

Phở Gà

To overcome the rampant alienation in our pseudo-industrial society, we turn to a communal meal in the Vietnamese tradition, which requires only two “exotic ingredients” as far as Americans are concerned:

Nuoc Man - also known as “fish sauce” is made from fermented anchovies. On its own, it is dreadful. When combined with lime juice and hot pepper oil, it imparts a unique, spicy taste to dozens of Vietnamese dishes. Look for Tommy Tang’s version in the Asian section of your supermarket.

Hoisin Sauce.- the Chinese equivalent of ketchup, is a thick tomato paste with spices. Also available in most supermarkets.

Ingredients:

- 48 oz. chicken stock (jumbo can)
- 1 lb. shredded chicken (white meat)
- fresh ginger (buy a “hand” of ginger, and use one finger)
- 1 pkg. fresh bean sprouts (in the produce section)
- 6 scallions
- 2 shallots (or 2 cloves of garlic if you can’t find them)
- 10 leaves fresh basil
- 1 lime (½ to be juiced, the other ½ sliced into wedges)
- 2 tablespoons hot sauce (e.g., Frank’s Louisiana)
- 1 can jalapeño peppers (they’re not just for breakfast any more)
- 1 shredded carrot (for garnish)
- 2 tablespoons nuoc man (a little goes a long way, not to be confused with Long Hue)
- 1 jar hoisin sauce

Heuristics:

This is a meal where “playing with your food” is encouraged. Chicken should be cooked ahead of time, either poached or roasted. Leftover garlic chicken works best. Remove skin, then shred the cooked chicken, and place in a bowl for assembly at table.

Heat large can of chicken stock (that collegiate brand, for example) in large soup pot. Dice scallions, add half to the pan, reserving the remainder for garnish at table. Dice shallots and add to pan. Peel, then shred fresh ginger, add to pan. Mince basil leaves and add to pan. Open and drain jalapeño peppers, then put in small bowl for garnish at table. Add nuoc man, lime juice and hot sauce to soup pot. Rinse bean sprouts, then place in bowl for tableside ministrations.

Now comes the fun part: When soup is piping hot, bring to table, then let each guest create his/her own combination. Throw individual portions of bean sprouts and shredded chicken into bowl, then add soup. Sprinkle scallions on top, add two or three jalapeño peppers, and squeeze a wedge of lime into the bowl. A teaspoon of hoisin should complete the picture. The adventurous may add a few splashes of hot sauce. (Intriguing how the French influenced cuisine in more than one delta!) Then as they say in Saigon or Baton Rouge, “laissez les bons temps rouler!” If you know what Plum Sauce is, you may also offer that as a garnish to the cognoscenti. It’s on the sweet side though, and probably not worth a special trip to the store.

Recipe brought to you as a community service, and officially endorsed by **The Iceman**.

