

YIELD

Eric's
Forbidden Bánh Tét





Eric's *Forbidden Bánh tét*

What's the dish?

Bánh tét (glutinous rice cake with mung bean and pork belly).

Why is it important to me?

While we don't traditionally celebrate Christmas in the Vietnamese culture, the Lunar Vietnamese New Year (Tết) is celebrated and holds great significance. For as long as I can remember, I've never not eaten a slice of bánh tét on New Year's. It's cultural significance is fascinating. Bánh Tét is known as a symbol of abundance when ringing in the new year. Growing up in Canada, this traditional dish helps connect me to my heritage, reminding me of the rich culture back home. Despite the dish's labour-intensive process, families go out of their way to ensure that Bánh Tét is set on the table when the time arrives.

Ingredients (Makes 5 Cakes):

- 1 lb pork belly
- 3½ teaspoons sea salt
- ½ teaspoon granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon fish sauce
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 5 cups of long-grain sticky rice (rinsed and soaked overnight)
- 3 cups dried split mung beans (rinsed and soaked overnight)
- Cooking twine
- Banana leaves

Directions

1. Season pork belly with salt, sugar, fish sauce, ground black pepper
2. Rinse presoaked rice and drain dry
3. Rinse presoaked mung beans and drain dry

4. Cut twelve 11x11 inch sheets of banana leaves. Rinse sheets with hot water and dry with paper towels.
5. Place three banana leaves on top of one another with the shiny side down.
6. Place ½ cup rice within the centre of the leaves, spread horizontally. Leave about a 1 ½ inch gap on either side of the rice. Place ½ cup mung beans on top of rice. Place 1-2 strips of pork belly on top. Top with ½ cup mung beans and ½ cup rice. Roll the banana leaves together into a tight cylinder and wrap to close.
7. Wrap the log with twine both horizontally and vertically, ensuring there are no leaks and it does not come apart. Be careful to not over-tighten.
8. Submerge the cakes in water in a large, covered pot on medium-low heat. A heavy ceramic bowl may be placed on top to weigh the cakes down. Let the cakes cook for about 4 hours.
9. Remove the cakes and let them cool to room temperature.
10. Cut the cakes into ½ inch slices and enjoy!



Have a
flavourful
Holiday!

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