

Pork and Crab Spring Rolls (Cha Gio)

Simple Art of Vietnamese Cooking

Servings: 8



These spring rolls are considered a national dish of Vietnam and are sold in the marketplace and in every restaurant as snacks. They are made at home only on special occasions, as they require some handiwork. However, homemade is always best, and they are well worth the effort. Just gather extra pairs of hands when it comes time to roll them. A real plus is that they can be filled, rolled, and lightly fried up to 2 days in advance. Let them cool, then cover and refrigerate. When ready to use, fry them again until golden brown and serve.

Ingredients

2 tablespoons dried tree ears
1½ ounces cellophane noodles, package
¾ pound lean ground pork
1 red onion, medium, minced
½ cup carrot, finely shredded, rinsed and squeezed dry
3 eggs
3 ounces crab meat, cooked
½ teaspoon sea salt
1 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper
36 rice paper wrapper, triangles

Cooking Method

Prepare the Nuoc Cham Dipping Sauce and Table Salad and set aside.

In a small bowl...

1. Cover the tree ears with hot water and soak until they inflate, about 3 minutes.
2. Drain, rinse well, and chop.

In a large bowl...

1. Cover the cellophane noodles with cold water and soak until pliable, about 3 minutes.
2. Drain and with scissors cut them into 2" lengths.

In a medium bowl...

1. Combine the tree ears, cellophane noodles, pork, onion, carrot, 1 of the eggs, crab, salt, and pepper.
2. Mix well, using your hands to combine thoroughly.

Put the remaining 2 eggs in a small bowl and beat them lightly.

1. Lay the rice papers out on a work surface, 10 at a time, and using a pastry brush, coat both sides with the beaten egg.
2. Allow to stand a few moments to soften.
3. Peel each rice paper gently off the surface and place the point of the triangle away from you.
4. Put a generous tablespoon of the filling mixture about ½" from the bottom edge of each rice paper wrapper.
5. Fold the bottom of the wrapper up over the filling, enclosing the filling in a 2" log.
6. Fold the sides in and smooth the rice paper over the filling snugly.
7. Roll the wrapper very tightly, ending with the tip of the triangle.
8. Continue making rolls with the remaining rice paper wrappers and filling.

In a large skillet, heat ½" of oil over medium-high heat to 350° on a deep-fry thermometer.

1. Be sure the oil stays at this temperature. If it gets too hot, the spring rolls might burst.
2. Fry about 10 rolls at a time until golden brown, about 5 minutes per side, turning once.
3. Drain on paper towels and repeat with the remaining rolls.
4. Serve hot or at room temperature with the Nuoc Cham and the Table Salad.