

Vietnamese Pho Recipe with Rich Homemade Beef Broth

5 to 6 pounds beef knuckles or leg bones



TIME
3 to 5 min

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INGREDIENTS

For the pho broth:

- 5 to 6 pounds beef knuckles or leg bones
- 6 quarts cold water
- 2 onions, quartered
- 4-inch piece fresh ginger, halved lengthwise
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 tablespoon coriander seeds
- 1 tablespoon fennel seeds
- 6 whole star anise
- 6 whole cloves
- 1 black cardamom pod
- 1 1/2 tablespoons fine sea salt
- 1/4 cup fish sauce
- 1-inch piece yellow rock sugar

For assembly:

- 1 pound dried or fresh banh pho noodles
- 8 ounces raw eye of round, sirloin, or tri-tip steak, thinly sliced across the grain
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced onions
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro leaves

Optional for the table:

- Fresh mint
- Thai basil
- Bean sprouts
- Lime wedges

Sliced green or red chilies

Fish sauce

Hoisin sauce

Sriracha or chili sauce

DIRECTIONS

1. Parboil the bones: Place the beef bones in a large stockpot and cover with cold water.
2. Bring to a boil over high heat for 3 to 5 minutes. As the bones boil, foam and scum will rise to the top.
3. Drain the bones, rinse them with warm water, and scrub the stockpot clean.
4. Return the cleaned bones to the pot and add 6 quarts of fresh cold water.
5. Char the onion and ginger: Preheat your oven broiler to high and line a baking sheet with foil.
6. Place the onion quarters and halved ginger on the sheet and broil for 10 to 15 minutes, turning occasionally, until nicely charred.
7. Toast the spices: Place the cinnamon, coriander, fennel, star anise, cloves, and black cardamom in a dry pan over low heat.
8. Toast for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until fragrant.
9. Transfer the spices to a muslin bag or cheesecloth and tie it closed.
10. Simmer the broth: Bring the stockpot back to a boil, then reduce the heat to a gentle simmer.
11. Add the charred onions, ginger, spice bag, salt, fish sauce, and rock sugar.
12. Simmer uncovered for 3 hours, skimming any foam that rises to the top.
13. Strain and clean the broth: Use tongs to remove the bones, onions, and ginger.
14. Strain the broth through a fine-mesh strainer.
15. Skim off excess fat with a spoon, or chill the broth

overnight so the fat solidifies on top and can be removed easily.

16. Prepare the noodles: Place the strained broth back into a stockpot and keep it at a simmer over medium-low heat.
17. If using dried pho noodles, soak them in hot water for 15 to 20 minutes until softened and opaque.
18. If using fresh noodles, rinse them in a colander under cold water.
19. Bring a medium saucepan of water to a boil and cook the noodles briefly, about 10 seconds, until just tender.
20. Drain and divide them among serving bowls.
21. Assemble the bowls: Top the noodles with thin slices of raw beef.
22. Ladle the very hot broth over the meat so it cooks gently in the bowl.
23. Top with sliced onions and cilantro.
24. Serve immediately with herbs, lime, bean sprouts, chilies, and sauces on the side.

SWAPS & NOTES

Beef knuckles or leg bones are ideal because they create a flavorful broth with body, but the real key is giving them enough time to simmer properly.

Charring the onion and ginger is one of the most important flavor-building steps.

It gives the broth a subtle smokiness and extra depth that really helps it taste like pho.

Toasting them first brings out their fragrance and helps them infuse the broth more fully without making it muddy.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Do not skip the initial bone-boiling step.

It helps clean the broth and gives you a clearer final result.

Keep the broth at a gentle simmer, not a rolling boil.

A hard boil can make the broth cloudy instead of clear and delicate.

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