Beef and rice noodle soup

Phở bò



serves 2

about 305 min

mild

First had it at a Hanoi street stall, cold morning, tiny stool

Shopping list

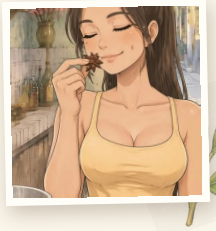
- [ ] 1 kg beef marrow and knuckle bones, cut open
- [ ] 1 onion, unpeeled, halved
- [ ] 50 g ginger, unpeeled, halved lengthwise
- [ ] 3 star anise, 1 cinnamon stick, 3 cloves, 1 black cardamom pod
- [ ] 300 g beef brisket, in one piece
- [ ] 2500 ml cold water
- [ ] 1 tsp salt
- [ ] 2 tbsp fish sauce
- [ ] 1 tsp rock sugar, crushed
- [ ] 300 g fresh flat rice noodles, separated
- [ ] 120 g beef sirloin, chilled, sliced paper-thin across the grain
- [ ] ¼ onion and 2 spring onions, thinly sliced
- [ ] 10 g coriander and Thai basil, leaves picked
- [ ] 1 lime in wedges and 1 red chilli, sliced

Method

1. Cover the bones with cold water and boil hard for 10 minutes, until grey scum rises. Drain them and rinse each bone clean.



2. Char the onion and ginger cut side down in a dry pan on high heat for 8 minutes, until blackened. Toast the spices on medium heat for 2 minutes, until fragrant.



Method, continued

3. Put the bones, onion, ginger, brisket, water and salt in a clean pot and bring to the boil. Turn down to a bare simmer and skim often. After 90 minutes, lift out the brisket when a skewer slides in easily.



4. Add the spices in a cloth bag. Simmer uncovered for 3 more hours, until about 1200 ml of clear amber broth is left. Strain it, then add fish sauce and sugar until it tastes savoury and faintly sweet.



5. Slice the brisket thinly. Dip the noodles in boiling water for 10 seconds, until soft and glossy. Drain and divide them between two warm bowls.



6. Top the noodles with brisket, raw sirloin, onion and spring onion. Ladle 500 ml of broth at a rolling boil into each bowl. The sirloin turns pink at once.



7. Serve straight away, with herbs, lime and chilli on the side.



Kimmi's tips

What keeps the broth clear

Rinsed bones, a bare simmer, skim often. 3 hours uncovered, until about 1200 ml of clear amber broth is left.

Why the sirloin is chilled

Sirloin: chilled, paper-thin, across the grain. Broth at a rolling boil cooks it pink in the bowl.