

Ken's Thai Boat House Noodle Soup

Inspired by Ken's mom and her roots in Thailand, this bowl is a tribute to street-style boat noodle soup—flavorful, warming, and deeply personal. It's built on beef broth, packed with noodles, herbs, and beefy goodness, and brought to life with that signature Southeast Asian balance of salt, acid, heat, and richness.

Ingredients

Broth Base:

- 6 cups beef broth (homemade or low-sodium store-bought)
- 1 tbsp fish sauce
- 1 tsp sugar or palm sugar
- 1 tsp rice vinegar or white vinegar
- 2–3 cloves garlic, smashed
- 1 tbsp fried garlic oil (optional)
- 1 tsp chili flakes or chili oil (adjust to taste)
- 1 small bunch cilantro stems, tied or chopped
- Optional: 1 star anise or cinnamon stick
- Optional: 1 tsp dark soy sauce or Thai seasoning sauce (for extra depth and color)

Protein:

- 1/2 lb braised beef (brisket or chuck), sliced
- 4–6 Thai-style fish balls

Noodles & Add-ins:

- 6 oz wide rice noodles (prepared per package)
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1/4 cup green onions, chopped
- Optional: soft-boiled egg, Thai basil, or bean sprouts

Instructions

1. In a large pot, simmer the beef broth over medium-low heat. Add fish sauce, sugar, vinegar, garlic, chili flakes, and cilantro stems. Add optional soy sauce or spices if desired. Simmer 25–30 minutes.
2. Add sliced braised beef and fish balls to the broth. Simmer until heated through (10 minutes more).
3. Prepare the rice noodles. Drain and rinse briefly to stop cooking.
4. Assemble: Add noodles to a large bowl. Ladle hot broth and toppings over the noodles.
5. Garnish with chopped cilantro, green onions, and optional toppings. Serve hot.

Z Sistas' Flavor Tips

- A spoonful of chili oil brings the heat. Don't be shy.
- Add roasted bone broth concentrate for an ultra-rich broth.
- No fish balls? Sub in shrimp or tofu. It's your bowl—own it.