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The Spruce / Christine Ma Meat, pickles, vegetables, chili, and mayonnaise on an airy, crusty baguette—these are the elements of a classic banh mi sandwich. The best banh mi is the one you grab on the streets of Vietnam, or from the little cafe you ducked into seeking shelter from the monsoon. It's ready in moments, doesn't cost much, and tastes all the better for it. At home, it's better to buy precooked ingredients, so that you don't find yourself working for half a day in the kitchen just to make a sandwich. The fully cooked pork belly from Trader Joe's, for example, is excellent for banh mi, and requires only slicing and a quick crisp in the frying pan. If you must make everything from scratch, do it over the course of a few days. Make the pickles first so they have time to, you know, pickle. Roast the pork for dinner. Make the pâté some Sunday afternoon. Then, when the time is right, pick up a fresh baguette and assemble your lunch. Speaking of the baguette, it's very important. If possible, stay away from sourdough or levain baguettes for banh mi. Those styles are crusty and chewy, but you're looking for light, airy and crispy. The crust should be thin and the crumb should be soft, yielding easily to the fillings and holding them in place. If you can't find the right baguette, look for fresh bolillo rolls, which are available in many supermarkets. The pâté should be soft and spreadable to lend moisture to the sandwich. Typically it is made of chicken liver, a flavor of mellow intensity that contrasts beautifully with the pickles and fresh vegetables. Some styles of banh mi are made with pâté alone. Besides roast pork and liver pâté, banh mi can also be made with cold cuts, meatballs, barbecued pork or beef, and even vegetarian pâté. "The banh mi sandwich is flavorful, impressive-looking, and full of quality ingredients. The brine comes together quickly and the sandwich is easy to assemble. I packed them up and enjoyed them with friends who thought I was a genius. The recipes is, not me!" —Mary Jo Romano For the Pork: 2 cups warm water 1/2 cup kosher salt 1/2 cup lightly packed brown sugar 4 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped 2 tablespoons whole black peppercorns 1 medium onion, quartered 3 medium jalapeños, coarsely chopped 1/2 cup soy sauce 1/3 cup fish sauce 3 pounds boneless pork shoulder, trimmed For the Sandwich: 1 French baguette, 22 to 24-inches long 1/2 cup store-bought or homemade pâté 1/4 cup mayonnaise 3/4 cup store-bough or homemade pickled carrot and radish mixture, fresh julienned radish, or daikon 1 jalapeño, thinly sliced, seeded if desired 3/4 cup thinly sliced seedless cucumber 2/3 cup packed fresh cilantro sprigs Gather the ingredients. The Spruce / Christine Ma Add the water, salt, and sugar to a bowl large enough to hold the pork shoulder and other ingredients. Stir to dissolve the salt and sugar. Alternatively, use a 2-gallon zip-top bag. The Spruce / Christine Ma Add the garlic, peppercorns, onion, jalapeño, soy sauce, and fish sauce to the bowl. Stir to combine. Add the pork and enough cold water to completely submerge the meat. Cover and refrigerate overnight. The Spruce / Christine Ma Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat to 400 F. Remove the pork from the brine and pat dry. Discard the brine. Place the pork on a rack in a roasting pan and roast until the internal temperature reaches 145 F on an instant-read thermometer, about 1 hour, 15 minutes. The Spruce / Christine Ma Remove from oven and rest for at least 30 minutes before cutting into 1/4-inch thick slices. The Spruce / Christine Ma Gather the ingredients. The Spruce / Christine Ma Cut the baguette into 4 equal-size pieces, about 5- to 6- inches long. The Spruce / Christine Ma Divide the pâté evenly between the sandwiches, spreading it on 1 side of each baguette. Divide the mayonnaise evenly between the sandwiches, spreading it on the other side of each baguette. The Spruce / Christine Ma Divide 1 pound of pork slices equally among the 4 sandwiches. Reserve any remaining pork for another use. Layer in the pickled vegetables, jalapeño, cucumber, and cilantro. Serve immediately. The Spruce / Christine Ma For an extra crispy crust on your bread, lightly spray your baguette with water and warm it in a 350 F oven for about 10 minutes before using it for