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## Pho Recipe (How to Make Vietnamese Noodle Soup)

[Jessica Randhawa](#)

Last Updated July 27, 2020 |



July 27, 2020

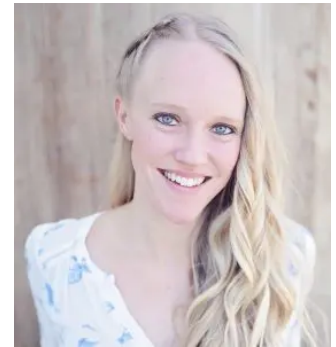
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4.80 from 775 votes

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This unbelievably delicious **Vietnamese Pho Recipe** is made with a nourishing beef broth infused with fragrant spices, chewy noodles, and tender slices of meat. Filled with the same delicious and authentic flavors as your favorite pho restaurant, learn how to make this Vietnamese Noodle Soup from scratch and serve topped with fresh herbs and vegetables.



I'm Jessica! Aka mom, wife, chef, and travel-obsessed photographer. Welcome to The Forked Spoon. Here you can browse hundreds of incredible family-friendly recipes covering dozens of diets, courses, and cuisines. [Learn more about me.](#)



## Pho Recipe

Pho (pronounced "fuh") is a popular Vietnamese Noodle Soup and a recipe truly worth learning how to master. Filled with layers of aromatic and complex flavors, the key to any good pho recipe is the broth.

In this post, **I will share two methods for making pho broth.**

## Reader Favorites



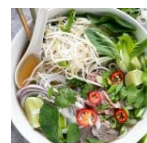
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The first, more authentic version, is lengthy but completely worth the extra effort if you're looking to duplicate the pho from your favorite Vietnamese restaurant. The method is nearly identical to making [homemade bone broth](#) and comes packed with tons of nutritional benefits. The recipe makes a lot of broth, so cut in half or freeze the leftovers for a rainy day.

The second, less authentic (translation: not at all authentic), version, is a fast and easy 20-minute broth inspired by my [bok choy soup recipe](#). Perfect for last-minute cravings, this version lacks much of the nutritional benefits of the above but it's there for you when you're in a hurry.

If this is your first time trying Vietnamese noodle soup, I recommend trying the fast version to start. It includes several of the same spices, so you'll get an idea for the overall taste and flavor.



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## What is Pho?

Pho (**Phở**) originated in the early 20th century in northern Vietnam. It is a Vietnamese soup consisting of broth, *bánh phở* (rice noodles), simple herbs and vegetables, and meat. The type of meat typically found in Pho is usually either *phở gà* (chicken pho) or *phở bò* (beef pho).

You will find that different parts of Vietnam serve different styles with some regions offering a sweeter broth, different herbs, or wider noodles.





## Pho Ingredients & Frequently Asked Questions

For this pho recipe, I chose to make *phở bò*, or beef pho. You can find most of the ingredients at your favorite grocery store, Asian supermarket, or online (like Amazon).

- Marrow bones and Meaty bones
- Thinly sliced raw meat
- Yellow onions

- Whole garlic
- Fresh ginger
- Whole spices: star anise, cloves, cinnamon sticks, black cardamom pods, fennel seeds, coriander seeds
- Salt
- Fish sauce
- Sugar

## **What bones should I use to make pho broth?**

The best beef pho broth is made using several different types of beef bones. I like to add strictly marrow bones (no meat) and meaty bones (bones with meat on them. Try to incorporate a mix of knuckles, joints, feet, or marrow bones like leg and shin bones that have been cut into smaller pieces. For added flavor incorporate meaty bones like oxtail, shank, and short ribs. You can also toss in 2-3 pounds beef brisket or beef cheek, which adds amazing flavor and provides leftover meat for sandwiches and soups.

## **How can I slice my raw beef super thin?**

The easiest way to thinly slice tender raw beef is to partially freeze it before slicing. Careful not to freeze it all the way, though! Otherwise, it will be impossible to slice through. It's also helpful to have a recently sharpened knife.

## **Raw meat- what's the best cut?**



Boneless is easiest to slice. Flank steak, tri-tip steak, or brisket. Or, you can splurge (recommended!) and add beef tenderloin – so yummy!

