

Vietnamese food is about accomplishing a perfect balance in taste, in texture and the lightness of being. Many people naturally follow the yin and yang principles in combining ingredients, for example, a soup with hearty ginger to warm up the body is contrasted with refreshing, cool leaves like pak choi to harmonies the feeling in your body. Eating in balance is a major factor in keeping healthy and many believe that food is medicine.

To maintain an equilibrium, plenty of refreshing shakes, like avocado, papaya, pennywort and watermelon, are drunk as snacks, especially in the evenings to freshen the body before bedtime.

CNN in [Travel to Vietnam](#) program, has introduced Vietnam's 40 delicious dishes, including "pho" (Noodles), "banh xeo" (pancakes) and "cha ca" fried fish, soup (pho), spring rolls, grilled shrimp paste, grilled minced fish, etc.

"Pho" ranks top of the list. The channel also broadcast other courses from Vietnam's Northern, Central and Southern provinces, such as "Cao lau" (vermicelli), "bun cha" (noodle salad with pork patties), Southern "bun bo" (spicy beef noodle soup), "nom hoa chuo" (banana blossom salad) and sweetened porridge and so on. What list of Vietnamese cuisine would be complete without pho? It's almost impossible to walk a block in Vietnam's major cities without bumping into a crowd of hungry patrons slurping noodles at a makeshift pho stand.

This simple staple consisting of a salty broth, fresh rice noodles, a sprinkling of herbs and chicken or beef, features predominately in the local diet -- and understandably so. It's cheap, tasty, and widely available at all hours.

Cha ca

Hanoians consider cha ca to be so exceptional that there is a street in the capital dedicated to these fried morsels of fish. This namesake alley is home to Cha Ca La Vong, which serves sizzling chunks of fish seasoned with garlic, ginger, turmeric and dill on a hot pan tableside.

Banh xeo

A good banh xeo is a crispy crepe bulging with pork, shrimp, and bean sprouts, plus the garnish of fresh herbs that are characteristic of most authentic Vietnamese dishes.

To enjoy one like a local, cut it into manageable slices, roll it up in rice paper or lettuce leaves and dunk it in whatever special sauce the chef has mixed up for you.

Cao lau

This pork noodle dish from Hoi An is a bit like the various cultures that visited the trading port at its prime. The thicker noodles are similar to Japanese udon, the crispy won-ton crackers and pork are a Chinese touch, while the broth and herbs are clearly Vietnamese. Authentic cau lao is made only with water drawn from the local Ba Le well.

Rau muong

Some might call it river weed -- with good reason -- but that doesn't stop the masses from scarfing down platefuls of morning glory, usually stir-fried and seasoned with slithers of potent garlic. Rau muong is common at Vietnamese restaurants and beer

gardens.

Nem ran/cha gio

Vietnam's bite-sized crunchy spring rolls might not enjoy the same popularity as their healthier fresh equivalent, but they deserve a special mention. The crispy shell with a soft veggie and meat filling dunked in a tangy sauce gets the gastronomic juices flowing before a main course. In the north these parcels go by the name nem ran while southerners call them cha gio.

Goi cuon

These light and healthy fresh spring rolls are a wholesome choice when you've been indulging in too much of the fried food in Vietnam. The translucent parcels are first packed with salad greens, a slither of meat or seafood and a layer of coriander, before being neatly rolled and dunked in Vietnam's favorite condiment -- fish sauce.

Bun bo Hue

Central Vietnam's take on noodles caters to carnivores with its meaty broth and piles of beef and pork. The thick slippery rice noodles also make for a heartier meal than noodles found in the north and south.

Banh khot

This dainty variation of a Vietnamese pancake has all the same tasty ingredients but is a fraction of the size. Each banh knot can be scoffed in one ambitious but satisfying mouthful. The crunchy outside is made using coconut milk and the filling usually consists of shrimp, mung beans, and spring onions with a dusting of dried shrimp flakes on top.

Ga tan

Got the sniffles? Opt for ga tan, a broth that's Vietnam's answer to the proverbial cup of chicken noodle soup. Sure, it's not quite how your mother used to make it, with its greenish tinge from the herbs and hunks of chicken parts, but it's worth a try if you're needing a Vietnamese tonic.

Nom hoa chuoï

Vietnam's banana flower salad packs a much bigger punch than a typical plate of mixed greens. Banana flowers (thick purple lumps that will later turn into bunches of bananas) are peeled and thinly sliced then mixed with green papaya, carrots, and cilantro along with chicken and a heavy-handed pour of a salty fish sauce dressing and crunchy peanuts.

