



Any one for sea snails and vodka with a shot of blood from a snake's heart ?

A taste of Vietnam

As I popped the chicken onto the white hot heat of the BBQ and took a sip of red strawberry cordial my mind flashed back to another barbie I had been at just a few weeks ago in HO CHI MINH City. In place of the strawberry cordial had been blood red vodka which received its crimson colour as the heart of a snake was plopped into it.



Snakes heart

Sizzling on the BBQ were giant sea snails the size of tennis balls and whole octopus glistening with the sheen of oil and freshly squeezed lemons. All manner of meat had been threaded onto skewers and judging from the red chillies in some of them we knew they were going to be hot and set our mouths on fire There had

been fruits and vegetables we had never seen before and an aroma which was enough to make anyone feel hungry. Everything was fantastic and fresh - much of it still alive only minutes before!.



Pho Bo.

The night had been warm and balmy and the strings of blue lights which were festooned in the trees gave it a magical feel. This had

been our first night in Ho Chi Minh and this was a food festival just across the street from the comfort of our resort. The eleven hour journey from London had passed quickly and catapulted us forwards seven hours and after freshening up at our hotel we had begun to feel hungry. It was then that we had noticed the activity in the park. In many ways it was a perfect introduction as food dominates every aspect of Vietnamese life.

My other memory of the awesome food was the Pho Bo. A beef soup with rice noodles in a rich broth, topped with finely sliced beef and bright green spring onions. You could call it the national dish - it is eaten by all at any time of day.



Insects for sale

We did however refrain from trying the pickled insects and other creatures which are considered a delicacy and found in profusion on market stalls

Now, I glanced across at my friend who had been with me, as we tucked into our chicken and simultaneously we remember those giant water snails. After all they tasted just like chicken and as for the red vodka, the strawberry cordial tasted just fine.

