

Comfort Food from the Heart

It was not easy, but we have found the best pho in Bali. This elusive classic Vietnamese beef noodle soup is a signature of Bo & Bun, a new Asian eatery specializing in Vietnamese comfort food and Southeast Asian cuisines, well-worth the parking hassle on the busiest street of Seminyak.



Co-founded in September 2014 by Balinese beauty queen Ines Putri Tjiptadi Chandra (formerly crowned Miss Indonesia 2012) and her partner, Bo & Bun is a full-blown love-in-action: the love of eating, the love of cooking, the love of experimenting and the love between two beautiful young talents. As they took us on a narrative journey through how they fell in love with Vietnamese cuisine in Australia, it became clear that food is at the very heart of their cultures and that cooking and eating are their shared passions.

"Our menu is small, only 20 to 25 dishes. We are not trying to be authentic because we are not. These are foods that we like to cook and eat ourselves," Ines readily admitted. "This restaurant is built for locals living in Seminyak; it's not a tourist trap. We want them to come here regularly for their weekday meals." A brief scan around the French-inspired interior confirmed that they were right on target. Bo & Bun has become the talk of the expat town and attracted a steady local following.

Reading the menu left us licking our lips in anticipation. Stimulate your appetite with a nice cup of iced Vietnamese drip coffee while you wait. To start with, take your taste buds on a trip to Vietnam, China, South Korea and Thailand all in one course.

The "Try Everything!" is made-to-share and includes half portions of the best-selling Bao Gao Pork Belly (twice-cooked pork belly marinated in hoisin sauce and sandwiched between steamed buns), the Pandan Chicken (Thai boneless chicken wings wrapped and fried in pandan leaves), the crispy Vietnamese spring rolls, the fresh Vietnamese rice paper rolls and the spicy Korean fried chicken wings—all served with three assortments of house-made sauces.

The secret to Bo & Bun's signature "12-Hour Pho" main dish lies entirely in the broth. A combination of quality beef bones, oxtails and bone marrows are slow-cooked for 12 hours until all the juices are extracted, leaving behind a rich, hearty soup base. At Bo & Bun, they take it a step further by keeping the stock intense and limiting the yield, never once diluting it. The aptly named pho is served piping hot with rice noodles, thinly sliced tenderloin, meatballs, beef shanks, sliced onions and coriander stems with a side of fresh bean sprouts, Thai basil, chilli and lime.

If you crave a light main, try the Bun Bao Xao, a true Vietnamese salad consisting of a choice of lemongrass marinated protein (pork, chicken or tofu) glass noodles, pickled carrots and jicama, fresh vegetables and herbs, fried shallots, peanuts and

Vietnamese spring rolls served with nuoc cham dressing.

For a quick bite on the run, try the Banh Mi Thit, which is essentially a French-inspired Vietnamese baguette of lemongrass chicken or pork, pickled carrots and jicama, cucumber, pate, mayonnaise, coriander, sliced chilli and fried wonton skins. A vegetarian option is available as well.

Other notable mains, which we will return to sample, are the lemongrass marinated and grilled pork chop with broken rice, and authentic Thai dishes such as the Thai green curry and pad Thai.

The owners of Bo & Bun have chosen to focus on the art of making good, simple, fresh food, respecting the original flavours of Vietnam and Southeast Asia, yet they are not afraid to challenge them and inject their own innovative touches. With its simple concept, honest-to-goodness comfort fare, friendly service and cosy ambience, this hole-in-the-wall is a new force to be reckoned with!

Bo & Bun

Jalan Raya Basangkasa No. 26, Seminyak Bali, 80361, Indonesia
T: (+62) 859 3549 3484
E: boandbun@eatcompany.co
www.eatcompany.co