

RECIPE for health

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Featured Food:

TOFU



By Peggy Crum, RD, Health4U Nutritionist

When Friar Domingo Navarrete first enjoyed tofu in 17th century China, he called it “the most usual, common and cheap sort of food” eaten by all from “the Emperor and great men” to “the common sort as necessary sustenance.” Tofu had been a daily food in China for hundreds of years by the time Navarrete arrived on the scene.

Still not a daily food for most people in the United States, tofu is making a move to the mainstream. The wide array of tofu products available in the supermarket is a testament to its increasing popularity. The velvety white cakes are sold in rectangular blocks packed in water and sealed in plastic containers. Many forms are found in Asian markets. The most common kinds include:

Silken tofu, known as a soft or Japanese-style. Flawlessly smooth and tender, silken tofu is best used in salad dressings, sauces and desserts.

Regular tofu, known as firm or Chinese-style. Dense and somewhat course-looking, regular tofu retains its shape when cooked.

To be successful when cooking with tofu, use one or more of these simple techniques:

Draining or Pressing

Flavors penetrate better if you remove the surface water from your tofu. After draining, simply blot with paper towels. Pressing will remove more water resulting in less spattering when frying tofu. Cut in slabs, cover with paper towels and weight it down for 15 minutes.

Firming

Heat firms up the protein in tofu to help it hold together, giving it a chewy texture. It takes about five minutes of cooking time in either hot oil or simmering water.

Marinating

Only the outside of the tofu is really affected by this process, but it does add a punch to an otherwise flavorless food. Cover the drained tofu with marinade and refrigerate for an hour or more. Then sauté, grill, broil or bake.

Freezing

Tofu is one of only a few foods usefully altered by freezing. Tofu releases even more liquid when frozen and then thawed. The result is a tofu “sponge” ready to take on flavor with a texture that is chewier and meatier.

Experiment a little to discover tofu’s value for you!

Char-grilled Tofu Romesco

Recipe tested by Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski and featured in Residential Dining Services. Serves 8.

Romesco Sauce

- 2 Tablespoons Tomato Puree
- 1 Can (3.25 ounces) Roasted Red Peppers, drained
- 1 Tablespoon + 1 ½ teaspoon Olive Oil
- 1 teaspoon Kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon Minced Garlic
- 3 Tablespoons Water
- 1 Tablespoon Sherry Vinegar
- ¼ cup Sliced Almonds, roasted
- ¼ cup Whole Wheat Bread Crumbs, lightly toasted
- 1 teaspoon Ground Cumin
- ½ teaspoon Crushed Red Pepper
- 1 teaspoon Sweet Spanish Paprika

Char-grilled Tofu

- 2 pounds Extra Firm Tofu, drained
- Oil for Grill
- 2 Tablespoons Chopped Fresh Flat Leaf Parsley
- 2 Tablespoons Crumbled Goat Cheese

Place tomato puree, red peppers, olive oil, salt, garlic, water and vinegar in a blender or food processor and blend until smooth. Add the almonds, bread crumbs, cumin, crushed red pepper and paprika and blend again until smooth.

Cut tofu into eight triangular pieces by cutting each one-pound block in half diagonally, then slicing each piece in half through the thickness. Place on a baking sheet. Brush with romesco sauce. Let sit for at least 45 minutes.

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Heat a lightly-oiled ridged grill or grill pan over moderately high heat until hot, but not smoking. Place tofu pieces on grill and cook until grill marks appear, for two or three minutes. Turn carefully and continue cooking for another two or three minutes. Place grilled tofu pieces in a single layer in an oven-safe dish. Top each with a spoonful of romesco sauce. Bake for eight minutes or until sauce is hot and bubbly. Remove from oven. Serve garnished with parsley and goat cheese.

This recipe will be served at The Gallery at Snyder/Phillips, Riverwalk Market at Owen Hall, Holmes Dining, Shaw Dining, Brody Dining, Wonders Dining and Landon Dining on January 28.

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