

FOOD & DRINK

Trying tofu

The ancient soyabean product is often found in kitchens that traditionally only contained meat and potatoes

With many people choosing to become vegetarians, tofu, also called soybean curd, is becoming a staple ingredient in many kitchens.

Soyabean — which was first made in China around 200 BC — is the only plant source that is a complete protein.

Bland in flavour, tofu absorbs the flavour of other foods.

BUYING AND STORING

Tofu is sold in most supermarkets, health food stores and Asian stores. It may be purchased in four ways:

- In bulk (usually in Asian stores)
- Packed in water in plastic tubs
- In vacuum packaging
- In tetra packs (often called silken tofu)

Tofu packed in water in plastic tubs or vacuum packed should be refrigerated and used within the expiry date on the package (usually within seven to 10 days). Once the package is opened, the tofu should be covered with fresh water daily.

Tofu in tofu packs can be stored on the shelf and used up to the expiry date. Once opened, any leftover tofu should be refrigerated and covered with fresh water daily.

The fresher the tofu, the sweeter the taste. If tofu becomes old or the water is not changed regularly, it will become sour in taste. Leftover tofu can be stored in plastic

wrap and frozen. Once frozen, the texture changes. It is no longer creamy, but more porous, almost sponge-like in consistency, making it highly absorbent.

It works well as ground meat substitute in dishes like chili. Defrost frozen tofu in the refrigerator or in the microwave. Squeeze excess water out of the tofu before using.

NUTRITION

Tofu is an excellent source of high-quality protein and is completely cholesterol-free, however, it is not fat free.

Check the nutrient analysis on the package for specific nutrient information. Tofu is a nutritious food easily digested by both small children and older persons.

TOFU IDEAS AND TIPS

- To brighten up tofu's neutral appearance, add colourful ingredients and garnishes.
- Soft silken tofu can be used for drinks, sauces, dip, dressing and desserts.
- Firm tofu can be added to casseroles, stir fried or marinated and grilled.
- Frozen tofu, once defrosted, crumbles easily and is great in dishes calling for ground meats. It also absorbs flavours well.
- To make tofu absorb more flavour, place it between two plates and top with a weight. This presses the excess moisture out and allows the tofu to absorb more seasoning.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FOODLAND ONTARIO

Tofu vegetable stir-fry

Prepare the vegetables the night before and you can have dinner on the table in minutes. Feel free to vary vegetable choices with the best of the season.

Serve on a bed of basmati rice or vermicelli noodles.

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 10 minutes

Serves: four to six

☐ Cut tofu into three quarter inch strips; place in shallow container. In saucepan, bring soy sauce and garlic to boil; pour over tofu. Set aside.

☐ In Dutch oven or large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Cook onion and ginger until onion is softened, about two minutes.

☐ Stir in carrots, cabbage, mushrooms and red pepper; cover and cook for two to three minutes or until softened. Add reserved tofu mixture, stir-fry for two minutes. Stir in sesame oil. Serve immediately.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

1 serving (when recipe serves six)
 Protein: 11.5 grams
 Fat: 10 grams
 Carbohydrates: 10 grams
 Calories: 176

Creamy garlic dill dressing

This dressing is indispensable. Use it as a crudité dip, a salad dressing or simply toss with pasta for fabulous taste.

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Makes about two cups

- 1 pkg (12oz/340g) silken soft tofu
- 1/4 cup each chopped fresh parsley, green onions and dill
- 1 clove Ontario garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp each fresh lemon juice and whipped dressing

- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper

☐ Using sieve, drain tofu; add tofu to food processor.

☐ Add parsley, onions, dill, garlic, lemon juice, whipped dressing, salt and pepper; puree until smooth.

☐ Use immediately or cover and refrigerate for up to two days.

- 1 pkg (350g) extra-firm tofu
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 2 cloves Ontario garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 Ontario onion, sliced
- 2 tbsp minced fresh ginger
- 3 cups sliced Ontario cabbage
- 2 cups sliced Ontario mushrooms
- 1 cup sliced Ontario carrots
- Half sliced sweet red pepper
- 1 tsp sesame oil

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"Mario's Recipe"
Beef Steak Marinade
 1/4 cup oil
 1/2 cup white wine
 1 tsp. soya sauce
 2 garlic cloves finely chopped
 1 lbs. Montreal steak spice
 some oregano & some paprika
 Cooking Instructions:
 • Marinate meat overnight or 1 to 8 hours in refrigerator.
 • When ready, place meat on BBQ, save marinade and brush on meat while cooking.
 • (PS: flip meat once only)

Buon Appetito!