

Vietnamese New Year's Stew (Thit Kho)

Serves 4

This recipe is from my friend Victoria's mother, who makes this every year for Tet. She buys the pork butt, fish sauce and fresh coconut from Asian markets like Dai Thanh Supermarket (420 S. Second St., San Jose) and 99 Ranch Market (250 Skyline Plaza, Daly City). To get juice from the coconut, simply slice off the top with a sharp knife and pour juice out. Serve with jasmine rice.

The eggs

- 4 hard-boiled eggs, peeled
- 1 quart vegetable oil

The stew

- 1 to 1½ pounds boneless pork butt, quartered with skin and fat left on
- Juice from 1 fresh coconut
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon minced shallots
- Boiling water
- 1¼ cups fish sauce + more to taste
- Chopped cilantro (optional)

For the eggs: Fill a medium saucepan with oil and bring to 350°. With a slotted spoon, gently drop an egg into the hot oil and cook

until golden brown, about 3 minutes, rotating it for even frying. You can cook two eggs at a time. Remove from oil and allow to cool. Refrigerate until ready to use.

For the stew: In a medium saucepan, add the pork and coconut juice to cover about ¾ of the pork. Add garlic and shallots to the liquid and set pan over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low and simmer until liquid is almost fully evaporated, about 30 minutes. Flip over pieces of pork occasionally while simmering. The liquid will begin to caramelize and turn a golden brown color. When there is barely any liquid left in the pan, pour in boiling water to just cover the pork. Add fish sauce

and fried eggs. Increase heat and bring liquid to a boil then reduce again to a simmer. Cook until meat is tender, about 30-40 minutes. Taste and adjust seasonings with more fish sauce.

When ready to eat, quarter the eggs. Plate up the pork and add liquid from the stew, as desired. Garnish with eggs and cilantro and serve.

Due to the nature of this recipe, an accurate analysis is not possible. However, please be aware that fish sauce, an ingredient in the broth, contains a significant amount of sodium. People concerned about sodium should moderate their intake.