

Vietnamese style tofu with pak choi and basil

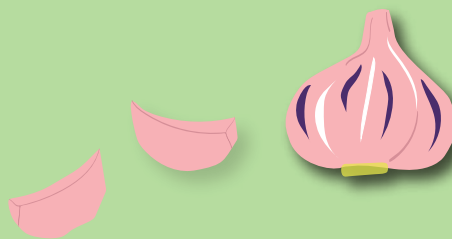
Those who consider tofu to be bland or boring should really give this recipe a try – I think it might just convert a few sceptics.

When tofu is prepared and cooked properly it's anything but bland or boring. The key is to think of your block of tofu as a sponge, so remove as much moisture as possible from the tofu before you begin, to encourage it to soak up the beautiful flavours of the sauce. Coating it lightly in corn or rice flour and frying it in hot oil before adding to the other ingredients will give the tofu a lighter, slightly chewier texture.

Servings: 4

Ingredients

400g block of tofu
2 tbsp cornflour
450 g pak choi, roughly chopped
8 spring onions, white and green parts sliced on the diagonal
1 red chilli, seeds in, thinly sliced
1 clove garlic, thinly sliced
2 tbsp Thai basil, roughly chopped
2 tbsp soy sauce
1 tbsp sake
1 tsp maple syrup
2 tbsp water
2 tbsp groundnut oil



Method

First prepare the tofu by wrapping the block in a clean tea towel or several layers of kitchen paper and placing it between two flat chopping boards or baking trays. Put weights carefully on top and leave for at least thirty minutes.

In a small bowl mix together the soy sauce, sake, maple syrup and water. Unwrap the block of tofu, wipe it dry and cut into 1-2 cm cubes. Roll the tofu cubes gently in the cornflour so that they are lightly coated.

Heat a wok over a high heat. As soon as it begins to smoke add the groundnut oil. After thirty seconds add the tofu (you will need to do this in a couple of batches to avoid crowding the wok which would lower the temperature too drastically). Cook, stirring from time to time, until the tofu has crisped up and browned slightly. Remove from the pan with a slotted spoon and drain on kitchen paper. Set to one side.

Keep the wok on the high heat, adding a little more oil if needed. Add the pak choi and the spring onions and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes. Next add the tofu, chilli, garlic and basil. Stir-fry for 30 seconds then finally add the soy sauce mixture. It should immediately bubble up. Stir the contents of the pan to ensure everything gets a really good coating of the sauce then remove from the heat and serve immediately, accompanied by jasmine rice.