonings to taste; add more kosher salt and rock sugar. The pho broth should be savory, slightly salty to balance the bland rice noodles.
10. About 30 minutes before the pho broth is ready, add the bo vien meatballs if using.

### **Assemble the pho.**

11.To assemble the pho, rinse the fresh noodles in cold water; set them aside. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and, working in batches, dip the noodles into the boiling water for 10 to 20 seconds, stirring them until al dente and to keep from tangling. Drain.

### **Serve and garnish.**

12.To serve, place about 2 cups of cooked noodles in each of eight large soup bowls. Place a few slices of brisket, sliced raw eye of round, and poached chicken breast on the noodles. Garnish with sliced onions, scallions, cilantro, and ground black pepper to taste, then spoon 2 to 3 cups broth and bo vien meatballs into each bowl. Season each of bowl of pho with about ½ to 1 tablespoon fish sauce, or to taste before serving.

13.Guests can top the soup at the table with bean sprouts, fresh herbs, chilies, fresh lime juice, and add additional fish sauce to taste. Sriracha sauce and hoisin sauce are a matter of taste and are purely optional. Makes 8 large servings.

### **Notes from the Huynh Kitchen.**

You can find rock sugar at Asian stores. Vietnamese groceries sell bo vien meatballs made with beef and tendon (hence the slight chew). All you need to do is warmed these already cooked meatballs in the pho broth before serving.

Many recipes add fish sauce to the broth while simmering. However, our mother found that it can add a slight sourness to the finished broth, so in our family, we add the fish sauce to the bowl of pho just before serving. Mom recommends Three Crabs Fish Sauce, but many brands are available.

Even though this is called Vietnamese Beef Pho, you'll notice the addition of whole chicken and chicken broth (either homemade or canned will work). Without the fresh chicken and canned broth, the pho lacks depth and dimension. We hope you have a “pho-nomenal” time making this traditional Vietnamese dish.