

Show #73. Good Evening Vietnam

Soda Chanh

For simple syrup:

2 cups sugar (to make 1 cup simple syrup)
2 cups water

For soda:

½ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
Ice cubes or crushed ice
6 cups sparkling water or club soda

1. To make the simple syrup, combine 2 cups of sugar and 2 cups of water in a saucepan.
2. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally until the sugar is dissolved.
3. Continue cooking without stirring for about 5 minutes, until the mixture is clear and the consistency of light syrup.
4. Remove pan from heat and allow to cool completely.
5. Either use immediately or pour into a clean, dry jar and refrigerate, covered tightly until ready to use. Makes about 2 1/2 cups.
6. To make lemon soda: In a pitcher, combine 1 cup simple syrup and lemon juice. Stir to mix well.
7. Fill six glasses with crushed ice; then pour ¼ cup of lemon syrup in each glass. Fill the rest of the way with sparkling water, stir, and serve immediately.

Vietnamese Spring Roll

Preparation time 10 minutes

Ingredients:

1 Carrot, grated
50g Beansprouts
5cm piece cucumber, shredded
225 g Blue Dragon bamboo Shoots, drained and rinsed
1 tsp Blue Dragon Nuoc Cham (Vietnamese fish sauce)
2 tsp Castor Sugar
blue Dragon Spring Roll wrappers
Fresh mint and coriander
Blue Dragon Sweet and sour Dipping sauce to serve

1. Dip the spring roll wrappers one at a time in warm water and place on a damp tea towel to drain. Allow to dry off slightly
2. Mix the vegetables with the fish sauce, vinegar, sugar and a handful of fresh mint leaves
3. Place a mint leaf in the centre of each pancake, and the vegetable filling and rollup into a cone shape. Serve sprinkled with fresh herbs, accompanied by Blue Dragon Sweet and Sour Dipping sauce.

Baguette Sandwiches (bánh mì)

For marinated daikon and carrot:

1 carrot
5-inch piece of daikon radish, about 2 inches in diameter
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon sugar
3 tablespoons white vinegar
2 tablespoons water

For each sandwich:

1 small baguette roll or a 6-inch section cut from a regular length

baguette
Mayonnaise
Soy sauce
2-3 cilantro sprigs, roughly chopped
3-4 thin strips of seeded cucumber, pickling or English variety preferred
3-4 thin slices of jalapeño pepper
Leftover grilled or roasted meat, chicken or tofu, sliced and at room Temperature

To prepare marinated vegetables: Cut carrot and daikon into julienne about 1/8 inch thick and 4-5 inches long. Place in a bowl and sprinkle with salt and 1 teaspoon sugar. Using your hands, massage carrots and daikon to soften, about 3 minutes. (If you pause, there should be a little water that pools at bottom of bowl; the vegetables should be bendable but still crunchy.) Drain and rinse under cold water. Return to bowl. Dissolve remaining sugar in vinegar and water. Pour over vegetables and set aside, at least 1 hour. Store in a glass jar and refrigerate if not using right away.

To prepare sandwich: Split bread lengthwise and use your fingers or a bread knife to hollow out insides, making a trough on both sides. Discard insides or save for another use, such as bread crumbs. If necessary, crisp up bread in a toaster oven at 300-325 degrees, letting it cool briefly before generously spreading inside with mayonnaise and drizzling in some soy sauce. Fill with cilantro, cucumber, jalapeño, a little daikon and carrot pickle, and your choice of protein. Close sandwich, cut it in half crosswise for easy eating, and enjoy.

Spicy Cabbage Salad

Dressing

1 or 2 Thai or serrano chilis, chopped
1 clove garlic, chopped
½ teaspoon plus 1 teaspoon sugar
1 pinch salt
2 ½ to 3 tablespoons fish sauce
6 tablespoons unseasoned Japanese rice vinegar

1 (1 ¼ to 1 1/3 pound) head green cabbage, about 1 pound, quartered through the stem end, cored, and cut crosswise into ¼ inch wide ribbons
1 large carrot, peeled and finely shredded
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh Vietnamese coriander, cilantro, or mint leaves
1/3 to ½ cup toasted cashew halves and pieces (not whole ones) or coarsely chopped unsalted roasted peanuts

For the dressing:

Using a mortar and pestle, mash the chili, garlic, ½ teaspoon sugar, and salt together into a fragrant orange-red paste. This releases and combines the oils from the chili and garlic. Scrape the paste into a bowl and add the remaining teaspoon of sugar and smaller quantities of fish sauce and rice vinegar, stirring to dissolve the sugar and salt to combine well. Taste and add more fish sauce or rice vinegar to create a spicy, tart, savory, lightly garlicky dressing.

In a large bowl, combine the cabbage, carrot, chopped herb of your choice and cashews. Toss to combine and distribute the ingredients well. If you're making this salad in advance, leave the cashews out and add them right before tossing, so that they won't become chewy.

Just before serving, pour the dressing over the salad and toss to mix well. The salad will wilt slightly. Taste and adjust the flavors to your liking, balancing the sour, sweet, salty and spicy. Transfer to a serving plate, leaving any unabsorbed dressing behind, and serve.

Pho Bo – Beef Noodle Soup

Broth ingredients

3 cans beef broth (low-salt suggested)
2 carrots, julienne
4 slices fresh ginger, chopped
1 cinnamon stick
1 star anise
2 whole cloves
2 cloves garlic
2 teaspoons black peppercorns
3 Tablespoons fish sauce

Accompaniments ingredients

½ pound roast beef (may be purchased from a deli), sliced into very thin bite-sized strips
1 onion, thinly sliced
2 cups fresh bean sprouts
¼ cup chopped cilantro
1 bunch fresh basil, coarsely chopped
2 or more chilis, sliced at a diagonal
2 limes, cut into wedges
1 package rice noodles, cooked

Procedure

1. Make broth by pouring contents from three cans of broth into a large saucepan.
2. Add carrots, ginger, cinnamon, star anise, cloves, garlic, and peppercorns.
3. Simmer covered for 20 minutes.
4. Add fish sauce and simmer about 5 more minutes
5. Strain by pouring through a colander.
6. To serve, arrange the following on a platter; beef, onion, bean sprouts, cilantro, basil, chilis, lime wedges, and noodles.
7. Ladle the broth into bowls, and serve.
8. Each person chooses items from the platter to add to his or her bowl of broth.

Caphe (Vietnamese coffee)

- ½ cup sweetened condensed milk
- 3-4 cups hot, strongly brewed French-roast Coffee
(we recommend Café DuMonde, available at Cost Plus World Market)

1. Pour 2 tablespoons of condensed milk into the bottom of each of four clear glass coffee cups
2. Slowly fill each cup with the coffee, making sure not to disturb the layer of milk at the bottom. Serve immediately. Each person stirs his/her own milk into the coffee before drinking.

For iced coffee, pour the condensed milk into the bottom of four tall glasses. Fill the glasses to overflowing with icecubes, then slowly pour in the coffee.

Serves 4