



Vietnamese Beef Skewers Recipe



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LEMONGRASS BEEF SKEWERS AND CRISP SESAME NOODLES WRAPPED IN LETTUCE LEAVES, WITH PEANUTS, SPRING ONIONS AND A CHILLI LIME DRESSING



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WHAT YOU NEED - SERVES 2

for the lemongrass beef:

- 750g skirt beef
- 3 stalks lemongrass
- 2 banana shallots, very finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 tsp caster sugar
- 3 tbsp fish sauce
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 12 small bamboo skewers, soaked in water for 1 hr

for the crisp sesame noodles:

- 3 blocks dried medium egg noodles (approx. 180-190g)
- 2 tsp toasted sesame oil
- 3 tsp sesame seeds
- Sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper

for the dressing:

- 3 limes, juiced
- 3 tbsp fish sauce
- 3 tbsp cold water
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2-3 birds eye chillies, finely chopped, to taste
- 2-3 tsp caster sugar, to taste

to serve:

- 1 soft lettuce, torn into leaves
- Salted peanuts, chopped
- 1 bunch spring onions, finely sliced

WHAT TO DO: IN THE KITCHEN

1. Place the beef in the freezer for 2 hours, wrapped in cling film. This will allow the meat to be sliced very thinly.
2. Whilst in the freezer, make the marinade. Discard the outer leaves of the lemongrass stalks and very finely chop the inner core. Add to a bowl, along with shallots, garlic, caster sugar, fish sauce and vegetable oil. Stir well to mix.
3. Take the beef out of the freezer and using a sharp knife, cut into thin slices cutting across the grain and aiming for a thickness of about 3mm. Add the beef to the marinade and mix thoroughly. Cover and refrigerate for a minimum of 2 hours, or overnight if you have time.
4. Cook the noodles according to pack instructions and drain. Tip into a bowl and toss in the sesame oil and seeds. Season to taste with sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper.
5. To make the dressing, add the ingredients, apart from the sugar, to a small bowl and mix thoroughly. Start with adding just a little sugar, and then add more to taste. It should have a good balance of sweet, sour, salty and sharp.

WHAT TO DO: AT THE BARBECUE

1. When you are ready to cook, fire up the barbecue and leave it to get hot for 10 minutes. Put a heavy plancha or cast iron frying pan on one side to heat up for the sesame noodles.
2. Thread the beef strips onto the soaked bamboo skewers and have ready by the barbecue.
3. Place small piles of noodles onto the plancha, evenly spaced and leave to fry for about 5 minutes - they should develop a lovely golden crust, press them down a little with a fish slice to encourage browning. Flip over and fry for another 5 minutes. Don't worry if the piles are a bit straggly, the main thing is to make sure you get plenty of crisp golden bits, combined with some soft bits inside.
4. Meanwhile cook the beef skewers on the other side of the barbecue and grill for around 8 minutes, turning to cook on all sides.
5. When everything is ready, add the crisp noodles and skewers to serving plates, along with the lettuce leaves. Put the dressing, peanuts and spring onions into separate little dishes.
6. To eat, take a skewer of beef and slide the meat off onto the centre of a lettuce leaf, top with a few crisp noodles, some peanuts, spring onions and a drizzle of dressing. Fold up and munch!