



Vietnamese Dishes for Lunar New Year

Braised Pork and Eggs (*Thịt Kho Trứng*)

- 1 lb pork butt/shoulder, cut into 1" chunks
- 1 tbsp garlic, minced
- 1.5 tbsp shallots, minced
- ½ tsp fish sauce (I highly recommend Việt Hương/Three Crabs brand)
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 tsp pepper
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 1-2 tbsp water
- 1.5 cups coconut juice
- 6 eggs

Marinate the pork with garlic, shallots, fish sauce, salt, and pepper for at least 30 minutes.

To add a golden color to this braised dish, you need to add a caramel sauce to it (not the same caramel sauce that you drizzle on your ice-cream). In a large saucepan on medium heat, add two tablespoons of brown sugar. Once the sugar is bubbling and has a nice amber color to it, add one to two tablespoons of water.

Add the marinated pork to the saucepan with the caramelized sugar and brown it evenly. Then add the coconut juice to the pan. Bring to a soft boil, and then lower the heat to low and cover for 30 minutes.

Hard-boil the eggs while the pork is cooking. Peel the eggs then poke some holes in them. The holes will help the eggs absorb the sauce more.

After the pork has been cooking for 30 minutes, taste the sauce and add more salt or fish sauce and pepper to your taste. Add the eggs and cook uncover for another 30-45 minutes.

Serve with rice and pickled bean sprouts.

Pickled Bean Sprouts (*Dưa Giá*)

- 1 lb bean sprouts
- 1 cup Chinese chives, cut into 2" strips
- 1 medium carrot, cut into 2" matchsticks
- 2.5 cups warm water
- 1.5 cups white sugar
- 1.5 teaspoons salt
- 1.5 cups white vinegar

Dissolve the sugar and salt in the warm water then add the vinegar. Set aside.

In a large bowl, mix the bean sprouts, chives, and carrot. Add the sugar and vinegar mixture and toss. The pickled bean sprouts will be ready to eat in about 1-1.5 hours.

The pickle will last for about two weeks in the fridge, if it's not gone by then.

Spring Rolls (*Gỏi Cuốn*)

- 1 package clear edible rice paper sheets (spring roll wrapper)
- 1/2 lb cooked small shrimp (peeled, deveined, halved)
- 1 bunch fresh mint leaves
- 1 head leafy lettuce, washed and separated into leaves
- 1 cucumbers, peeled and cut into thin strips
- 1 carrot, peeled and grated
- 1 cup fresh bean sprouts (optional)
- 1 package vermicelli rice noodles, prepared according to package directions

Have shrimp precooked and cold and the rice noodles prepared already.

Make sure all veggies and herbs are cleaned, dried, and set out before you start.

Dip a sheet of rice paper into warm water quickly, no longer than a few seconds (depending on the brand of rice paper you get) and lay flat on a work surface. The rice paper should still be a little bit stiff. As you're adding the ingredients onto your rice paper, it will continue to soften and be easy to roll without tearing. If it gets too soft, it would tear easier while you're rolling it.

On one edge, lay some noodles, shrimp, mint leaves, cucumber strips, bean sprouts, and a lettuce leaf. The ratio of each ingredient is up to you, but don't overstuff the roll.

Carefully start to roll up eggroll style, tucking in the sides, then continue to roll up-but not too tightly or the spring roll will split.

Peanut Dipping Sauce

- 1/2 cup natural creamy peanut butter
- 1/4 cup lukewarm water
- 3 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 1/2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 1/2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic

Microwave peanut butter for 20 seconds - should be slightly warm. Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.

Sauce can be made 1 day ahead of time, and will keep 3 to 4 days in the refrigerator.

Yield: about 1 1/4 cups