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# Excellent Tofu Dishes That Can Compete With Meat in Any Meal



Sometimes, tofu gets a poor rap because of the stereotype that it is tasteless, uninteresting, and difficult to prepare. We want to alter that by being here. We like to compare it to raw chicken: packed with promise but utterly devoid of taste. One of the editors here draws comparisons to fresh dairy products like ricotta, cottage cheese, or even butter. Even if you don't like it, with a little effort (and the advice we've provided), it can be transformed into a protein that can compete with the best meat substitutes. If you're attempting to cut down on your meat consumption or are already a vegetarian or vegan in search of new inspiration, you'll find something tasty here. You may easily go vegetarian seven days a week with the help of our greatest tofu dishes.

Okay, let's get down to brass tacks. Tofu might be scary if you have never prepared for it before. Learn unexpected techniques (sneak preview: freeze it for the greatest texture!) and best practices (including whether to press your tofu or not) for making your tofu the best it can be in our baked tofu or tofu stir fry recipes. Once you've mastered them, you may try one of our many unique recipes for any meal of the day. Looking for a hearty vegan breakfast? Give our tofu scramble a go. Want something tasty to eat that won't take forever to prepare? Have a grain bowl with our jerk tofu, a sandwich with our spicy fried "chicken," or a lettuce wrap with our caramelized tofu. What about making tofu the hero of a substantial main dish tonight? Try some of our vegan options like our tofu katsu curry, tofu banh mi, and vegan lasagna. Once you get used to cooking with it, you'll discover that it can stand in for eggs, meat, and dairy in a wide variety of dishes.

Even though firm tofu (in all of its forms, from medium-hard to super-firm) is the best choice for most of these dishes, silken or soft tofu may also be delicious and useful in some situations. You won't even be able to tell that the tofu is there in the lovely pink raspberry smoothie, the hot and sour soup, or the mapo tofu.

## 1. Tofu Stir-Fry

Use extra-firm tofu that has been frozen so that it can absorb flavors more easily, and quickly simmer the tofu in salted water to make it harder and less prone to crumble when jostled in the pan, for the best results. Except for that, whatever vegetables you choose may be included.

Selling tofu may be challenging. Many people are dissatisfied with its taste and consistency, but when it is given specific treatment, it becomes something quite different. My mum advised me to use frozen tofu to get extra-firm tofu for this dish. When tofu is defrosted, it takes on a more porous, sponge-like texture, making it a better vehicle for flavor infusion. It's great in a variety of soups and stews, and it works especially well in stir-fries. What, another one of mom's tricks? For a few minutes in salted water, before stir-frying the tofu. It's been said that doing so makes the tofu more sturdy and less prone to fall apart when stir-fried. No doubt my mom knows what she's talking about, but you don't have to follow her advice.

As with salads, practically any ingredient may be used to make a stir-fry that is still fast, nutritious, and delicious. You may use any robust vegetables you have on hand in place of the ones I've included in the recipe, but they're the ones I like most. My father used to add iceberg lettuce to the mix when I was a kid, which was a terrible idea. In place of lettuce, you may use almost any other vegetable: broccoli, cabbage, kale, bok choy, onions, thin slices of potato, celery, maize, etc.

Tofu with a firm texture is preferred. The labeling and packaging of tofu tend to be murky. Be wary of silken tofus labeled "firm silken tofu." Due to its high moisture content, silken tofu is very delicate and will fall apart in your hands. Soft fuses are great for other applications, including smoothies and hot and sour soup, but they won't hold up well in this stir-fry method.

Please rate this recipe and comment with your thoughts and feedback if you've tried it.

# Ingredients

## BEING TOFU

- 1 block extra-firm tofu (14 oz.), either fresh or frozen and thawed
- The equivalent of 1 tablespoon of low-sodium soy sauce
- The equivalent of 1 tablespoon of sesame oil
- pepper, black, freshly ground, 1/2 teaspoon
- Cornstarch, 2 tablespoons' worth

## A SEASONING FOR STIR-FRYING

- Kosher salt, and three tablespoons of olive oil from the jar's extra-virgin portion.
- 3 minced garlic cloves
- 1 tablespoon of finely chopped ginger
- 8 ounces of string beans, 2 small carrots, 1 small head of broccoli that has been chopped into florets, and some salt and pepper
- Pepper, red, seeded, and sliced: 1.
- 2 slivered green onions

## TO TOP WITH

- Sodium-reduced soy sauce, 2 tablespoons
- Sesame oil, 2 teaspoons
- Water, 1/4 cup
- 2 tablespoons of brown sugar, packed
- Cornstarch, 2 teaspoons

# Directions

## Step 1

Simmer the tofu for 2 minutes in a medium saucepan of boiling salted water. To thaw frozen tofu, cook it at a low simmer for about an hour. Take off the stove and let it cool in a paper towel-lined colander. After it has cooled down enough to be handled, give it a little squeeze and then a quick pat. Apply more pressure while squeezing frozen tofu to remove excess water.