Remember – you're not cooking this meat before adding it to the soup. Instead, you will add to your bowl of noodles and pour your boiling broth directly over the top. The result is perfectly cooked medium-rare slices of meat.

**Do you have to blanch the bones?** The answer is no. However, I recommend, especially if you're you're making your broth from beef bones, that you do blanch them first. If you're using chicken bones or chicken feet- blanching is less important, but beef bones really need this extra step, to remove impurities, coagulated protein, and blood which ultimately results in a cleaner, better tasting broth.

As far as nutrient loss due to blanching? The nutrient loss is too small to justify not blanching (in my opinion).

### **The spices are really important**

If you're wondering what sets pho broth apart from regular beef bone broth, it's all the added spices and aromatics. I know that there's a lot of them, but they're each incredibly important. So, if you're wondering if you can skip out on the spices and still have amazing broth, the answer is absolutely – but it won't be Vietnamese pho soup broth, it will simply be bone broth.

Also, note that it's a good idea to toast your spices in a dry pan or skillet before adding them to your simmering pot. This just helps intensify their flavors. Remember to pick up or order some cheesecloth (food grade) and kitchen twine to wrap them in.

### **What noodles are used in pho?**

Available fresh and dried, these rice noodles typically come in small, medium, and large widths. Fresh *Bahn Pho Kho* is typically pretty hard to locate outside of specialty supermarkets, so you'll probably find yourself with dried noodles. That's ok- dried noodles are great. The best size for soup is either small or medium.



## Pho Soup Garnishes

Basically, all the things you want to pile on top of your soup. Think fresh, green, and healthy.

- Fresh mint
- Sprigs of Thai basil
- Fresh cilantro
- Green onions (scallions)
- Sliced white or red onion
- Fresh lime wedges

- Mung bean sprouts
- Sliced Thai red chiles
- Cabbage
- Bok choy
- Sliced Jalapeño
- Sriracha or other spicy chili sauce
- Hoisin sauce
- Fish sauce

You know, those things.



# How to Cook Pho Noodles (Bahn Pho Kho)

As I discussed above, you'll want to get your hands on some rice noodles. These [rice noodles](#) are awesome as they don't need to be boiled. Simply place in a pot of boiling water and allow them to rest for approximately 10 minutes before draining.

**Do you have to use rice noodles?** No, of course not. But, they're highly recommended. Rice noodles are chewy, delicious, and made to go in Vietnamese noodle soups.

**Can you boil the rice noodles directly in the broth?** No. Well, I mean technically, yes. But, no. **Please, boil or soak your noodles separately.** Especially if you spent the hours and hours to make beautiful, clear, delicious bone broth. If you cook directly in your broth it will make your broth cloudy and your noodles will (likely) fall apart or turn soggy over time.



## Assembling the Very Best Bowl of Pho

Like building the perfect sandwich, **there is a right and a wrong way when constructing a bowl a pho.**

The wrong way? Throw everything together. The right way? Throw it all together, in a very specific order.

1. **Pick a large enough bowl.** YOU GUYS, Vietnamese noodle soup needs big bowls. Cereal bowls will not work here. Between the noodles and the broth and the veggies, bowls fill up fast.
2. **Rice noodles first.** Add your pre-cooked noodles first. My husband loves a whole lot of noodles, whereas I love extra veggies. Fill your bowl appropriately.
3. **Raw meat next.** Yes, you guys. RAW. Totally, completely uncooked (see above). Remember how I mentioned slicing your beef super (paper) thin? **This is why.** Don't worry, assuming your broth is boiling hot and not just warm, your meat will get fully cooked.
4. **Add the broth.** It doesn't matter which broth (the fast or the slow method), this is the moment. **Just make sure it's super hot.**
5. **Garnish like crazy.** Add cooked beef from the bones you used to make the bone broth, add one sauce...or five. Guys, it's up to you!  
**Have fun!**



## How to Store Leftover Pho Broth

Before storing your pho broth in the refrigerator or freezer you want to **cool it down to room temperature**. Ideally, you want to do this as quickly as possible to prevent any chance of contamination. The easiest way to do this is by adding a couple of handfuls of ice to the pot, covering, and waiting for the broth to cool. The ice helps expedite this process.



Or, as suggested by a reader, fill your sink or bathtub with a few inches of cold water. Place the pot in the cold water and allow the broth to cool to room temperature.

