



November 2018 Newsletter

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What is tofu you might ask? Moreover, why would I eat it?

*Sheila Gains, Family & Consumer Science
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Like cheese is made from curdled dairy milk, tofu is curd made from soymilk. Soymilk comes from soybeans. Also like cheese, tofu may be drained and pressed into a block.



Tofu has a very mild flavor that will take on the flavors from other ingredients and seasonings. The texture of tofu varies. It can be a soft gelatin block that you can slice or puree. It can also be a firm semi-solid block that you can slice, dice or crumble.

Tofu is a great source of protein and a good source of iron, calcium, manganese, selenium, phosphorus, magnesium, copper, zinc and vitamin B1. Tofu is easy to eat, making it a great protein source for people of all ages. It is especially good for people who might have a problem chewing other proteins like meat or nuts. Because tofu is made from soybeans, it is important not to serve it to anyone who is allergic to soy.

Tofu is the star of many Asian foods, such as stir-fries, soups and stews. It can replace meat, eggs and cheese in many recipes. I make tofu pumpkin pie for family and friends who are allergic to eggs or milk. That way they can enjoy the traditional flavors of the holiday season.

Types and Uses of Tofu:

- **Extra-Firm:** Use for frying, roasting, grilling or marinating. Tofu does not brown easily, so consider marinating it in a brown liquid like soy sauce, or coating it in seasoned cornstarch before frying or roasting.
- **Firm:** Great for stir-frying or boiling in soups or stews. Crumble, season and cook as you would ground meat. It is also a tasty replacement for ricotta cheese in your favorite lasagna recipe.
- **Soft:** Puree with other ingredients to make casseroles, or chop and use in an eggless egg salad recipe.
- **Silken:** Puree and use as an egg substitute in many baked goods. It is the perfect texture for pureeing in smoothies and puddings or vegan custards like my tofu pumpkin pie. (see recipe below)

Look for tofu in the refrigerated section of your grocery store. Keep it refrigerated at home and use it or freeze by the date on the label. If frozen, the texture of tofu changes, making it crumble easier which is desirable in some dishes. Always drain and pat-dry fresh tofu. Silken tofu is shelf stable. It does not need refrigeration (except after opening). While it does not need refrigeration, some stores keep it with other fresh tofu in the store refrigerator. Ask the store staff if you cannot find the type of tofu you are looking for.

Let's Talk

Encourage children to eat a variety of foods every day. Help them discover new favorites.

When introducing tofu to your family, consider saying something like this: "I have been hearing a lot of good things about tofu and would like to try some new recipes with tofu this week. Will you help me by tasting the foods and letting me know what you think?" Give each child a serving to taste. Ask them if they would like any more. After serving the food, say something like this: "What did you like or not like about this dish? Give me some ideas of how I could make the dish taste even better." Do not act disappointed if they do not like a new food the first time. Try again another day or with another recipe. The goal is to encourage children to try new foods and be adventurous.

Recipes for Health

Tofu Pumpkin Pie

Ingredients:

- One unbaked 9-inch deep-dish pie crust

Filling

- 16 oz. (1 1/2 packages) firm silken tofu
- 15 oz. can of pumpkin
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt



Directions:

1. Combine all the pie-filling ingredients in a blender or food processor, blend until smooth.
2. Pour filling into pie shell and smooth the top.
3. Bake in a preheated oven at 425 degrees for 15 minutes.
4. Turn oven down to 350 and continue to bake another 45 minutes.
5. Pie will be a little jiggly when hot, but will firm up when cool.
6. Chill before serving.
7. Store leftovers in the refrigerator. Eat within 4 days.

Tofu Vegetable Miso Soup

Adapted from Xi Chen, Michigan State University

Ingredients:

- 6 oz. (1/2 package) soft or firm cubed tofu
- 4oz. fresh sliced mushrooms, or other quick cooking vegetable of your choice
- Handful of chopped leafy greens (spinach, kale etc.)
- 2 Tablespoons chopped green onion
- 4 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 2-4 tablespoons miso paste (salty soy bean paste found in Asian food aisle)

Directions:

1. In a large pot, bring chicken or vegetable broth to a boil.
2. Add tofu, mushrooms, and leafy greens. Bring back to a simmer.
3. Stir in miso paste, until dissolved.
4. Taste and season with salt and pepper, if needed.
5. Remove from heat and top with green onions before serving.

