The Truth About TOFU

By: Meredith V. Pellegrini, RD, BS

SESAME CRUSTED TOFU SALAD

What is tofu? Although tofu has been in the public eye for some time, following the rise in popularity of vegetarian and meatless diets, it's amazing how little people really know much about this tender, chewy substance. Tofu, also known as soybean curd, is a soft cheese-like food made by curdling fresh hot soymilk with a coagulant. In recipes, tofu acts like a sponge and has the miraculous ability to soak up any flavor that is added to it. Tofu never gets in the way of the flavors you love. In fact, it absorbs those flavors, leaving your fruits, fruitier, your stocks, stockier and your veggies…veggier! Where did it come from?

The Chinese were the first to create tofu; it just took the rest of us about 1,500 years to catch up. Tofu made its way to Europe and America in the 18th and 19th centuries, but it wasn't until 1958 that tofu hit the grocery store shelves in America. Even then, it took a while to catch on. Is tofu really good for you?

Yes, as many are aware, tofu is rich in high quality protein. But what you may not know is that it's also a good source of B-vitamins and iron. It is low in saturated fat and contains no cholesterol. Tofu is also very low in sodium, making it a perfect food for people on sodium-restricted diets, and — because of the addition of a coagulation agent in the production process — contains a certain amount of calcium. Types of Tofu

There are three main types of tofu that can be found in grocery stores in the United States. Firm tofu is dense and solid, and cooks well in stir-fry dishes, soups or on the grill. Firm tofu keeps its shape. It is higher in protein, fat and calcium than the other forms of tofu. Soft tofu is a good choice for recipes that call for blended tofu. It is also good in Oriental soups. Silken tofu is made by a slightly different process and gives a creamy, custard-like consistency. This works well in pureed or blended dishes. There are literally thousands of recipes that contain tofu. This one is sure to be one of your favorites!

SESAME CRUSTED TOFU SALAD by Executive Chef Guy P. Pellegrini 8 ounces firm tofu 1/4 cup ginger, julienned 1/4 cup carrot, julienned 1/3 cup cilantro, chopped 4 cups baby mixed greens 4 Tablespoons sesame seeds, dry roasted 1/4 cup light soy sauce 2 Tablespoons sesame oil 4 Tablespoons olive oil 1 Tablespoon molasses or brown sugar Combine soy sauce, 2 Tablespoons olive oil, sesame oil, and molasses in a bowl. Place the firm tofu on a serving plate, draining the excess water. Pat dry. Cut into four pieces. Lightly coat the tofu with sesame seeds, and then sear in 2 Tablespoons of olive oil until lightly toasted. Mix ginger, carrot, cilantro and mixed greens, and toss with soy sauce dressing. Divide equally onto the center of each plate. Place equal portions of seared tofu on top of each mixed salad. Sprinkle with sesame seeds. Serves 4. CALORIES PER SERVING: 160FAT: 14G TRANS FAT: 0 CARBS: 6G PROTEIN: 9G

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