

Mapo Tofu

Servings: About 4

Ingredients

- 1 box soft tofu (or firmer if preferred)
- 4 pieces dried (or fresh) shiitake mushroom
- 2 tablespoon ginger (minced)
- 1 tablespoon Sichuan pepper
- 3 tablespoon oil
- 2 tablespoon fermented bean paste (or Sichuan style broad bean sauce)
- 1 teaspoon dark soy sauce
- 2 teaspoon hot chili paste/sauce (optional)
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoon arrowroot powder
- ½ cup water
- ½ cup clear vegetable stock or mushroom water (saved from soaking dried mushrooms)
- 1 stalk celery (finely chopped for garnish)

Directions

1. Soak dried mushrooms in hot water for at least 30 mins. depending on their thickness. Remove stalks and dice when softened. Keep ½ cup of the water.
2. Cut tofu into ½ inch cubes. Blanch in salted boiling water but turn off heat just before boiling again. Drain and set aside.
3. Combine arrowroot powder with 1/2 cup of water and set aside.
4. Pour oil in skillet and turn on heat to high. Add Sichuan pepper when oil is hot. Stir for 1-2 minutes until flavor of pepper is released. Remove and discard the pepper.
5. Add mushroom and sauté on high heat. Stirring constantly until moisture evaporates, then add bean paste and ginger. Season with sugar, dark soy sauce and chili sauce (if using). Add 1/2 cup of water (from mushroom or stock) and bring to a boil.
6. Slide tofu into the skillet, the amount of the mixture should be level with the tofu cubes. Pushing the spatula from side towards the center to evenly distribute the sauce.
7. Once boiling again, reduce heat and pour the arrowroot mixture evenly over the tofu. Stir right away and the sauce will thicken. Remove from heat at once.
8. Plate and garnish with celery. Serve over hot rice.