Store the leftover broth in a large stockpot, in mason jars, or in glass storage containers. If you plan to freeze your broth, transfer desired amounts to large ziplock bags with most of the air removed. Lay flat and allow at least 4-6 hours to freeze completely.

The leftover broth will stay fresh for up to 5 days in the refrigerator and 6 months in the freezer.

**I do NOT recommend freezing anything other than the pho broth.** That means, no noodles and no veggies. Only the broth.



## More Soup Recipes,

[Homemade Chicken Noodle Soup Recipe](#)

[Kimchi Ramen Noodle Soup \(30 minutes\).](#)

[Udon Noodle Soup with Bok Choy](#)

[Creamy Chicken and Wild Rice Soup Recipe](#)

[Easy Minestrone Soup Recipe \(Stovetop + Slow Cooker\).](#)

**If you try cooking this Pho Recipe (Vietnamese Noodle Soup), please leave me a comment and let me know!** I always love to hear your thoughts.



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## Pho Recipe (How to Make



## Vietnamese Noodle Soup)

★★★★★ 4.80 from 775 votes

Chef:  [Jessica Randhawa](#)

Learn How to Make this Vietnamese Noodle Soup Recipe (Pho) right in your own home with these easy to follow instructions.

Note- there are two sets of instructions. The first is for the more authentic pho broth (long version)

and the second is for the less authentic (short version).



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Prep Time Cook Time Refrigerate Total Time

1 hr

8 hrs

6 hrs

9 hrs



COURSE

CUISINE

SERVINGS

CALORIES

Beef, Main  
Course,  
Soup

Asian

12 bowls of  
pho (highly  
variable)

574 kcal

## INGREDIENTS

US Customary

Metric

1x

2x

3x

### Authentic Pho Broth (8+ hours)

- 10 pounds beef bones - preferably a mix of marrow bones (femur bones) and bones with meat on them (oxtail, short ribs, and knuckle bones cut in half)
- 2 medium yellow onions - peel and quarter
- 2 whole heads [garlic](#) - halved crosswise
- 4 (2-inch pieces) ginger - sliced lengthwise
- 6 whole [star anise](#)
- 12 whole [cloves](#)
- 2 whole cinnamon sticks
- 2 [black cardamom pods](#)
- 2 tablespoon [fennel seeds](#)
- 2 tablespoon [coriander seeds](#)
- 2 tablespoon salt - (plus more to taste)

- ⅔ cup [fish sauce](#) - divided between the two pots
- 4 tablespoon [sugar](#) - divided between the two pots

### Non-Authentic Pho Broth (20-30 minutes)

- 1 tablespoon [olive oil](#)
- 3 shallots - diced
- 1 bunch green onions - chopped, green and white parts divided
- 4 cloves [garlic](#) - minced
- 2 tablespoon fresh ginger - minced
- 6 cups low-sodium chicken broth - or water
- 2 whole [star anise](#)
- 1 tablespoon [soy sauce](#)
- 1 tablespoon [fish sauce](#)

### Assembly

- 1 pound flat rice noodles - dried or fresh
- 1 pound beef - flank steak, chuck roast, brisket, sirloin (sliced thin against the grain)
- sliced red or white onions
- fresh cilantro - chopped

### For the Table

- fresh mint, Thai basil
- mung bean sprouts
- green onions - (scallions)
- sliced jalapeño
- lime wedges
- thinly sliced red chilis
- hoisin sauce
- [fish sauce](#)
- chili sauce
- bok choy

**Cook Mode** Prevent your screen from going dark

## INSTRUCTIONS

### Authentic Pho Broth (8+ hours)

- 1. Blanch the bones.** This step is SO IMPORTANT. If you want a clear, beautiful pho broth, blanch your bones. Do this by dividing the bones between two large pots or stockpots. Cover with cold water. Bring to a boil over high heat and simmer for 15-20 minutes. Drain and rinse the bones with water.
- 2. Roast the bones and the vegetables (optional).** Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F. Transfer the bones, onion, garlic, and ginger to the roasting pans or rimmed baking sheets (you'll probably need two). Don't pile them all on top of each other. Roast for 30 minutes before gently tossing the bones, and roasting for an additional 15-30 minutes more (for a total of 45-60 minutes).
- 3. Toast the spices.** As the bones are roasting, add all of your spices (the star anise, cinnamon, cloves, cardamom pods, coriander seeds, and fennel seeds) to a large, dry skillet over low heat. Toast the spices, stirring often to prevent burning, until fragrant, approximately 5 minutes.  
**Divide the spices in half.** Cut [cheesecloth](#) into two small square pieces (approximately 5-inches by 5-inches) each. Transfer the divided spices to the center of each square. Gather at the top and secure with kitchen twine.

