

Trv Tofu Cooking

Have you tried tofu? It's a terrific product that will help you create inexpensive, nutritious dishes for your family.

Tofu is a cheese-like product made from soybeans. Because of its mild flavor, tofu combines well with fruits, vegetables, grains, meats, eggs and dairy products. It picks up the flavors of added sauces and spices and is useful as a meat extender.

Tofu is highly digestible, low in calories, and is an excellent, inexpensive source of calcium. It also is a heart healthy product; it's cholesterol free and contains polyunsaturated fat.

Although rich in plant protein, tofu lacks some of the essential amino acids not made by the human body. It needs to be eaten with rice or other grains, milk products, or small amounts of meat or eggs to provide good quality protein.

There are two types of tofu soft and firm. Soft tofu contains more water allowing it to be easily blended or creamed. Firm tofu contains less water and should be used in recipes that call for tofu to hold its shape. Either type can be used when the recipe specifies crumbles, mashed, or creamed tofu.

Tofu is sold as a water-covered cube sealed inside plastic containers or shelf stable containers in the produce section or the dairy case. Tofu packed in water is safe to use if you plan to cook it, as cooking kills most microorganisms.

When selecting tofu, examine the package to see that there are no holes, and buy only undamaged packages. Loss of water will lead to spoilage. Some packages may indicate a pull date. Choose those marked with the latest date to ensure freshness.

Tofu usually contains no preservatives and is perishable. When you bring it home, open the package and wash the tofu. Store covered with water in a plastic container with a lid. Make sure that about a half inch of water extends over the top of the tofu. Change the water every couple of days and tofu will keep for two weeks.

Tofu can be frozen. Simply drain off the water and wrap in foil or plastic. When defrosting it, cover with lukewarm water for a couple of hours. Squeeze out the excess and use immediately. Freezing changes the creamy consistency to a coarse, meaty texture that soaks up marinades and sauces easily.

Touf can be used in many ways. Try:

* Cubing or crumbling and adding to soups 10 minutes before done.

* Cubing or crumbling and adding to cold salads. Tofu absorbs dressing flavor after several hours and becomes quite

tasty. * Crumbling and adding to scrambling eggs.

* Stir-frying with onions, garlic, and assorted vegetables. Serve over rice.

Here are a few recipes which you may want to try:

Lasagna

10 ounces tofu, drained ¹/₄ cup grated Parmesan cheese

1 to 2 cloves garlic, crushed 1/2 lb. mushrooms, sliced

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1 lb. lasagna noodles

¹/₄ cup chopped fresh parsley or 1 tablespoon dried

 $2 \text{ to } 2^{1}$ cups canned tomato sauce 2 cups grated part-skim mozzarella cheese

Cook the lasagna noodles in boiling water with a teaspoon of vegetable oil until just tender. Drain. Saute the mushrooms in the oil until tender. Mash the tofu in a bowl and mix with Parmesan cheese and garlic. Have the cooked mushrooms, parsley, tomato sauce, and grated cheese ready for assembly.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly oil an 81/2 by 11 inch baking pan. Line bottom of baking pan with a layer of noodles. Spread the noodle layer with half the tofu mixture, then half the mushrooms, half the parsley, about 1/2 cup of sauce, and onethird the grated cheese. Add another layer of noodles and repeat the process. Place noodles on top, sprinkle with remaining grated cheese, and top with remaining tomato sauce. Bake for 45 minutes or until nicely browned. Serves 10.

Sticky Dip

1 cup tofu, squeezed to remove excess water*

1/2 cup water-packed tuna (white, preferably solid-packed), drained 1 cup chopped fresh spinach (or thawed frozen that is well drained) 1 teaspoon chopped fresh dill or 1/2 teaspoon dried dill weed (to taste)

1 clove garlic, pressed

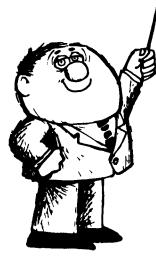
2 scallions minced

2 teaspoons frozen apple juice concentrate, thawed

1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar

In a mixing bowl, blend together the tofu, mayonnaise, and tuna, breaking up the chunks of tuna to make a relatively smooth mixture. Add the remaining ingredients and blend together thoroughly. Cover the bowl and refrigerate for one hour. Serve with crackers or fresh vegetables. Makes 2 cups.

* To squeeze, drain the tofu and wrap in a towel. Twist the towel closed and squeeze or knead the tofu for 2-3 minutes, taking care not to press so vigorously that the tofu begins to come through the towl. Empty into a bowl for use.



A LESSON WELL LEARNED...

Lancaster Farming's CLASSIFIED ADS GET RESULTS!

> Phone: 717-394-3047 or 717-626-1164