## Step 2

Toss cubed tofu in a medium bowl with some soy sauce, sesame oil, and black pepper. Mix cornstarch with the tofu once it has absorbed the liquid.

## Step 3

Two tablespoons of oil should be heated in a large pan over medium heat. When the oil is hot, add the tofu and let it fry for 7 to 8 minutes, flipping it regularly, until it is golden brown all over. Put in a bowl, season with salt and pepper, and leave away.

## Step 4

Garlic and ginger should be cooked in the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil until fragrant, about 1 minute. Put in the string beans, carrots, broccoli, red pepper, and green onions. Prepare for 8-10 minutes till done. Add salt and pepper to taste.

## Step 5

Combine the soy sauce, sesame oil, water, brown sugar, and cornstarch in a small bowl and mix well. Put the tofu back in the pan with the sauce and heat through. For about 2 minutes, while stirring constantly, you should see the mixture thicken.

## 2. Spicy Fried “Chicken” Sandwich



This “chicken” sandwich has the perfect balance of crunch, heat, creaminess, and tang. We used protein-rich tofu to mimic crispy fried chicken and boosted the batter’s crispness with cornmeal. Freezing the tofu is essential since it creates a texture closer to that of meat.

This “chicken” sandwich has the best of everything delicious: crunch, heat, creaminess, and tang. We used protein-rich tofu to mimic crispy fried chicken and boosted the batter’s crispness with cornmeal.

Don’t skip the freezing process if you want a chicken-like feel. When tofu is frozen, it undergoes a dramatic textural change, becoming chewy and reminiscent of flesh. Drain the tofu carefully between paper towels before breading it, whether you’ve frozen it or not; the extra moisture will prevent the batter from becoming nice and golden.

Ingredients

## SANDWICH TOPPINGS FOR FRIED CHICKEN

- Ingredients: 2 (14-ounce) blocks of extra-firm tofu, drained
- Mustard: about a quarter cup of Dijon
- Bread and butter pickle slices, plus a quarter cup of the brine from the pickles, to garnish
- Spicy condiment of choice, about 1/4 cup + extra for serving
- Apple cider vinegar, 2 tablespoons

- 1 cup of flour, any kind
- half a cup of cornmeal, finely ground
- Cornstarch, 1 Tablespoon
- A sprinkling of chili pepper, equivalent to 2 teaspoons
- Cayenne pepper, 1 1/2 teaspoons
- In a pinch, add onion powder (1 tsp).
- An equivalent of half a teaspoon of baking powder
- Garlic powder, half a teaspoon
- Half a teaspoon of kosher salt
- Oil derived from plants; for deep frying
- The equivalent of 4 squishy hamburger buns
- A head of green leaf lettuce with four leaves

## THE GARLIC MAYONNAISE

- Incorporating 1 whole garlic clove
- More than half a teaspoon of kosher salt is required.
- 2 teaspoons of freshly squeezed lemon juice
- Vegan mayonnaise, half a cup
- Cracked black pepper, just ground

## Directions

### A SANDWICH TO MAKE

## Step 1

To freeze the tofu, place it in a single layer on a plastic plate or in a big plastic container with a lid. Put in the freezer for at least 5 hours and up to a month before you need it.

## Step 2

Take the tofu out of the freezer and thaw it fully, for at least 4 hours on the counter or overnight in the fridge. Remove any standing water.

## Step 3

Place the thawed tofu in a single layer on a baking sheet coated with several layers of paper towels. Cover the tofu with a couple of extra layers of paper towels and a second-rimmed baking sheet. Press down on a baking sheet with some cookbooks or cans of beans for added weight. Drain for at least an hour in the fridge, preferably overnight, replacing the paper towels as needed.