4. **Transfer the roasted bones and veggies back to the stockpots.** Making sure to wash the pots after the bones were blanched and drained. Transfer and divide the roasted bones, onion, garlic, and ginger back to the stockpots. Scrape up any remaining bits and juices left in the roasting pan using a metal spatula and a little water, if needed. Add to the pot with the bones (don't worry, all those brown bits are FLAVOR!).
5. **Bring to a boil.** With the bones, spice sachets (one per pot), onion, garlic, and ginger divided between the two pots, fill each pot with approximately 12 cups water (or until bones are fully submerged), 1/3 cup fish sauce and 2 tablespoons of sugar. Bring to a boil.
6. **Simmer the bones.** Immediately reduce heat to low and simmer, with the lid slightly ajar, skimming any foam or excess fat, occasionally (if you blanched your bones, you shouldn't see much foam). Simmer for at least 6-12 hours, ideally 24 hours (do not leave the stove running overnight. Simply cool and store in the refrigerator and continue to simmer the next day). Add more water if needed to make sure the bones stay submerged.
7. **Strain the broth.** Once the bones have simmered and your hot broth is ready, strain it through a fine-mesh strainer or colander into a clean pot. This separates the pretty, clear broth from the bones and spices.



8. **Season to taste.** Add additional salt (you'll probably need a little), soy sauce, fish sauce, sugar or rock sugar (found at Asian markets), to taste. Set aside the broth to cool (if you're not using right away) and reserve the bones.
9. **Don't forget about the meat.** I can almost guarantee that there is a TON of delicious meat waiting to be picked from the bones. Don't let it go to waste!  
**Discard the meat-free bones, herbs, and other bits that were used to make the broth,** but save the meat and add to sandwiches, wraps, salads, or back to your broth.
10. **Skim the fat from the top (optional).** Add a couple of handfuls of ice to your broth to expedite cooling and cover your pot with a lid. Transfer the broth to the refrigerator and **allow the broth to cool fully** (this will take upwards of 6 hours or overnight). The result will be a hard, thick layer of fat on the top and a bottom layer that is your pho broth (which should look like gelatinous brown jello). If desired use a fork to scoop off the top layer of fat.

### **Non-Authentic Pho Broth (20-30 minutes)**

1. **Cook the mirepoix.** To a medium stockpot over medium heat, add the olive oil and shallots. Cook the shallots for approximately 5 minutes, stirring often. Add the white parts of a few green onions, the minced garlic, and ginger. Stir well to combine and cook for 1-2 more minutes.

2. **Add pre-made broth or stock.** Add your favorite store-bought broth or stock to the pot and bring to a simmer.
3. **Add some flavor.** Add 1-2 whole star anise, soy sauce, and fish sauce to the broth. Cover. Simmer for 15-20 minutes.
4. **Remove the star anise.** Try not to forget this part.
5. **Season to taste.** When it comes to Pho, you do you. Add more salt, more sugar, more fish sauce, etc.

### Assembly

1. **Slice your meat.** Thinly slice your meat. If you're having trouble, place it in the freezer for 10 minutes which will make it easier to slice.
2. **Noodles first.** Grab a large bowl and divide the pre-cooked noodles between bowls.
3. **Add the raw meat.** Yes, you guys. RAW. Add the meat directly on top of the rice noodles. Don't worry, assuming your broth is boiling hot and not just warm, your meat will get fully cooked.
4. **Add the broth.** It doesn't matter which broth (the fast or the slow method), this is the moment. Just make sure it's super hot and ladle directly over the meat.
5. **Garnish like crazy.** Add some extra cooked beef from the bones you used to make the bone broth, add one sauce...or five. Guys, it's up to you! Have fun!

