

Vegetarian Vietnamese Bun Cha

with Seared Tofu

Bun cha is a Vietnamese pork and rice noodle dish, especially beloved in the capital city of Hanoi. At one time, cooks could be seen selling bun cha up and down the streets, carrying improvised grills on their heads (fashioned from metal bread boxes). In this recipe, we're using pan-seared tofu to make bun cha deliciously vegetarian. Topped with a traditional, savory sauce featuring bird's eye chile and coconut palm sugar, this dish is worthy of the crowds that would gather around Hanoi's famous, bun cha street vendors.



Ingredients

- 1 14-Ounce Package Firm Tofu
 - 6 Ounces Vermicelli Rice Noodles
 - 2 Ounces Bean Sprouts
 - 1 Carrot
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ Pound Red Cabbage
 - 1 Bunch Mint
 - 1 Bunch Thai Basil
- ### Knick Knacks
- 3 Tablespoons Peanuts
 - 1 Lime
 - 1 Tablespoon Coconut Palm Sugar
 - 1 Bird's Eye Chile
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ Cup Golden Mountain Sauce

Makes 2 Servings

About 600 Calories Per Serving

Cooking Time: 15 to 25 Minutes



1



Prepare the ingredients:

Wash and dry the fresh produce. Heat a medium pot of salted water to boiling on high. Cube the tofu. Peel and cut the carrot into thin matchsticks. Remove and discard the core of the cabbage; thinly slice the cabbage leaves. Thinly slice the bird's eye chile into rounds and remove the seeds. (For a less spicy dish, discard half the chile.) Pick the mint and Thai basil leaves off the stems; discard the stems. Roughly chop the peanuts. Using a peeler, remove the green rind of the lime, avoiding the white pith; mince the rind to get 2 teaspoons of zest. Quarter the lime.

2



Make the bun cha sauce:

In a medium bowl, combine the **golden mountain sauce**, **coconut palm sugar**, **bird's eye chile**, **lime zest** and the **juice of all 4 lime wedges**; whisk until thoroughly combined and the sugar is dissolved.

3



Cook the tofu:

In a large pan (nonstick, if you have one), heat 2 teaspoons of olive oil on medium-high until hot. Add the **tofu** and cook, flipping occasionally, 7 to 9 minutes, or until evenly browned. Transfer to a bowl and toss with **1 teaspoon of the bun cha sauce**; season with salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

4



Cook the noodles:

While the tofu cooks, add the **noodles** to the pot of boiling water. Cook 3 to 5 minutes, or until tender. Drain thoroughly and rinse under cold water for 30 seconds to 1 minute to stop the cooking process.

5



Mix the noodle salad:

In a large bowl, combine the **cooked noodles**, **carrot**, **cabbage** and **remaining bun cha sauce**; season with salt and pepper to taste. Toss gently to mix.

6



Plate your dish:

Divide the **noodle salad** between 2 dishes. Top each with half the **cooked tofu** and half the **bean sprouts**. Garnish with the **Thai basil**, **mint** and **peanuts**. Enjoy!