

# FOOD & WINE

INSPIRATION SERVED DAILY



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## Spiced Beef Pho with Sesame-Chile Oil

CONTRIBUTED BY [MARCIA KIESEL](#)**ACTIVE:** 1 HR• **HEALTHY****TOTAL TIME:** 3 HRS PLUS OVERNIGHT CHILLING • **MAKE-AHEAD****SERVINGS:** 6

*The rice vermicelli soup pho is a staple all over Vietnam and this spicy beef version is the specialty of Hanoi. At home in Connecticut, Marcia Kiesel often eats it for breakfast, as the Vietnamese do. "It's a perfect meal and an invigorating way to start the day," she says. She's tried innumerable phos but considers the recipe from Binh Duong, her co-author on Simple Art of Vietnamese Cooking, to be the best. Inspired by the pho served at Ana Mandara and the Hideaway, she tweaks Duong's recipe by adding an escarole garnish.*

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#### BEEF BROTH

**4 pounds oxtails or beef short ribs**

**18 cups water**

**1 teaspoon vegetable oil**

**1 medium onion, halved**

**One 3-inch piece unpeeled fresh ginger, halved lengthwise**

**2 bay leaves**

**Two 3-inch cinnamon sticks, broken into pieces**

**One 2-inch piece of rock sugar or 6 sugar cubes (see Note)**

**Kosher salt**

**4 whole cloves**

**4 star anise pods, broken into pieces**

**2 teaspoons fennel seeds**

#### SESAME-CHILE OIL

**1.** In a large soup pot, cover the oxtails or short ribs with cold water and bring to a boil over high heat. Drain off the water. Add the 18 cups of water and bring to a boil.

**2.** Meanwhile, heat the oil in a small nonstick skillet. Add the onion and ginger, cut sides down, and cook over moderately high heat until richly browned, about 5 minutes. Add the onion and ginger to the pot along with the bay leaves, cinnamon sticks, rock sugar and 1 tablespoon of kosher salt.

**3.** Put the cloves, star anise and fennel seeds in a tea ball or tie them up in a piece of cheesecloth. Add them to the pot and simmer, skimming occasionally, until the oxtails are tender, about 2 hours. Strain the broth in a large sieve set over a heatproof bowl. Remove the meat from the oxtails. Refrigerate the broth and the oxtail meat separately overnight.

**4.** Heat the vegetable oil in a small saucepan. Add the garlic and cook over moderate heat until golden, about 2 minutes. Add the crushed red pepper and sesame seeds and cook for 1 minute; transfer to a bowl. Stir in the sesame oil and a pinch of salt.

**5.** Put the rice vermicelli in a large bowl and cover with cold water. Let the vermicelli soak until pliable, about 20 minutes.

1/4 cup vegetable oil  
3 large garlic cloves, chopped  
2 tablespoons crushed red pepper  
1 1/2 teaspoons sesame seeds  
1/2 teaspoon Asian sesame oil  
Kosher salt

#### SOUP GARNISHES

1 pound rice vermicelli  
1 pound beef round, partially frozen and very thinly sliced across the grain  
Asian fish sauce  
Asian sesame oil  
Sriracha chile sauce  
Lime wedges  
Cilantro sprigs  
Basil leaves  
Sliced onion  
Sliced chiles  
Escarole leaves  
Mung bean sprouts

6. Skim the fat from the surface of the beef broth and discard. Bring the broth to a simmer over moderately high heat. Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil.

7. Place the thinly sliced raw beef in a large strainer and lower it into the simmering broth for 4 seconds; transfer the meat to 6 soup bowls. Drain the vermicelli. Working in 6 batches, put the vermicelli in the strainer and lower it into the boiling water for 30 seconds, or until the vermicelli is barely tender. Drain and transfer to the bowls. Ladle about 1 1/2 cups of the broth over each bowl of vermicelli and add the chilled oxtail meat.

8. Put each of the remaining ingredients in separate bowls or arrange the vegetables and herbs together on a platter. Serve the soup with the condiments and the sesame-chile oil.

**MAKE AHEAD** The beef broth and oxtail meat can be refrigerated for up to 3 days. The sesame-chile oil can be refrigerated overnight. Let return to room temperature before serving. **NOTES** Rock sugar comes in large amber crystals and is less sweet than refined granulated white sugar. It is available at Asian markets.

#### SUGGESTED PAIRING

**BEER** A steaming bowl of flavorful, spicy, salty *pho* demands something cold and refreshing to drink with it: beer. In Vietnam, one could drink it with *bia hoi*—a term for beer brewed fresh that day, and delivered to local bars. Here in the U.S., open a bottle of Hue or "33" Export, both light Vietnamese lagers.

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