

Jai (Monks' Stew or Buddha's Delight)

Makes 4 servings | Active Time: 30 minutes | Total Time: 3 hours 30 minutes

Swick

Chef's Notes

- If you can't find these ingredients at your regular grocery store, you can find them at an Asian grocery store or online.
- You can substitute 5 fresh shiitake and wood ear mushrooms for the dried mushrooms. Do not soak fresh mushrooms.

Making the Jai

Rinse the chestnuts, dates, shiitake mushrooms, wood ear mushrooms, bean curd sticks, lily flower buds, and black moss. Put each into separate bowls and cover with water. Let them soak for at least 3 hours. Drain, reserving the soaking water (the soaking water for all can be combined).

After soaking, cut the ingredients into bite-size pieces.

Soak the mung bean noodles in warm water for about 15 minutes and then drain (discard the soaking water).

In a wok, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add the garlic, ginger, and turmeric, and cook, stirring, until they begin to brown, 30 seconds to 1 minute.

Add about 2 cups of the reserved soaking liquid and bring to a boil.

Add the fermented bean curd and the rehydrated chestnuts, dates, mushrooms, bean curd sticks, lily flower buds, and black moss, and cook, stirring frequently, until the mushrooms soften, about 5 minutes.

Stir in the ginkgo fruit, bamboo shoots, and wheat gluten. Then add the snow peas, carrot, cabbage, and soy sauce, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are crisp-tender, adding more of the soaking liquid if needed to prevent the pan from going dry.

Add the mung bean noodles and cook for a few minutes to soften them and heat them through; they should soak up most of the liquid.

Serve hot.

Step 1: Making the Jai

- 1/2 ounce dried chestnuts or 1/2 (5-ounce) can water chestnuts
- 1 ounce dried red dates (jujubes)
- 1 ounce dried shiitake mushrooms
- 1 ounce dried wood ear mushrooms
- 3 ounces dried bean curd sticks (bean threads)
- 1/2 ounce dried lily flower buds
- 1/2 ounce dried black moss
- 2 ounces dried mung bean vermicelli noodles
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1/2 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon minced fresh ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon minced fresh turmeric
- 2 ounces fermented bean curd (red or white), cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1/4 cup canned white ginkgo fruit, drained
- 1/2 (5-ounce) can shredded bamboo shoots
- 5 ounces (fresh or canned) fried wheat gluten
- 1 cup fresh snow peas
- 1 cup sliced carrot
- 1 1/2 cups sliced napa cabbage
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce