

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

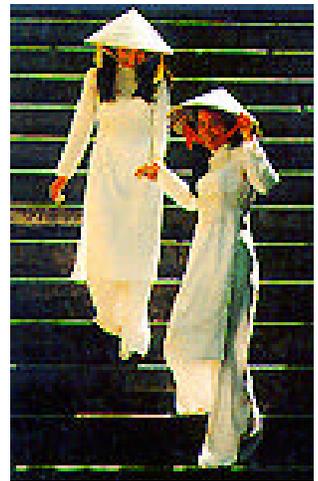
Heuristics:

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**.



Pâté de Foie Québécois

To be totally authentic, this recipe calls for smuggling a bottle of brandy from Quebec. Timid souls, or those living at a distance from La Belle Province may substitute Single Malt Irish Whiskey.

Ingredients:

1 lb. Chicken Liver(s)
¼ pound butter (1 stick)
1 Vidalia Onion
2 oz. Firewater
2 Tablespoons Sweet Curry Powder
1 Tablespoon fresh ground pepper (white or black)
2 oz. Heavy Cream (optional)



Heuristics:

Melt butter in frying pan over medium heat. Add in curry powder and pepper to pan and stir briefly. (Heating the spices brings out their full flavor.)

Slice the onion into medium size slivers then add to pan. Everything will go through a food processor later, so you don't need to dice it into unidentifiable molecules.

Continue cooking onions over medium heat, stirring periodically, until onions are golden brown, and all moisture from onions is cooked off. This will take at least a half-hour. If you don't do this, the final product will be watery!

Thoroughly wash the chicken liver(s). If you can find one liver that weighs a pound, you are onto something (or on something). Remove gristle, veins or chicken fat globules.

Add liver(s) to pan, continue medium heat while you test the firewater of your choice. This will take about 15 minutes.

Remove pan from burner (yes, you should turn off the burner), and allow it to cool for another 10 minutes. Test firewater again, to be sure. If you have both the Québec brandy AND the Single Malt Irish Whiskey in your house, you will be faced with a difficult decision.

Finally, run the entire concoction through a food processor, adding the 2 oz. (shots) of firewater at that time. Inhale.

Now get this – if you add the optional heavy cream, it will make the final product lighter! Being health conscious, the chef prefers to omit this final ingredient.

Pour the slurry of activity into one-cup containers (divide it into two doses – one to share, and one to hoard). Refrigerate for at least four hours before presenting to the discerning palate. Serve with stone ground Canadian crackers or slices of French bread. Then plan a trip to Gaspé & environs.

Note: If you double or triple the batch (a very smart thing to do once you realize how delightful it is, and recognizing the productivity/efficiency gained by slicing and sautéing in quantity, as you blend portions of the ingredients in your food processor, pour them into one large bowl and stir, so that the ingredients are evenly divided from batch to batch.

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