

TAIWANESE BEEF NOODLE SOUP

This is the national dish of Taiwan, and it actually originates from mainland China. The KMT (nationalist party) that fled China to Taiwan were the inventors of this dish, and what makes it uniquely Taiwanese is the toasted soy sauce on the braised beef. This is known as "red roasting" (braising with soy sauce). The initial acidic sharp flavour of the sauce softens, replaced with a toasted aroma, introducing a new fragrance and flavour. In China, beef noodle soup has a stronger and purer beefy taste, made without the red roasting of the soy sauce. More of a noodle dish that contains some soup, this is a popular street food served in a bag to go. Serve hot, hot, hot!

Time: 20 mins (2 hours simmering)

Serving: 4 bowls

- * Cooking oil
- * 3 large onions, diced
- * 5 garlic cloves, pressed
- * 100g ginger, thickly sliced
- * 4 spring onions, chopped
- * 8 star anise
- * 1kg beef shank or shin, cut into chunks (keep the bones)
- * 1 cup low sodium soy sauce
- * 4 large carrots, chopped (thick slices)
- * 4 plum tomatoes or 150g rosa tomatoes, skinned
- * 1 Tbsp Chinese five-spice
- * ¼ cup orange juice
- * 1 packet (300g) egg noodles
- * Salt
- * Chopped chilli

OPTIONAL EXTRAS:*

- * ¼ cup rice wine
- * 1 tsp – ¼ cup brown sugar
- * Bok Choy
- * Handful chopped coriander
- * 1 spring onion, chopped
- * Pickled mustard leaves
(The dish will still have a rad flavour if you leave these out.)

- 1 In a soup pot over medium-high heat, heat oil and sauté onion until golden.
- 2 Add garlic, ginger, spring onion and star anise and cook until onions are golden-brown. Remove into a bowl.
- 3 Drizzle more oil into the pot and add the beef (and bones – they add rich flavour). Fry until the meat has browned.
- 4 Add a dash of soy sauce and continue to fry for 2 minutes, adding more soy sauce to "red roast" the beef.
- 5 Add the carrots, tomatoes, Chinese five-spice and orange juice (plus rice wine and sugar if using) and stir.
- 6 Return the onion mix to the pot and add about 5 cups of water, so that all the ingredients are covered.
- 7 Boil for 5 minutes, then lower heat to a slow simmer for 1½ to 2 hours. You may need to top up the water. Leave a wooden spoon in the soup to prevent it from boiling over and cover the pot.
- 8 Boil the egg noodles. Add a drop of oil to the water to keep the strands from sticking to each other and the pot. Rinse the noodles in cool water to keep them chewy.
- 9 Blanch the Bok Choy in a separate pot, if using.
- 10 Add salt and chilli to taste to the soup.
- 11 Place a handful of noodles in a serving bowl, ladle in the soup and some meat (and add the Bok Choy). If you like, garnish with coriander, spring onion and strips of pickled mustard leaves.

