



VIETNAMESE

Lime-Cured Rare Beef (Bò Tái Chanh)

COMPLEXITY	SERVES	PREP	COOK	TECHNIQUE	CUT
Basic	4	30 min	10 min	Raw preparations	Eye of round

Ingredients

- 400 g (14 oz) very fresh eye of round, trimmed of all fat and silverskin
- 80 ml (1/3 cup) fresh lime juice (about 3 limes)
- 1 tbsp fish sauce
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 red onion, sliced paper-thin
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 red chilli, thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp neutral oil
- 2 tbsp roasted peanuts, crushed
- Large handful of Thai basil, mint and Vietnamese coriander (rau răm) (or regular basil, extra mint and cilantro)
- Prawn crackers or rice crackers, to serve

Steps

1. Wrap the beef and freeze for 30 to 40 minutes, until firm but not solid. This lets you slice it very thin.
2. Slice the beef into pieces about 2 mm (1/12 in) thick, against the grain. Spread them out in a single layer on a wide dish.
3. Mix the lime juice, fish sauce and sugar until the sugar dissolves. Pour half over the beef and turn the slices gently. Leave for 5 to 8 minutes, until the surface turns pale and opaque. The acid only changes the colour and texture; this stays a raw dish and the lime does not make the beef safe.
4. Meanwhile, soak the onion slices in cold water with a pinch of salt for 10 minutes, then drain well.
5. Heat the oil in a small pan over medium heat. Fry the garlic for 30 seconds, until just pale gold. Do not let it brown.
6. Drain the beef lightly. Toss with the onion, remaining dressing, garlic with its oil, chilli and half the herbs.
7. Pile onto a plate, top with peanuts and the remaining herbs, and serve immediately with crackers.

Notes

- **Food safety:** buy beef from a trusted butcher, tell them it is for eating raw, and keep it cold until you serve. Not suitable for pregnant women, young children, the elderly or anyone immunocompromised.
- **Texture:** do not over-marinate; after 10 minutes the beef turns firm and chalky.
- **Milder option:** before slicing, briefly sear the whole trimmed piece on all sides in a very hot pan, then chill it. It is still not fully cooked.
- **Make ahead:** mix the dressing and prep the onion and herbs a few hours ahead; dress the beef only at the last minute.
- **Chef's touch:** chill the serving plate in the freezer for 10 minutes; it keeps the raw beef cold at the table.