VIETNAMESE · LUNCH · DINNER

Canh Khổ Qua (Vietnamese Stuffed Bitter Melon Soup)

Canh khổ qua nhồi thịt

70 min · Serves 4 · 286 kcal a serve · Video 12:05 in Vietnamese · Vành Khuyên Lê

No dairy listed · No nuts listed

About 27 g protein and 12 g net carbs a serve: bitter melons stuffed with pork and fish paste and simmered in a clear broth, with only a little sugar.

Diet notes: Gluten-free with a swap: use gluten-free chicken stock powder.

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Ingredients 15 · SERVES 4

- [ ] 4 **bitter melons** (about 1½ lb), slit and seeded
- [ ] 11 oz **pork** with some fat (shoulder or belly), minced
- [ ] 7 oz **Vietnamese fish paste** (chả cá thác lác)
- [ ] 1½ tsp **fish sauce**, plus a little to dab on the filling
- [ ] 1½ heaped tsp **sugar**, for the filling
- [ ] 1½ heaped tsp **chicken stock powder**, for the filling (counted as its salt)
- [ ] 2 **spring onions**, chopped
- [ ] a little **coriander**, chopped
- [ ] about ½ tsp **crushed black pepper**
- [ ] a little chopped **chilli** for the filling, and 1–2 small hot chillies for the broth
- [ ] **Sugar**: 1¾ oz sugar and ¼ oz salt, for the blanching water (poured away)
- [ ] 6⅓ cups **pork bone stock** (or chicken stock)
- [ ] ¼ oz **rock sugar**, for the broth
- [ ] ½ tsp **salt**, for the broth
- [ ] 1 tsp **chicken stock powder**, to finish (counted as its salt)

Amounts in US units, converted from the cook's and rounded — the video has the originals.

Allergens found in the listed ingredients: Gluten, Fish. Worked out from the ingredient list, not tested. Stock, sauces, spice mixes and other packaged foods can contain allergens, so always read the labels on what you buy. If you have a food allergy, don't rely on this.

Method TIMES = THE MOMENT IN THE VIDEO

1. If you're making your own pork-bone stock, scald the chopped bones in boiling water, then simmer them with a little rock sugar, sea salt and a halved shallot (a pressure cooker is quickest). 1:43
2. For the filling, mince the pork and season it with the fish sauce, sugar, chicken powder, spring onion and pepper. Knead in the fish paste with the coriander, a little more seasoning and the chopped chilli for 2–3 minutes until springy, then chill. 3:12
3. Slit each bitter melon along one side, scoop out the seeds and scrape away the white pith, which is the most bitter part. 5:19
4. Blanch the melons for about 5 minutes in 6⅓ cups of boiling water with 1¾ oz sugar and ¼ oz salt, opening the slit so the water gets inside — it softens the bitterness and keeps them green. Drain. 6:04
5. Stuff the melons firmly with the filling, dab a little fish sauce over the exposed filling and pin each one closed with a skewer or blanched spring onion. 7:14
6. Put them in 6⅓ cups of hot stock with the rock sugar, chillies and ½ tsp salt and simmer over medium heat, lid ajar, for about 20 minutes until tender. Roll any leftover filling into meatballs and cook them 5–7 minutes more, uncovered. 9:05
7. Season with the chicken powder at the end (fish sauce would turn the broth sour), simmer one more minute, then serve with spring onion, coriander and pepper. 10:23

> **Tip** A Tết (Lunar New Year) favourite, eaten with rice. Choose short, plump melons with big bumps — they're less bitter. It's salty as made; an unsalted stock cuts that. Fish paste is sold frozen in Vietnamese grocers.

The method is a summary in our words, in English — the video (in Vietnamese) shows every step.

One serve gives you 1 OF 4 · ESTIMATE

ENERGY	PROTEIN	CARBOHYDRATE	FIBRE	FAT	SODIUM
286 kcal	**27 g**	**16 g**	**3.9 g**	**13 g**	**1,980 mg**
1,190 kJ	55% of a day	12 g net · 9.7 g sugars 6% of a day	14% of a day	4.4 g saturated 16% of a day	86% of a day

Energy from net carbs 18% · protein 40% · fat 42% — low carb (under 26% of the energy from carbs)

High in (20%+ of a day) Vitamin C 73% · Selenium 67% · Vitamin B12 33% · Zinc 32% · Folate 27% · Vitamin B6 26% · Potassium 22% · Vitamin K 20%

Source of (10–19%) Magnesium 19% · Iron 12%

⚠ One serve has about 86% of a day's sodium — less salt, stock or sauce (or reduced-salt versions) brings it down.

Recipe and video: Vành Khuyên Lê on YouTube — youtube.com/watch?v=6z5k-Isd0zs. All credit for the recipe goes to the cook; please watch and support their channel.

By Notbroken: the method summary, the unit conversions, the diet notes and the nutrition estimate — worked out from the ingredient list with USDA FoodData Central values; % of a day compares one serve with the US FDA daily values on food labels (2,000 kcal). Brands, portions and cooking change the real numbers.

General information about food, not medical or dietary advice. Free, no sign-up: notbroken.io/eat/canh-kho-qua-nhoi-thit-stuffed-bitter-melon-soup