

## Bánh Mì

*The Vietnamese adopted the baguette from their French colonists and put it to very good use in these delicious 'Saigon sandwiches'. This is the perfect way to use up leftover roast meats, especially pork, and ideally Chinese BBQ-style char siu pork. This recipe fuses techniques from Andrea Nguyen's book 'Into the Vietnamese Kitchen' with inspiration from Saigon Sandwich\*, by far the best hole-in-the-wall bánh mì purveyor in all of San Francisco.*



Serves: as many as you have ingredients for

Total active time: 45 mins max (Start one day in advance if you can)

*For the pickled carrot and daikon ('đồ chua'):*\*

2 medium carrots, peeled and sliced into thin 2" long matchsticks

1 daikon (1-2" wide), peeled and sliced into thin 2" long matchsticks

1 tsp salt

2 tsps + 8 tbsps sugar

300ml (1¼ cups) distilled white vinegar

240ml (1 cup) lukewarm water

*You will also need:*

crusty baguette rolls, or 6" lengths of a wide baguette

mayonnaise\*

Maggi Seasoning Sauce\* (or Marmite mixed with water so just pourable)

cucumber (English), sliced into rounds on the angle

medium-hot chillies (eg jalapeños), sliced into rounds on the angle

cooked meat, (eg *char siu* pork\*, 5-spice pork, roast chicken, liver paté), sliced

fresh coriander leaves, thick stems removed

limes, halved

1. *First make the salad:* Sprinkle the salt and 2 tsps sugar over the carrot and daikon matchsticks. Use your hands to gently massage the salt and sugar into the vegetables so they release their water. After 2 mins of massaging the vegetables should be flexible, ie not snap when folded in half so ends meet. Drain and rinse vegetables in cold water. Press to expel excess

water. In a bowl or jar combine remaining sugar, vinegar and warm water. Stir together until sugar dissolves, then add vegetables and let them marinate in the brine for at least an hour and preferably overnight. The pickled salad will keep in a sealed jar in the fridge for several weeks.

2. *To make a sandwich:* Cut a baguette roll in half and pull out some of the bread inside so as to create a hollow to house the filling. Spread lower half with mayonnaise then sprinkle with a few drops of Maggi seasoning. Lay on 3 slices of cucumber and a generous amount of meat. Top with a large handful of carrot and daikon pickle (drained), lots of coriander and 3 or 4 slices of chilli. Squeeze over a little lime juice then squish the top half of the baguette on top. Enjoy!

#### \*Notes:

- Saigon Sandwich's *bánh mì* are not only twice as nice as those sold out the back of *The Slanted Door* (supposedly, but not, San Francisco's best Vietnamese restaurant), but also half the price. Buy one every time you happen to be on Larkin just south of Eddy.
- Instead of this salad you can use the Vietnamese carrot and daikon salad described in my separate recipe. This has wonderful additional lime, fish sauce, chilli, garlic and shallot flavours but somehow tastes less authentic in *bánh mì* than this simpler, sweeter pickled version of the salad.
- The sandwich tastes even better with home-made mayonnaise: Bring an egg to room temperature. Crack it into a food processor and dollop ½ tsp Dijon mustard, a squeeze of lemon juice and a good pinch of both salt and pepper onto the yolk. Process til blended, then, with motor running, pour in, very slowly at first, 300ml (1¼cups) of a mixture of half olive oil half vegetable oil. Process until all oil is absorbed and emulsified. Taste and add more lemon, salt or pepper if desired. If too thick, mix in a little water.
- Like its British cousin Marmite, Maggi seasoning sauce is intensely savoury and meaty, despite being made entirely from vegetable proteins. (Just this once, I advise you *not* to read the ingredients list on the label...) Invented in Switzerland at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was probably brought to Vietnam by the French. The kind in a small long-necked bottle made by Nestlé (everyone's favourite powdered drinks manufacturer) is unfortunately much better than the non-Nestlé imitations, so I'm told.
- *Char siu* pork is Chinese BBQ-style pork, also very popular in Vietnam. It's easy to make and you don't need a BBQ – see my separate recipe.

