

Sumthin good from Viet Nam



On December 5th, 2010 Tuan Ming Hoang (a Vietnamese national from Hanoi) prepared a delicious “typical Vietnamese meal” for two friends (John Beeman and Ed Powe) in the 6th floor kitchen of the Saxony Apartments. Tuan Ming (whose name in Vietnamese means “handsome” and “intelligent”) was born in Hanoi in 1981 and is currently studying for his PhD in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, WI.

Before preparing the meal, Tuan (who is married and the proud father of a 16 month old girl named Chau) informed me that he was not a cook and that all he knows about cooking he learned from his wife, Lan (whose name means a kind of a flower). Nevertheless, he permitted himself to be filmed and interviewed so that our BLAC Foundation viewers could appreciate what a typical meal from his country is like.

According to Tuan Ming, Vietnamese (unlike Americans) typically have a variety of meats and vegetables at each meal. This particular “simple meal”, which he insisted was nothing special, consisted of fried beef and onions, fried egg, boiled chicken, fried yam, spinach, sticky rice, tea, and apples together with small bowls of soy sauce and lemon juice with salt as condiments. In addition to this “typical meal” (which is typically eaten with chop sticks), he also prepared (upon my insistence) a plate of *chao*, a dish he says is consumed by anyone, but is most appropriate for small children and very old people because no teeth are necessary and it is easy to digest.

What follows is a description of each of the plates he prepared. To see exactly how he did this watch the video under “What’s New” in the “*sumptin good from ...competition*”.

Typical Daily Lunch / Dinner from Hanoi

Ingredients – beef, 2 chicken breasts, 2 eggs, sticky rice, vegetable (here spinach), 1 potato (here sweet potato), 2 large onions; tea (green tea preferred), apples, soy sauce, lemon juice, and salt.

Preparation

- a) **chicken** – Put two chicken breasts in a pot of water and boil until when punctured with a chopstick there is no visible blood. Then chop chicken into small pieces with a large knife. Do not throw away the chicken water because it can be used in making *chau*; for which see below;
- b) **beef** – Put vegetable oil in a pan and fry with chopped onions until browned;
- c) **egg** – put egg in pan with a little vegetable oil and salt and stir with chop stick;
- d) **spinach** – Put water in deep pot. When water boils add spinach which has been thoroughly washed. Wait until the water boils again. When this happens, remove spinach. Save the spinach water which will be drunk at mealtime;
- e) **yams** – peel and wash yam and then cut into small chunks. Deep fry in vegetable oil until golden brown;
- f) **sticky rice** – nothing special here. Just put sticky rice in a pot with water and cook until rice is done;
- g) **green tea** – put green tea into a pot; add boiling water and wait for 1 minute; then pour into a cup; sweeten to taste.
- h) **apples** – wash and cut into quarters (do not peel the apple).

Well that's the meal, now for the *chau* (pronounced chow):

Ingredients - rice (1 cup preferably ground); 1 liter of plain water or chicken water; salt, vegetable (mint or carrot), onion, egg yolk, shredded chicken.

Preparation – add ground rice to a small pot of water; heat for 45 minutes while stirring constantly until rice grains are very soft; shred chicken (or fish or pork) and place in a small bowl; add the yolk of one egg to the bowl; add a small quantity of mint leaves or onion to the bowl; pour the hot *chau* into the bowl and then stir. The hot *chau* will cook the egg yolk. Eat while hot.

Needless to say, both the “typical meal” and the “*chau*” were excellent. And we washed down our meal with green tea and ... a little later ... we enjoyed wine and crackers as we watched several of the BLAC Foundation videos on the computer.