### JESSICA'S NOTES

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- **This recipe will require two (8+ quart) stockpots and two roasting pans or rimmed baking sheets.** You can easily cut the recipe in half. *However*, pho soup freezes well and takes so much effort, why not, right? You will also need 1-2 large [Roasting Pans](#) or rimmed baking sheets.
- Servings amounts. Authentic Pho Broth (approximately 8 large bowls or 24 cups of broth). Non-Authentic Pho Broth (approximately 2 bowls of Pho).

*Originally published November 30, 2018*

## NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Calories: 574kcal | Carbohydrates: 8g | Protein: 5g | Fat: 57g  
| Saturated Fat: 0g | Cholesterol: 0mg | Sodium: 2179mg |  
Potassium: 111mg | Fiber: 1g | Sugar: 5g | Vitamin A: 165IU |  
Vitamin C: 1.9mg | Calcium: 38mg | Iron: 3.9mg

(Nutrition information provided is an estimate and will vary based on cooking methods and specific brands of ingredients used.)



### KEYWORD

How to make Pho, Pho, Pho Recipe, Vietnamese Noodle Soup



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## About Jessica

Jessica Randhawa is the head chef, photographer, and recipe developer of The Forked Spoon. Jessica fell in love with cooking while traveling through Asia and Europe, where she discovered her passion for good food and new adventures. Her recipes have been featured on Yahoo, MSN, USA Today, FeedFeed, and many more. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of California.



## Comments

Rachael says

April 15, 2023 at 5:56 pm

I used the quick recipe for a grilled pork pho the other night. I didn't have any star anise so I used a dash of 5 spice and it was delicious! My 6 year old loved it!

[Reply.](#)

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GastroHeathen says

March 20, 2023 at 11:08 pm

This recipe has great techniques built in but is lacking in guidance on flavor balancing after straining the broth. I think it would be safe to recommend at \*least\* 1T hoison, 1t soy or tamari, 1T dark Chinese vinegar, 1t MSG, and probably 1T or more additional sugar (brown is better than white) depending on type of beef used.

Try mushrooms and a couple carrot ends to help round out the spices against a richer base.

[Reply.](#)

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Kristen says

March 1, 2023 at 9:55 am

Do I need to add any oil in the pan when I roast the bones and brisket and veggies? I had to use three pans because my veggies didn't fit in my dish with the bones.

[Reply.](#)

[Jessica Randhawa](#) says

March 1, 2023 at 10:54 am

Oiling is not required, but you can if you would like 😊

[Reply.](#)

---

Tania says

February 28, 2023 at 7:01 am

Thank you so much Jessica, this recipe turned out awesome, like how I had in Vietnam years ago!

[Reply.](#)

---

Ma Kie says

February 15, 2023 at 8:10 am

This recipe for authentic broth turned out amazing, thanks

[Reply.](#)

[Jessica Randhawa](#) says

February 16, 2023 at 11:53 am

I appreciate your amazing feedback for the authentic version, Ma Kie 😊

[Reply](#)

Jonathan says

February 8, 2023 at 2:09 am

Hi Jessica,

I'm a little confused with the serving amounts between the authentic and non-authentic pho. So the authentic one make 24 cups and the non-authentic makes 6 cups based on the 12 serving recipe? Just wondering why it's different serving amounts.

I'm thinking of trying the non-authentic one with a homemade chicken broth with one whole chicken, 9lb chicken bones, and 6 onions in a 18 qt pot with about 48 cups, so I wanted to nailed down the serving amounts correctly. It looks like a lot of spices, garlic, and shallots for just 6 cups in the 12 serving recipe. Would you recommend sticking to the recipe amounts if I increase it 48 cups for the non-authentic (base on a 96 serving recipe)? Do you think it'll make a huge difference in flavor

if I leave out the shallots since I'm already using onions?

Thank!

[Reply.](#)

[Jessica Randhawa](#) says

February 8, 2023 at 11:56 am

If you are looking to make a [homemade chicken broth](#)-based pho, I would scale the spices/garlic/shallots based on the amount of water you add for your 9lbs of bones and whole chicken compared to the **authentic broth recipe**.

Shallots have a unique flavor compared to onions, so I think omitting shallots, in this case, depends on if you like shallots or not



[Reply.](#)

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