## Step 4

Make the sandwich while the tofu drains. Dijon mustard, pickle brine, spicy sauce, and vinegar should be combined in a small basin and whisked together. The dry ingredients (flour, cornmeal, cornstarch, chili powder, cayenne pepper, onion powder, baking powder, garlic powder, and 12 teaspoon salt) should be mixed together in a second, shallow basin.

## Step 5

The tofu should yield 4 separate planks, 2 from each half that was cut in half lengthwise. Coat the tofu in the dry mixture, then dunk it in the wet mixture, one piece at a time. Turn back to the dry ingredients, then the wet, and finally back to the dry ingredients again. Spread out on a spotless serving platter. Continue with the remaining tofu.

## Step 6

The oil level in a big cast-iron skillet should be about 1/2 inch above the pan's rim. Get it going in a pan over moderate heat. Turn the heat down to medium when the oil is heated enough to shimmer. Turn the tofu over after approximately 5 minutes of frying on each side to ensure even browning. Drain on a paper towel-lined platter.

### PREPARE THE MAYONNAISE WITH GARLIC

## Step 1

Squash the garlic clove with the blade of your knife on a chopping board. Add half a teaspoon of salt and mix well. Keep pressing the garlic with the blade of the knife until it becomes a paste. A garlic

paste may be made by scraping garlic cloves into a small bowl and then adding some mayonnaise and lemon juice. Adjust the seasoning with more salt and pepper.

## Step 2

The bottom half of the buns should be spread with garlic mayonnaise. Place lettuce, fried tofu, and pickles on top. Put the topping on the sandwich and serve.

## 3. Caramelized Tofu Lettuce Wraps

This dish for tofu, which was inspired by our caramelized beef with rice, is easy to make and will convert even the most hesitant of tofu eaters. Lettuce wraps may be served with a wide variety of condiments, including those that provide sweetness, sourness, and saltiness.

Even though cilantro and peanuts go so well together, onions and toasted sesame seeds are also delicious additions. Weight may be added by using crunchy raw vegetables like cucumbers, bell peppers, celery, and carrots, and a sprinkle of chile oil is essential for spice fans. If lettuce just isn't cutting it, try it with some rice instead.

It is recommended, but not necessary, to press your tofu. If you'd rather forgo that, just dry your tofu well before cooking it, and know that it will take longer to prepare because of the added moisture. You shouldn't worry if your tofu is clinging to the pan; a crust will develop in the end. Flip your spatula upside down and squeeze the edge between the tofu and the griddle to get beneath stubborn chunks.

## Ingredients

- 1 block of firm tofu (14 ounces), drained
- One-fourth cup of low-sodium soy sauce
- Dark brown sugar, 3 tablespoons
- two tablespoons of plain rice vinegar
- Toasted sesame oil, 1 teaspoon
- Garnish with half a teaspoon of crushed red pepper
- Fish sauce, 1/2 teaspoon (optional)
- 2 Tablespoons of oil from a vegetable source
- Minced fresh ginger, one inch 2 minced garlic cloves
- Serve with butterhead or romaine lettuce, leaves removed.

- Serve with cilantro leaves.
- Finely chopped toasted peanuts, for garnish
- Wedges of lime for squeezing over food before serving

## Directions

### Step 1

Place the tofu on a chopping board that has been covered with clean paper towels or a clean kitchen towel. Spread the tofu out on a flat surface (a skillet or baking sheet works well) and then use cans or another flat pan to press down on the tofu. Drain the tofu for 15 minutes, but no more than 45.

### Step 2

Use your fingers to crumble the tofu into a basin of suitable size. The largest bits need to be the size of a pea.

### Step 3

Soy sauce, sugar, vinegar, sesame oil, red pepper flakes, and fish sauce (if used) should be whisked together in a separate medium bowl. (Don't worry if the sugar doesn't fully dissolve; it will as soon as it hits the hot pan.)

### Step 4

Vegetable oil should be heated until it shimmers in a large cast-iron skillet or nonstick pan over medium heat. Shake the tofu into an equal layer and add it to the pan. Leave it alone for approximately 5 minutes, or until the bottom is deep brown.

### Step 5

To get the tofu crispy and brown all the way through, heat it for an additional 4 minutes while stirring it periodically. Cook the ginger and garlic for approximately a minute, or until they start to release their aroma.

### Step 6

Stir in the soy sauce mixture and continue cooking for another 3 minutes, or until all liquid has evaporated.

