

Taiwanese Beef Noodle Soup (userealbutter.com)

<http://userealbutter.com/2012/02/12/taiwanese-beef-noodle-soup-recipe/>
from [Chef Hou](#) via [Food Gal](#) with lots of my own notes

2.5 lbs. beef bones (mine were beef marrow bones)
2.5 lbs. beef shank (mine had bone in the middle)

herb bags

2 g whole star anise (about 2)
2 g (1 tsp) fennel seeds
2 g angelica roots (I omitted because I couldn't find it)
2 g dried orange peel (about 4 pieces)
6 g (1 tbsp) Sichuan peppercorns
6 g cassia buds (I omitted because I couldn't find it)
6 g (1 tbsp) cinnamon bark
6 g cinnamon sticks (two 3-inch sticks)

aromatics and such

4 tbsps vegetable oil
6 green onions, 4 chopped into 3-inch pieces, 2 finely sliced for topping
12-14 garlic cloves, peeled and smashed
2-inch piece of ginger, peeled and sliced lengthwise about 1/8-inch thickness
4 Thai bird chiles, halved and seeded
1 oz rock sugar or 2 tbsps dark brown sugar
3/4 cup hot bean paste
1 cup soy sauce
1/2 cup spicy fermented bean curd
1/4 cup tomato paste
1 tbsp black peppercorns
2 large Bay leaves
4 1/2 tbsps soy paste
2 1/2 tbsps dark soy sauce

to serve

noodles of your choice
baby bok choy for garnish (optional)
chili oil for garnish (optional)
other spicy chili pastes of your liking (optional)
fresh cilantro for garnish (optional – I omitted)

Equipment: Either way, you're going to be washing a lot of dishes. You will need: a large stock pot or pressure cooker – two is preferable if you're into multi-tasking (which I am), a medium saucepan, a mesh skimmer, a fine-mesh sieve, and two cloth spice bags.

Chinese herb bags: [You don't have to use herb bags if you plan on straining your broth and sauce.] Split all of the herb bag ingredients in half and place the halves in two separate spice bags. **Each** bag should contain approximately: 1 whole star anise, 1/2 teaspoon fennel seeds, 1 gram angelica roots (I omitted because I couldn't find this), 2 pieces of dried orange peel, 1/2 tablespoon Sichuan peppercorns, 3 g cassia buds (I omitted because I couldn't find this), 1/2 tablespoon cinnamon bark, and one 3-inch cinnamon stick. Tie the bags off.

Make the beef broth: Place the beef bones and a gallon of water in a large stock pot or the pot of pressure cooker. Bring the water to a boil and skim off the scum that accumulates on the surface for about 10-15 minutes or until the scum production reduces considerably. Let it continue to boil gently while you work on the aromatics. In a medium saucepan, heat 2 tablespoons of the vegetable oil and sauté **half** of the: green onions, ginger, garlic, and Thai bird chiles until fragrant. Then add **half** of the: sugar, hot bean paste, and soy sauce. Let it all simmer for a minute and then pour the contents into the beef broth. Stir **half** of the fermented bean curd and **all** of the tomato paste into the broth. Add **half** of the black peppercorns, one bay leaf, and one bag of Chinese seasonings to the broth. If cooking with a conventional stock pot, simmer the broth for 6 hours. If cooking with a pressure cooker, I let it cook on high (Fagor setting 2) for 30 minutes and natural decompression. Strain the broth with a sieve. Discard the solids.

Defatting the broth (optional): I like to defat my broth and there are a couple of tricks I use. The first and fastest is to set a gallon-size ziploc bag in a bowl or container with high sides. Pour the broth into the bag taking care not to spill. Don't fill it up, leave it a cup or two shy of capacity. Seal the ziploc and make sure you don't squeeze it from the bottom, busting the seal open and spilling hot broth all over the place. Holding the ziploc from one of the top corners, you should have a bottom corner pointed down toward a large, clean vessel to capture the broth. It's highly advisable to do this in your sink. By now you should see the fat separating into a nice layer on the top. Lower the bottom corner of the bag into the vessel (if it's too far above the vessel, you will spray broth all over the place) and with the tip of a very sharp knife, poke a little hole just 1/8-inch above the corner. The broth should spill slowly into the vessel as you hold it from the top. If you're comfortable with the method, make the hole bigger and let the broth drain faster. As the fat layer approaches the hole, pinch it off with your fingers. Discard the fat and ziploc. If you had more broth than would fit into the first ziploc, repeat with a second bag until you are done defatting all of the broth. The second method is less wasteful, but takes longer. Essentially, you want to cool the broth until the fat (which floats to the top) solidifies so you can skim it off. I really hate putting such a large volume of warm broth in my refrigerator and since I only make these kinds of soups in winter, I just cover it with a lid or plastic wrap and let it cool on my deck which ranges anywhere from -25°F to 30°F for a good fraction of the year. [Note: My deck is a 2nd story deck and has no "access" from the ground floor. I would never put it on my front doorstep. If you live in a place where critters abound, I wouldn't recommend putting it outside unattended where said critters could get into your delicious broth.]

Cook the beef shank and make the beef sauce: Place the beef shank in a pot or saucepan and fill with enough water to just cover the beef. Boil the beef shank until the meat is cooked through. If using whole shanks, remove the beef from the water and slice into disks about 1 1/2 inches in thickness (Chef Hou says 1/3-inch thick, but I like the beef thicker). If using beef shank cuts, just remove from the water and set aside. Save the beef water. In a large saucepan, stock pot, or pressure cooker pot, heat 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil and sauté the **remaining** green onions, ginger, garlic, and Thai bird chiles until fragrant. Add the **rest** of the sugar, hot bean paste, and soy sauce. Let cook for a minute. Stir in the **remaining** fermented bean curd, **all** of the soy paste, and **all** of the dark soy sauce. Lastly, add the rest of the black peppercorns, one bay leaf, and the other Chinese herb bag. Place the beef in the stock pot or pressure cooker containing the sauce. Add all of the beef water and stir to make sure it mixes with the sauce. If cooking with a conventional stock pot or saucepan, cover with lid and simmer for at least 30 minutes. If you want the meat to be tender, let it cook for another couple of hours, but check on the water levels to make sure they don't get too low. If cooking with a pressure cooker, your only option is tender meat. Again, I let mine cook on high (Fagor setting 2) for 30 minutes with natural decompression. If using bone-in shank, the meat should fall off the bone when it is done. While the beef is warm, I like to discard any fat or connective tissue from the meat, reserving the lean beef in a separate vessel. Strain the sauce through a sieve and discard the solids. Follow the defatting process as listed above for the beef broth if desired.

Assembly: Bring fresh water to a boil and cook your noodles (fresh or dried). Drain the noodles and let cool. Blanch or sauté baby bok choy and set aside. Combine 4 parts beef broth with 1 part beef sauce in a saucepan. Add beef to the broth and bring to a boil. Remove from heat. Place noodles in a bowl and top with beef shank, bok choy, and chopped green onions. Ladle the broth-sauce over the noodles. Drizzle some hot chili oil over top (purely optional, but mandatory in my book) and serve with more hot chili sauce on the side. Serves 10-12. Makes about 10 cups of broth and 8 cups of sauce.