

Tofu



Tofu is made from soy milk that is pressed into curds. Rich in protein, it has a neutral, slightly nutty flavor and smooth texture. It acts like a sponge, picking up the flavors of other ingredients.

Getting Started

Tofu comes in several textures. Choose the type that works best for the recipe.

- **Extra-firm or firm tofu:** Use in stir-fries, on the grill, or anytime you want the tofu to maintain its texture. Use in place of beef or chicken in any dish.
- **Soft tofu:** Use in place of scrambled eggs or in an eggless “egg” salad. Try in smoothies, sauces, dips, and puddings.
- **Silken tofu:** Use in puddings, smoothies, salad dressings, sauces, dips, and spreads. You can substitute ¼ cup blended silken tofu for 1 egg in many recipes. Add silken tofu to soups, such as butternut squash or pea, and blend for a creamy consistency.

Tofu is usually packaged in water. Before cooking, always drain tofu and pat it dry with paper towels. Add firmness to extra-firm, firm, and soft tofu by pressing out excess water before cooking. Place the tofu on a rimmed dish lined with paper towels. Add another layer of paper towels on top of the tofu and put a plate on top. Put cans or a heavy pot on top of the plate. Let the tofu stand like this for 20 minutes.

Storing Tofu

- Store leftover tofu in clean water for up to 1 week in the refrigerator. Change the water every 2 days. Do not use tofu if it starts to smell sour.
- Store tofu in the freezer for up to 6 months. Frozen tofu has a meaty texture. Crumble it to replace ground meat in your favorite recipes, such as pasta with marinara sauce, pizza, and chili.

Recipe Ideas

Tofu-Vegetable Stir-Fry

1. Drain 8 ounces extra-firm or firm tofu and pat dry with paper towels.
2. Slice tofu into 1-inch cubes. Place in a bowl and toss with several tablespoons of your favorite marinade. Cover the bowl and let the tofu marinate in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes.
3. Heat 1 tablespoon canola oil in a wok or frying pan over medium heat. The oil is hot enough when a piece of onion added to the wok sizzles. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped onion and cook for about 1 minute. Add 2 cloves minced garlic and cook for 30 seconds.
4. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup each of sliced carrots, broccoli, and peppers. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring regularly.
5. Stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sliced mushrooms and the cubed tofu with marinade. Cook for 3–4 minutes.
6. Remove the pan from the heat. Serve each portion with $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cooked brown rice.
Serves 4.

Blueberry-Banana Smoothie

1. Peel and slice 1 banana. Freeze slices overnight in a sealed, freezer-safe bag.
2. Add 1 cup frozen blueberries, the banana slices, 6 ounces silken tofu, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup light soy milk, and 2 teaspoons honey to a blender. Combine until smooth and serve. Serves 3.

Baked Tofu Salad

1. In a medium-size bowl, combine 1 tablespoon reduced-sodium soy sauce, 1 teaspoon grated ginger, 1 clove minced garlic, 1 tablespoon canola or peanut oil, and 1 tablespoon sesame oil.
2. Cut 12 ounces extra-firm tofu into large cubes. Add the tofu to the bowl and gently toss with the marinade until it is well coated. Cover the bowl and place in the refrigerator overnight.
3. Preheat the oven to 350° F. Remove tofu from marinade and place in baking dish. Bake for 20–30 minutes.
4. Serve baked tofu over a bed of your favorite greens.
Serves 4.

