

Beef Ball Soup Recipe

(Thai Recipes)

Ingredients: Serves 4-6

10 oz (300 g) lean topside beef, thinly sliced
2 teaspoons sesame oil
2 tablespoons minced fresh coriander leaf
liberal sprinkling of freshly ground black pepper

Marinade:

1 tablespoon fish sauce
1 tablespoon iced water
2 teaspoons lime juice
1 teaspoon tapioca flour or cornflour
½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
¼ teaspoon sugar

Stock:

6 cups (1.5 liters) beef stock, preferably home-made
1 tablespoon fish sauce
1 medium red or brown onion, minced
1 clove garlic, smashed and minced
1 stem lemon grass, sliced
1 whole star anise
½ teaspoon black peppercorns
salt to taste

Method:

Put the sliced beef in a bowl and add the marinade ingredients, massing well with your hand until the liquid is completely absorbed. Cover the meat and refrigerate for at least 4 hours, or overnight if preferred. To make the stock, put all the ingredients except salt in a pan and bring to a boil. Cover the pan, lower the heat, and simmer for 20 minutes. Strain, discarding the solids, then return the stock to the pan. Taste and add salt if desired. Transfer the marinated beef to a food processor and process to a very smooth paste. Put the sesame oil in a small dish and use it to moisten your hands. You can use both hands to shape the mixture into very small balls about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (2 cm) in diameter. Alternatively, you can try doing it the Vietnamese way, taking a handful of the beef mixture in one oiled hand and making a circle with between your thumb and forefinger. Squeeze out some of the meat, scraping off the small ball that emerges with a teaspoon held in your other (non-oiled) hand. Repeat until you have used up the beef mixture and set the balls aside on a plate. (You should have around 30 beef balls). Reheat the stock, add the beef balls, and bring to the boil. When the beef balls have risen to the surface of the stock, lower the heat and simmer with the pan partially covered for 3 minutes. Transfer to individual soup bowls, sprinkle with coriander leaf and black pepper, and serve immediately as an accompaniment to rice.

Note: If you would like to convert this into a noodle soup, increase the amount of stock to 7 cups (1.75 liters) and add 7 oz (200 g) cooked rice vermicelli or wheat noodles before serving. You could add a handful of bean sprouts too, if you have them handy.