

DESTINATION ASIA

Char-grilled Beef in Betel Leaf with Lemongrass (Bò Cuốn Lá Lốt)

Fragrantly seasoned grilled rolls of beef wrapped up in wild betel leaf (lá lốt) are a favorite Vietnamese snack often served as an appetizer or entrée as part of a traditional lunch or dinner. The key to this dish is in the preparation and presentation. Once grilled and ready, the betel leaf beef rolls are placed on the table. Each guest then wraps the roll in rice paper along with a salad leaf for extra crunch, to eat as a “roll served in a roll”.

Preparation time 45 Minutes **Cooking time** 3 - 5 Minutes **Serves** 3 - 4 People

Ingredients

Rolls

- 480g minced beef
- 4 betel leaves, chopped
- 1 tbsp chopped shallots
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 50g pork fat
- 18 betel leaves (for rolling)
- 1 tbsp chopped garlic
- 1 tsp salt
- 1tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 stems of lemongrass, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 4 wooden skewers

Sauce

- 2 tbsp water
- 2 tsp rice vinegar
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp red chilli, deseeded and minced
- 2 tbsp lime juice
- 1 tsp chopped garlic

Accompaniments

- 12 lettuce leaves
- 6 rice papers
- 4 stems of Vietnamese basil leaves
- 20g roasted, chopped peanuts
- 200g fresh noodles

Steps

1. Prepare all the ingredients for the rolls as above. Mix all ingredients to form a smooth filling, then divide into 18 portions.
2. Lightly oil the outside face of the betel leaves, then place 1 betel leaf with the oiled side facing down and add 1 portion of filling.
3. Roll tightly then place on the skewer to close. Continue until all the filling has been used.
4. Grill beef rolls over a charcoal barbeque for 3 minutes.
5. In a bowl, add the lemon juice, water, rice vinegar, sugar and fish sauce. Whisk until the sugar is dissolved.
6. Add chopped chilli and chopped garlic and mix again. Add more fish sauce or chilli if desired.

Notes / Tips

1. To keep the rolls tender and the beef juicy, be careful not to overcook on the grill.
2. Betel leaves can be substituted with grape leaves.
3. To serve, place beef rolls on a serving platter and top with chopped peanuts.
4. Serve with a plate of lettuce leaves, Vietnamese basil leaves, fresh noodles, and rice papers, as well as the dipping sauce.

A recipe from Destination Asia Vietnam