## Step 7

Spread the tofu mixture with a generous scoop in the middle of each lettuce leaf. Serve with lime wedges, peanuts, and cilantro leaves on top.

## 4. Tofu Marinade

This tofu marinade is full of pantry items and has a sweet-savory flavor that is reminiscent of barbecue sauce with a bite. This is a fantastic recipe for the foundation of any of your favorite tofu dishes, whether you choose to bake, grill, or pan-fry the tofu.

Before marinating, you should drain the tofu to remove as much of the natural moisture as possible so that it can absorb the flavorful sauce. That's why we choose the extra-firm kind of tofu. Freezing your tofu until it is firm, let it thaw, and then gently squeezing out the residual liquid is the easiest approach to get rid of all that moisture. (Check out June's recipe for Baked Tofu for further details on this technique.) If you're short on time, you may skip the marinating step and just press or squeeze out as much liquid as possible.

Cutting tofu may be done as you choose. To ensure that the marinade is being absorbed evenly, it is best to marinate smaller cubes in a resealable bag.

Did you make this? Leave a comment telling us how it went!

## Ingredients

- Reduced-sodium soy sauce, 3 tablespoons
- Spicy sauce, about 1 tablespoon's worth of sriracha
- Toasted sesame oil, 1 tablespoon
- 1 teaspoon of pure olive oil
- 2 tablespoons of 100% pure maple syrup
- Smoked paprika, 2 teaspoons
- Five-spice powder, one teaspoon
- 2 tablespoons chopped or grated garlic

- one 14-ounce block of extra-firm tofu, drained and sliced to taste

## Directions

### Step 1

Mix everything (except the tofu) together in a medium bowl. Spread tofu out in a baking dish or a plastic bag that can be sealed. Add tofu to the marinade and stir to coat.

### Step 2

Marinate for at least 30 minutes and up to a day in the fridge, turning it over periodically. Make it taste.

## 5. Air Fryer Tofu

With the advent of the air fryer, crunchy snacks can be created with ease in any kitchen. This tofu dish is a great illustration of it! The standard method of achieving crispy tofu involves heating a large quantity of oil while fretting about overcooking and a cumbersome clean-up. However, the air fryer makes it simple to cook tofu to a golden brown.

The tofu is marinated, then dredged with cornstarch, air-fried, and then tossed in sauce. The choice of marinade and sauce is up to you, however, we recommend trying this one with soy marinade and spicy sauce (that might remind you of bang bang shrimp). Alternatively, you may throw the tofu in a sauce made from equal parts ketchup and gochujang. Choices may be made at will.

To prevent the tofu from seeming dusty, just brush off any extra cornstarch. Apart from that, I have no doubts about the success of this dish. Made any attempts? Leave a comment telling us how it turned out.

## Ingredients

- 14 ounces of firm tofu, diced into 1-inch cubes
- Sodium-reduced soy sauce, 2 tablespoons
- Toast 2 tablespoons of sesame oil.
- Garlic powder, half a teaspoon
- To taste, 1/2 teaspoon of spicy or smoked paprika

- Seasoning with half a teaspoon of onion powder
- half a cup of cornstarch
- Plus more than 1 teaspoon of kosher salt
- Black pepper, freshly ground, 1/4 teaspoon
- spritz olive oil for cooking
- Mayonnaise, 1/4 cup
- Thai Sweet Chili Sauce, 1/4 Cup
- Two minced garlic cloves
- Add 2 tablespoons of sriracha sauce.
- Service with steamed white rice, sliced scallions, and toasted sesame seeds.

## Directions

### Step 1

Combine the tofu, oil, soy sauce, garlic powder, paprika, and onion powder in a large bowl and toss to coat. Put the bowl in the fridge for at least 20 minutes and up to an hour, covered.

### Step 2

Combine the cornstarch, 1 teaspoon of salt, and 1/4 teaspoon of black pepper in a medium bowl and stir until smooth. Shake off any extra cornstarch after coating the tofu with the mixture.

### Step 3

Spread tofu in an air fryer basket in a single layer and coat with cooking spray, working in batches if required. For around 15 minutes at 400 degrees, flipping once, the food will be golden and crispy.

### Step 4

Mix mayonnaise, chili sauce, garlic, and sriracha together in a large bowl; season with salt. The tofu should be tossed in the sauce to absorb the flavor.

### Step 5

Put the tofu on a bed of rice. Serve with a sprinkle of scallions and sesame seeds for garnish.

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