the sandwiches.If you can't find a 22- to 24-inch French baguette, buy two smaller baguettes, or look for fresh bolillo rolls, which are available in many supermarkets Leftover pork can be refrigerated for up to 1 week, or wrap tightly and frozen for up to 3 months. Rate This Recipe I don't like this at all. It's not the worst. Sure, this will do. I'm a fan—would recommend. Amazing! I love it! Thanks for your rating! No new notifications You'll get updated when important things are happening, and when you engage with our community. Jared Newman / IDG At a GlanceCustomizable home screen can recommend contentPowerful Google Assistant voice searchChromecast built inChoppy, laggy, sluggish performanceHulu is practically unusableRemote lacks IR controlPricey for a 1080p streaming deviceAn inexpensive Android TV streamer is a great idea, but the execution in this case is a mess. With a \$50 list price, the Xiaomi Mi TV Stick aims to be a relatively cheap Android TV streaming dongle for 1080p televisions. Like other Android TV devices, it offers Google Assistant voice controls, Chromecast support, and a slick menu for recommending things to watch. But all that is undermined by the Mi TV Stick's performance, which ranges from just average (in apps like Netflix and HBO) to unusable (in Hulu). Combined with a chintzy remote and the likelihood of a much more interesting Android TV device just around the corner—that is, Google's own "Sabrina" streaming dongle—the Xiaomi Mi TV Stick doesn't offer much in its favor. This review is part of TechHive's coverage of the best media streamers, where you'll find reviews of competing products, plus a buyer's guide to the features you should consider when shopping for this type of product. Slow stick, cheap remote In the same vein as Amazon's Fire TV Stick and Roku's Streaming Stick+, the Mi TV Stick is a finger-length device that plugs directly into the HDMI slot on modern televisions. Depending on the arrangement of your TV's HDMI ports, you may need a short HDMI extender cable to make the Mi TV Stick fit; fortunately Xiaomi now includes one in the box. For tech specs, the Mi TV Stick uses a Cortex-A53 quad-core processor and Mali-450 GPU with 1GB of RAM and 8GB of onboard storage. The components are similar to what Xiaomi has used in its previous Android TV players, the Mi Box and Mi Box S, but it has half as much RAM as those devices, and it doesn't support 4K video. In practice, the hardware results in a sluggish experience. The system routinely vacillates between smooth and choppy frame rates while scrolling through menus, and the home screen can take upwards of five seconds to reload after exiting an app. Even just pressing a button on the remote often fails to produce an immediate response. Hulu, for whatever reason, seems to bring out the worst of these issues. Scrolling around the app causes the Mi TV Stick to freeze for seconds at a time, and it occasionally becomes so tripped up that it just crashes back to the home screen. Crashing also occurred during media playback, usually while trying to fast forward or adjust the device's volume. The fact that Xiaomi hasn't fixed issues with one of the most popular streaming services doesn't instill confidence, especially since some early adopters of the Mi TV Stick have been complaining about the matter since last August. Xiaomi says the performance issues in apps like Hulu may have to do with it being an EU version of the hardware, rather than the U.S. version that's launching later this year. We'll reevaluate once that version is available, but in the meantime, buyers will need to exercise caution as the EU model is selling on Amazon right now. The remote, meanwhile, is also a letdown, though not a surprising one since it's nearly identical to what shipped with 2018's Mi Box S. (The only difference: It now has a shortcut button for Amazon Prime Video.) The minimalist remote has a hollow, cheap feel to it; more importantly, it lacks an infrared emitter for direct control of TV volume and power. The best you can do is control the Mi TV Stick's internal volume level (which tops out at whatever maximum you've set on the TV itself), or use HDMI-CEC to control a connected sound system. In 2020, there's really no excuse for this omission. Jared Newman / IDG The Xiaomi Mi TV Stick remote has volume buttons, but the lack of IR support means it can't