

Traditional Vietnamese Fried Lemongrass Pork Ribs with Fish sauce (Sườn Chiên Sả)

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Serves 3-4

INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs pork spare ribs
- 2 teaspoons sea salt (optional for cleaning)
- 2 teaspoons chicken or mushroom bouillon stock powder
- 1 teaspoon granulated white sugar
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper and a sprinkle as garnish
- ½ teaspoon baking soda (meat tenderizer)
- 3 garlic cloves (about 1 tablespoon minced)
- 1 stalk lemongrass (about 2 tablespoons minced)
- 1 small shallot (about 1 tablespoon minced)
- 2 heaping tablespoons corn starch
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- ½ cup water
- 1 scallion/green onion (optional; slice thin)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Optional but recommended: Remove the outer membrane of the pork. It's typically only on one side. Start off by using tearing or cutting a small piece then pull the rest off with your hands. It can get slippery. If so, use a paper towel for a better grip. Clean the pork by giving it a good rub down with salt. This helps get rid of any foul pork smell and surface residue. Rinse the ribs under cold running water to wash off salt then drain or pat dry. You can alternatively use cooking wine, vinegar, lime/lemon juice, or any combination of these.
2. Cut the pork: Cut in-between the bones into long single rib pieces, then use a sharp meat cleaver/butcher knife to hack each rib into bite-size 2-inch segments. Have confidence in your hacking skill to have clean cuts. Otherwise, you will have small pieces of bone fragments. Be careful of those fingers.
3. In a medium-size bowl, ribs with chicken/mushroom bouillon stock powder, sugar, fish sauce, ground black pepper, baking soda, garlic, and lemongrass for at least 1 hour minutes or overnight in the fridge for better results.
4. In a large 12-skillet with a lid, heat vegetable oil on medium-high. Pan fry spare ribs until golden brown on all sides (about 5 minutes).
5. Add water (½ cup), cover skillet with a lid, and cook for 10 minutes until tender. Remove lid and continue to pan-fry until excess moisture is gone.
6. Garnish with sliced green onion/scallion and a sprinkle of freshly cracked black pepper and serve.