



VIETNAMESE

Beef Pho with Brisket (Phở Bò)

COMPLEXITY	SERVES	PREP	COOK	TECHNIQUE	CUT
Complex	6	30 min	3 hr 30 min	Simmer	Brisket

Ingredients

- 1 kg (2¼ lb) beef brisket, in one piece
- 1 kg (2¼ lb) beef marrow or knuckle bones (or oxtail or neck bones; ask the butcher for soup bones)
- 2 large onions, halved
- 90 g (3 oz) fresh ginger, halved lengthwise
- 3 star anise
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 4 cloves
- 1 tbsp coriander seeds
- 3 litres (12 cups) water
- 3 tbsp fish sauce, plus more to taste
- 1 tbsp rock sugar (or 2 tsp white sugar)
- 400 g (14 oz) flat dried rice noodles
- 1 small onion, sliced paper-thin
- Bean sprouts, Thai basil (or regular basil), culantro or cilantro, lime wedges, sliced chilli and hoisin, to serve

Steps

1. Cover the bones with cold water in a big pot, bring to a boil over high heat, and boil 5 minutes until grey scum rises. Drain and rinse the bones and the pot.
2. Char the onions and ginger cut-side down in a dry pan over high heat, or under the broiler, until blackened in spots, about 8 minutes. Rinse off loose bits.
3. Toast the star anise, cinnamon, cloves and coriander in a dry pan over medium heat for 1 to 2 minutes, until fragrant.
4. Return the bones to the pot with the brisket, charred onion and ginger, spices and 3 litres of water. Bring to a boil, then lower to a bare simmer with the lid ajar.
5. Skim the surface for the first 30 minutes. Simmer for 2½ hours total, until the brisket is tender when pierced but not falling apart.
6. Lift out the brisket and plunge it into cold water for 5 minutes (this keeps it from darkening). Drain, dry and refrigerate.
7. Season the broth with fish sauce and sugar, simmer 30 minutes more, then strain through a fine sieve. It should taste slightly too salty on its own.
8. Soak the noodles in warm water for 30 minutes, then boil in a separate pot for 1 to 2 minutes until just tender. Drain. Slice the brisket thinly against the grain.
9. Divide the noodles, brisket and raw onion among bowls and ladle over boiling broth. Serve with the herbs, sprouts, lime and chilli at the table.

Notes

- **Make ahead:** the broth keeps 3–4 days in the fridge or 3 months frozen; skim the set fat off the top if you like a lighter bowl. Reheat to a rolling boil before ladling.
- **Other cuts:** add thin raw sirloin slices to the bowl, which the hot broth cooks in a minute.

- **Clearer broth:** never let it boil hard after the first skim.
- **Shortcut:** a pressure cooker makes the broth faster: about 1 hr at high pressure, then natural release, after the parboil and charring steps.
- **Chef's touch:** warm the bowls with hot tap water first; thin noodles and broth cool quickly in cold china.