Bun bo nam bo

This bowl of noodles comes sans broth, keeping the ingredients from becoming sodden and the various textures intact. The tender slices of beef mingle with crunchy peanuts and bean sprouts, and are flavored with fresh herbs, crisp dried shallots, and a splash of fish sauce and fiery chili pepper.

Hoa qua dam

This chunky blend of fresh tropical fruit in a cup is the perfect local treat when the heat of Vietnamese summer starts to wear you down. It could be considered a healthy alternative to ice cream -- if you stick to the shaved ice variation -- but for the

full experience it's best had with diabetes-inducing condensed milk mixed in.

Pho cuon

Pho cuon packages the flavors of pho and goi cuon in one neat little parcel. This Hanoi take on fresh spring rolls uses sheets of uncut pho noodles to encase fried beef, herbs and lettuce or cucumber.

Ga nuong

KFC may be everywhere in Vietnam these days, but skip the fast food for the local version. Honey marinated then grilled over large flaming barbecues, the chicken legs, wings and feet served are unusually tender, while the skin stays crispy but not dry.

Pho xao

Pho xao may just be a slightly healthier take on my xao -- but the beauty is in the details. The flat, smoother pho noodle doesn't crisp up like its pre-boiled instant cousin.

When done well the outer edges acquire a browned crunchiness, whilst the center stays soft and glutinous. This dish tastes best with a fried egg and seasoned with chili or soy sauce.

Ca phe trung

Vietnamese "egg coffee" is technically a drink but we prefer to put it in the dessert category. The creamy soft, meringue-like egg white foam perched on the dense Vietnamese coffee will have even those who don't normally crave a cup of joe licking their spoons with delight.

Bo la lot

Vietnamese are masters of wrapping their food. Bo la lot is neither raw nor deep-fried, but flamed on an open grill to soften the exterior and infuse the betel leaf's peppery aroma into the ground beef inside.

Xoi

Savory sticky rice is less of an accompaniment to meals in Vietnam, more a meal itself. The glutinous staple comes with any number of mix-ins (from slithers of chicken, or pork to fried or preserved eggs), but almost always with a scattering of dried shallots on top.

Banh cuon

These rolled up rice flour pancakes are best when served piping hot, still soft and delicate. Although seemingly slender and empty they have a savory filling of minced pork and mushrooms. Zest is also added by dunking the slippery parcels in a fishy dipping sauce.

Ca tim kho to

Eggplant alone tends not to get us excited. Although when it's diced and sautéed in a clay pot along with tomatoes, soy sauce, sugar, and (depending on the recipe) minced meat, the once bland vegetable redeems itself.

Bot chien

Saigon's favorite street-side snack, bot chien, is popular with both the afterschool and the after-midnight crowd. Chunks of rice flour dough are fried in a large wok until crispy and then an egg is broken into the mix. Once cooked it's served with slices of papaya, shallots and green onions, before more flavor is added with pickled chili sauce and rice vinegar.

Bun dau mam tom

This plain-looking tofu and noodle dish is served with mam tom sauce -- the Vegemite of Vietnam. The pungent purple dipping sauce is used to flavor the slabs of deep-fried tofu that are at the core of the meal.

Banh goi

These pockets of deep-fried goodness are often described as the equivalent of a Cornish pastry or as a Vietnamese samosa, depending on the nationality of the person explaining. Inside the crispy exterior you'll find that it's similar to neither description, with its filling of finely minced pork, mushrooms and vermicelli noodles.

Com suon nuong

This simple meal is the Saigonese equivalent of bun cha -- with rice in place of noodles. A tender pork cutlet is barbecued over hot coals to give it a rich, smoky flavor, and laid over the fluffy white com.

Chao

With its thick and creamy texture Vietnam's rice porridge is the best pick when your queasy stomach can't handle much else. If you want to jazz it up you can always add slices of chicken, fish, beef, duck or pork ribs, along with a sprinkling of herbs and shallots.

Bo luc lac

Cubes of beef are tossed around a steaming wok with garlic, pepper, and some vegetables to make shaking beef. There's nothing special about the beef that makes it shaking.

The name is just a literal translation that refers to the process of mixing the beef around while cooking.

Hat de nong

The smell of chestnuts roasting on an open fire can bring back fond memories of Christmas carols -- until a moped transporting a giant blow-up Santa whizz by. Pick the street vendor with the most enticing smell.

Source: [Đặt khách sạn](#)