

Vietnamese Shaking Venison

By Jim Pashby | Preparation time: 10 minutes | Cooking time: 5 minutes | Serves 2 – 4



VIETNAMESE SHAKING BEEF PHOTO BY DELIGHTFULPLATE.COM

As temperatures begin to drop in late summer and early fall, cooks start putting away the tongs and grill mitts and start moving back inside to the kitchen. It can be a tough transition. At our house, cooking dinner on the grill is a symbol of the outdoor life that is often far too brief in Montana. Every meal cooked inside during September and October further signifies that summer is over and reminds us that soon the back porch will be covered in a foot of snow.

To make the transition easier, I prepare dishes this time of year that can't be duplicated outside. One is this easy recipe by Hank Shaw, the San Francisco-based cookbook author whose blog *Hunter Angler Gardener Cook* and dozens of game recipes have inspired and instructed thousands of new and experienced cooks across the country.

This recipe, from Shaw's latest cookbook, *Buck, Buck, Moose*, originates from the traditional Vietnamese dish Bo Luc Lac, or Shaking Beef. The name refers to how shaking the hot pan moves the meat around (though I've found that using a spatula actually works better).

An essential tip: Don't crowd the meat when cooking. Leave as much room between meat chunks as the chunks themselves. That means cooking two batches. If you crowd the meat, it steam-cooks and can't develop the crisp, dark brown crust that adds so much flavor to sautéed meat.

Don't panic over the oyster sauce and fish sauce. Both are in the Asian section of most supermarkets and are well worth buying. They are delicious in this dish and several others in the *Montana Outdoors* archives (fwp.mt.gov/mtoutdoors). Arugula is a leafy green with a great peppery flavor that pairs well with the sweet, savory meat. So does watercress. Find either one in the produce section of major grocers.

This yummy dish takes just a few minutes to prepare. Serve it with cooked rice and a sliced tomato and red onion (or scallions), which add color to the plate and pay tribute to the summer months we are sadly leaving behind. 🐾

—Jim Pashby is a writer in Helena.

INGREDIENTS

- 1-1.5 lb. pounds venison loin or tenderloin, trimmed of all white bits
- ½ t. black pepper
- 1½ t. sugar
- 2 garlic cloves, minced or crushed
- 2 T. oyster sauce
- 2 t. fish sauce
- 1 T. soy sauce
- 6 T. vegetable oil
- 1 medium red onion, sliced thin
- 2 bunches arugula or watercress
- Salt and pepper
- 2 t. rice or cider vinegar
- 1 ripe tomato, halved and sliced thin
- ½ red onion, sliced thin

DIRECTIONS

Cut the venison into ½- to 1-inch chunks, no larger. Mix the chunks with the black pepper, sugar, garlic, and three sauces. Marinate 1 to 4 hours.

When time to cook, add 2 T. oil to a large sauté pan and heat on high until the oil starts smoking. Add the onion and stir constantly until it begins to brown around the edges, about 2 minutes. Remove from the pan and set aside. Wipe out the pan with a paper towel.

Add another 2 T. oil and heat on high until it starts to smoke. Add half the venison in one layer, making sure the pieces are spaced, and sear for one minute without moving the meat. Quickly, using a spatula or fork, turn every piece over. Sear without moving for another minute. Remove meat, wipe pan, and repeat with the remaining 2 T. oil and other half of the venison chunks. Turn heat to low and add the onion and cooked meat to the pan. Toss to combine.

Mix the arugula or watercress with the vinegar and add a little salt and pepper. Top with the venison and serve with cooked white rice and thinly sliced tomatoes and red onion.