



## Learning to cook with TOFU

Tofu is often the object of fun. Those who have never eaten it often laugh at it. Even some vegetarians hesitate to try it because they fear that they may be ridiculed or simply do not know how to cook it.

But tofu is a highly nutritious food that can be cooked in a variety of delicious ways. Vegetarians and non-vegetarians can enjoy it.

Tofu comes in two forms. There is silken tofu which you will find on the supermarket shelf with oriental foods. Silken tofu can be kept for a long time without refrigeration if the packet is unopened. Once opened it must be stored in the refrigerator. You will find regular tofu in the chiller department of your supermarket. It usually comes in a plastic vacuum pack. Both kinds of tofu come in a white block. It looks something like cheese.

Silken tofu is widely used in Japanese cooking but both kinds of tofu can be used in most dishes that call for tofu.

When you taste tofu you will find that there is no comparison with cheese. It tastes of *nothing*. That is the secret of cooking with tofu. You are adding the flavor. The advantage is that tofu is endlessly adaptable as it *takes on* the herbs, spices and vegetables with which it is cooked.

You can use it in stir fries by cutting it into little cubes. Flavor it with garlic, ginger, sesame oil, chilies or whatever you like to add to your favorite stir fry. If you keep a block of silken tofu in the cupboard you will always have something to make a stir fry in a hurry.

Tofu can be used for salad dressings and creamy sauces for savory or sweet dishes. Throw either kind into the food processor with the flavorings you want to use. For a salad dressing choose garlic, lemon juice, honey or herbs. If you make the same dressing thicker it can be used as a spread or dip.

Tofu is a very healthy food. It is low in fat and contains no animal fat at all. It will not raise your cholesterol levels and is reputed to play a part in raising the level of "good" cholesterol.

Whether you use tofu as part of a vegetarian diet or a non-vegetarian diet it is food worthy of trying.

### **Marinating**

Marinating tofu is a great way to add flavor to it. Start with firm or extra-firm tofu as it is the most porous and has the most room to absorb the liquid. Cut the block of tofu into smaller pieces and soak in your favorite marinade. Marinated tofu can be used in cooked dishes, or in cold dishes such as salads.

In a soup or stew where there is a great deal of liquid, you can look in the flavor of your tofu by cooking it with a little oil before adding it to the recipe. We recommend broiling it with a little non stick cooking spray to seal in the flavor and keep it from being leached out by the broth or soup.

### **Grilling or Broiling**

Marinate 1” thick slices of extra-firm tofu, then place on a lightly oiled or sprayed rack and grill or broil until a light crust forms.

### **Sautéing or Stir-frying**

Cut firm or extra-firm tofu into small pieces and place in a hot pan (make sure the pan is hot first or the tofu will stick). Once the tofu has browned, remove it from the pan and add any other ingredients to complete the recipe. Your last step will be to add in the browned tofu to simmer gently with the rest of the ingredients.

### **Simmering**

Cut firm or extra-firm tofu in to small pieces and simmer gently into your favorite soup or stew.

### **Salad Dressing**

Puree soft tofu with herbs and other favorite ingredients for a creamy salad dressing. This tofu dressing works well as a substitute for ranch dressing or any other type of creamy dressings. You can also puree soft tofu and substitute it for mayonnaise or sour cream dip.

### **Desserts**

Use soft tofu as a substitute for cream cheese in cheesecake, as a base for a pudding or a sweetened topping for fruit. Puree the tofu along with Splenda or Equal and flavorings. Soy custard, also known as “tofu fa”, is a delicious dessert enjoyed in many Asian countries.

For tofu recipes that fit the Living Whole Employee Wellness criteria, contact us at:  
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