directly control a TV's volume. Also worth noting: There are no additional ports on the Mi TV Stick, aside from Micro-USB for power. While some Android TV devices can gain a USB port through a USB-OTG cable, this didn't work with the Mi TV Stick. Both an Xbox One controller and a USB thumb drive failed to register through the USB-OTG cable, and plugging in a USB keyboard caused the device to reboot. Android TV Jared Newman / IDG The Xiaomi Mi TV Stick runs Android 9.0. The Mi TV Stick's hardware is especially disappointing because the underlying Android TV software has gotten quite good. App availability—once the Achilles heel of Android TV—is no longer an issue, as the platform now offers pretty much every streaming service you might want. With Amazon continuing to fight with WarnerMedia and NBCUniversal over money, the presence of HBO Max and Peacock on Android TV even gives the platform something of an edge. (You can finally get Peacock on Roku devices.) The Android TV home screen takes some getting used to, but it can be really useful if you spend some time tailoring it to your liking. At the top of the screen—beyond a now-obligatory row of teaser content—is a customizable row of quick-launch app shortcuts. Underneath that are a series of "channel" rows from different apps, providing recommendations on what to watch. By scrolling to the left of any channel row, you can remove it or rearrange its order on the home screen. Jared Newman / IDG Android TV offers customizable home screen rows, each with recommendations from different apps. While you'll still have to dig into individual apps to see their full catalogs, being able to glance at suggestions from across Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, HBO Max, Disney+, and other streaming sources is pretty handy. The only problem is with Android TV's "Play Next" row, which is supposed to help you quickly resume any shows you're already watching. Many streaming sources continue to ignore this feature of Android TV, rendering it largely useless. Other hallmarks of Android TV are present on the Xiaomi Mi TV Stick as well. With the Google Assistant button on the remote, you can launch videos directly in supported apps such as Netflix and HBO Max; search by genre, actor, or director; control smart-home devices; or play music in apps like Spotify and YouTube Music. Jared Newman / IDG Google Assistant excels at detailed genre searches on Android TV. Having Chromecast support built in also comes in handy when you're using a phone or tablet and want to launch videos without having to grab the remote, and the system works nicely with Bluetooth headphones when you want to listen privately. Jared Newman / IDG Built-in Chromecast support means you can use apps on your phone (including Plexamp, pictured at left) to play media on your TV (pictured at right). But in some areas, Android TV still seems unrefined. Google Assistant has some odd blind spots—it can't search the Amazon Prime catalog, for instance, and I got an error while trying to launch CBS All Access content—and using Google Photos albums as a screensaver doesn't seem to work on the Mi TV Stick like it does on actual Chromecast devices. Android TV also lacks a single-sign-on feature for TV Everywhere apps, akin to what's available on Apple TV, Fire TV, and Roku devices. Overall, though, it's become a competent TV operating system with some unique perks. The big question arks as the platform grows Although Xiaomi just recently launched the Mi TV Stick in the United States, the possibility of a better budget Android TV device from Google looms large. That device, codenamed "Sabrina" and reportedly called Chromecast with Google TV, will likely be announced on September 30 with a price of \$50 to \$60. Rumors suggest that it will support 4K streaming, unlike the Mi TV Stick, and it might have a redesigned home screen to boot. Those who want a low-cost Android TV device would be well-advised to wait and see what Google brings. But even on its own merits, the Xiaomi Mi TV Stick is a tough sell. For the same \$50 asking price, you can get either a Roku Streaming Stick+ or an Amazon Fire TV Stick 4K, both of which offer much better performance, more capable remote controls, and 4K HDR video support. We can only hope Google will fare better at offering a compelling alternative to these budget streamers than Xiaomi has. \$39.80