**steph's tofu**

Serves 8

- 2 tablespoons organic sunflower oil
- ½ cup (⅓ of a 12-ounce can) organic orange juice concentrate
- ½ cup mirin rice wine
- ¼ cup organic low-sodium tamari
- ¼ cup organic toasted sesame oil
- 2 tablespoons organic brown rice vinegar
- 2 tablespoons finely minced garlic
- 2 tablespoons finely minced organic fresh ginger
- 2 pounds organic extra-firm tofu

Preheat oven to 350˚F. Grease a medium-size casserole dish with 1 tablespoon sunflower oil.

Mix together orange juice concentrate, mirin, tamari, remaining tablespoon of sunflower oil, garlic and ginger. Whisk well.

Cut tofu into ½-inch cubes and marinate in the above liquid in the greased casserole dish for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon. It’s best to use a wooden spoon to avoid damaging the tofu.

Bake the tofu in the dish for 1 hour, stirring every 10 to 15 minutes. Some sauces will be absorbed into the tofu while cooking. Serve hot or cold with your favorite accompaniment.

— Seppo Farrey, PCC Cooks instructor
A versatile choice for any meal

Low in calories and packed with protein, tofu can be a nutritious addition to many recipes. Because tofu takes on the flavors of other ingredients, it is delicious in sweet or savory dishes.

Tofu is made by adding a curdling agent to the liquid from cooked and strained soybeans. Traditionally, the curdling agent is nigari (a compound found in ocean water), magnesium sulfate (Epsom salt) or calcium sulfate (a naturally occurring mineral). The curds are pressed into a solid block and water is pressed out to determine the final texture.

**Firm and extra-firm tofu** are dense and solid and hold up well in stir-frys, soups or on the grill.

**Soft tofu** is good for soups and making dips or spreads, where a softer texture is desirable and the recipe calls for blending, mashing or puréeing.

**Silken tofu** is made by a slightly different process, using a cornstarch derivative. It’s custard-like and works well in puréed dishes or baking.

**Nutrition information**

Tofu is cholesterol-free, low in saturated fat, calories and sodium, and a good source of B vitamins and minerals. Generally, the firmer the tofu, the higher the protein, calcium, iron and fat content. Tofu has virtually no fiber.

Previous claims that soy foods may reduce the risk of heart disease appear to be unfounded. In 2006, the American Heart Association cancelled its endorsement of soy foods, declaring soy has little effect on cholesterol and is not likely to prevent heart disease.

Many nutritionists advise consumers to pay attention to the quality and quantity of soy in their diet. Traditional Asian cultures provide a healthful model, consuming tofu in small amounts.

Choose organic tofu to avoid consuming genetically engineered soy; 92 percent of the U.S. soybean crop is now genetically engineered.

**Storing tofu**

Tofu should be stored in the refrigerator at all times. Once the package is open, leftover tofu should be rinsed and covered with fresh water and a bit of salt. Change the water daily and use the tofu within a week. As with any perishable food, check the “best used by” date on the package. Tofu that turns “pinkish” is spoiled and should be thrown out.

Tofu can be frozen for several months without losing nutrient value. When thawed, it will have a sponge texture that soaks up marinades and is great for grilling, or can be shredded for stews or chili.

**Preparing tofu**

**STIR-FRY DISHES**

Dice firm tofu into 1-inch cubes. Use it plain or marinate, then sauté with vegetables such as garlic, ginger root, onions, mushrooms, peppers, asparagus, snow peas, carrots or broccoli. Season with soy sauce and toasted sesame oil.

**SCRAMBLED**

Crumble soft or firm tofu, sprinkle with turmeric powder if desired for a golden glow, and sauté in oil. Capers, peppers, onions and mushrooms are nice enhancements. Optional seasonings include Dijon mustard, thyme, marjoram, salt, cayenne or fresh cilantro.

**SOUPS**

Dice soft or silken tofu and add to chicken, vegetable or miso soups. Soft or silken tofu also may be pureed in a blender or food processor with cooked vegetables, then added back for a dairy-free “cream” soup.

**SANDWICHES**

Mash or crumble plain tofu and mix with mustard, pickle relish, mayonnaise, minced onions and celery for an “eggless” salad sandwich. Blend crumbled tofu half and half with dry veggie burger or falafel mixes for tofu burgers. Sliced plain tofu can be pan-browned quickly with oil and soy sauce and used in a sandwich. Try plain fresh tofu (similar to fresh mozzarella) on whole-grain bread with mustard and/or mayonnaise, tomato, avocado, lettuce and onions for a delicious, meat-free sandwich.

**GRILLING**

You’ll get best results with firm or extra-firm tofu. Cut in ½-inch slabs or 1-inch cubes. Marinate in refrigerator for 20 minutes to all day. Skewer cubes with mushrooms, bell peppers, cherry tomatoes and onions.

**DESSERTS, SAUCES AND SMOOTHIES**

Silken tofu is best for achieving a velvety smooth texture. For an instant, delicious mousse or pudding, whip equal amounts of ripe banana and silken tofu in a blender with a bit of sweetener, vanilla and lemon juice (optional) to protect colors and enhance flavors. Or, blend tofu with cocoa or carob powder, maple syrup and vanilla, almond or mint extract. You also may add fresh or frozen berries. Both can be thinned for a smoothie or fruit salad dressing.

**Preparation tip**

If a firmer tofu texture is desired, put tofu on a plate with another plate on top for 5 to 20 minutes. This gently expels extra liquid, making it especially good for marinating.