

CRISPY SWEET AND SOUR TOFU and MUSHROOMS

Over the last several weeks this recipe has become a regular lunch time meal in the midst of short winter days and the packing of boxes. The tofu is crispy on the outside, and yielding on the inside, and the whole lot is perfectly sweet, sour, and spicy.

Ingredients.

1/2 cup Chinese vinegar
1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
2 tablespoons soy sauce
10-12 medium crimini mushrooms, thinly sliced
4 cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger
14 oz firm tofu, cubed to about the size of dice
1 cup corn starch
vegetable oil
toasted sesame seeds
thinly sliced scallions
4 cups cooked Jasmine rice
Sriracha (optional)

Directions.

In a liquid measuring cup, combine the Chinese vinegar, brown sugar, and soy sauce. Stirring until it's combined and the sugar has mostly dissolved. Set it aside.

In a large non-stick skillet, heat a couple tablespoons of oil over medium high heat. Sauté the mushrooms until they are golden brown. Reduce the heat and add in the garlic and ginger and sauté until fragrant - about one minute. Don't let the garlic or ginger brown or burn. Set aside in a medium bowl.

Place the corn starch in a separate large bowl, toss the cubed tofu in the corn starch to coat.

Heat about three tablespoons of oil in the skillet over high heat. Working with about half of the tofu at a time, shake the excess corn starch from the cubes and add them to the hot skillet. Fry until all the sides are light-medium brown and crispy. Using tongs transfer the tofu to the same bowl with the mushrooms. Cook the second batch of tofu the same way. Carefully drain any remaining liquid from the skillet and wipe clean.

Replace the skillet over medium high heat, add back in the mushrooms and tofu along with the vinegar, sugar, soy sauce mixture. Sauté, stirring pretty constantly until the mixture reduces and the mushrooms and tofu are coated with a thick, caramel-like sauce.

Pour the tofu over rice, sprinkle with lots of toasted sesame seeds, scallions, and a bit of hot sauce. Enjoy while piping hot.

Serves 2.

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