

Vietnamese Grilled Tofu

Swick

Serves 3 to 4 | Active Time: 30 minutes | Total Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Step 1: Preparing Your Mise en Place

- 3 lemongrass, white and light green part only, finely minced (approx. 35 grs)
- 1 to 2 shallots, minced (approx. 30 grs)
- 3 to 4 cloves garlic, minced (approx. 20 grs)
- 3 tbsp palm sugar (approx. 25 grs)
- 3 tbsp Fish-Less Fish Sauce
- 2 tbsp soy sauce or tamari
- 1/4 tsp white peppercorns
- 1 pkg extra firm tofu (1.5 lb/567gr)

Step 2: Preparing the Marinade

To prepare the marinade, using a mortar and pestle (a food processor can also be used, but a mortar and pestle are ideal), first grind the white peppercorns. Then add the lemongrass, shallots, garlic, and sugar and grind together with the peppercorns.

Once you reach a somewhat smooth paste, remove the mixture and add it to a bowl. Add the remaining ingredients (except the tofu) and stir to combine.

Step 3: Marinating the Tofu

Heavily coat each piece of tofu with the marinade and let marinate for at least one hour. This step can be done the day before.

Step 4: Grilling the Tofu

- scallion oil (see chef notes)
- toasted peanuts, optional

Grill the tofu on a well oiled hot grill stone or grill top. Alternatively, the tofu can be baked in a hot oven, but this will not result in that charred flavor that is so common with this dish.

If desired, once done, the tofu can be brushed with scallion oil and topped with crushed peanuts just before serving.

Step 5: Serving the Tofu

- Vietnamese Roasted Shiitake Mushrooms
- Nuoc Cham Sauce
- 3 to 4 cups cooked vermicelli noodles
- 1/3 cup sliced cucumbers
- 2 cups shredded lettuce
- 1/3 cup fresh cilantro
- 1/3 cup fresh mint
- sriracha sauce
- hoisin sauce
- pickled carrots and daikon*
- toasted peanuts
- fried shallots

Here we have served the tofu with cooked vermicelli noodles, Vietnamese Roasted Shiitake Mushrooms, shredded lettuce and Nuoc Cham Sauce (Vietnamese Dipping Sauce).

However, this tofu can be served in a variety of ways — it can be served with steamed jasmine rice or it can even be made into a sandwich. Serve inside a baguette, along with any or all of the fixings and enjoy.

Chef's Notes

Many Vietnamese dishes are finished with scallion oil. The oil not only adds richness and flavor to the food, but it also adds nice color.

To make scallion oil, wash and thinly slice about 4 scallions (green onions). Heat about a 1/4 cup of neutral oil over medium heat. After about 30 seconds or so, test the oil by adding a piece of scallion — if it sizzles, the oil is ready. Add the scallions and let cook for 30 seconds or so, or until they are just soft, but still a vibrant green.