

Get cooking



Control Your Tempeh

Tempeh - pronounced tempay - is based on cooked, fermented soya beans bound with a mould and is a staple food in Indonesia. Like all foods based on soya, it is a brilliant source of protein, containing all the eight essential amino acids (building blocks of protein). The fermentation process means it is much easier for the body to digest and with its high fibre, low fat, vitamin-rich nutritional profile it's a bit of a wonder food but contrary to some claims, it is not a source of vitamin B12.

You'll find it in residence in the chilled and frozen cabinets of wholefood shops and it comes as a block or cut into small strips, plain or marinated with soya sauce. So what does it taste like? It has a rather nutty flavour and smell with a dense chewy texture. Tempeh goes well in stir-fries and stews. The marinated variety is great when sliced, grilled and slapped between slices of white bread with tomato ketchup (well the white bread is a source of calcium and of course tomato sauce is full of lycopene, as we have all discovered!). Give tempeh a go with this little tempter.

If you've ever fancied trying out a veggie food you've not eaten or cooked with before, VVF's here to help. After all, there's no point in knowing about veggie nutrition and health if you don't actually get to eat the goodies in the veggie larder! We'll hold your floury hands and guide you through the world of veggie cuisine, throwing in a tasty recipe or two to help you on your way.

Super-stuffed Tempeh sandwich

The tasty little snack below was made with ready-marinated tempeh strips - browned under a grill - with sliced tomatoes, salad leaves and a dollop of tomato ketchup. Sandwiched between a couple of slices of multigrain bread this makes a quick, nutritious and tasty sarnie. Pass it over!



Spicy Tempeh Stir-Fry

Serves 4

For the Marinade

- 1 heaped tsp grated root ginger
- 2 large cloves garlic, crushed
- 3 tsp caster sugar
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 3 tbsp soy sauce
- ¼ tsp chilli powder (or to taste)

For the Stir-Fry

- 125g tempeh
- 1 red pepper
- 1 yellow pepper
- 1 courgette
- 1 bunch of spring onions
- 2 carrots
- 250g beansprouts
- olive oil for stir-frying (approx 2-3 tbsp)
- Brown rice to serve

- 1 Combine the marinade ingredients in a bowl.
- 2 Cut the tempeh into thin slices, about 6 x 1 x ½ cm is perfect.
- 3 Place tempeh in a shallow dish and pour over marinade, leave for at least an hour or longer if possible.
- 4 Prepare the brown rice as directed on the packet, it usually takes about ½ hour to cook so it is best to get it going now.
- 5 Slice the peppers, courgette, spring onions and carrots into thin strips.
- 6 Heat ½ the oil in a frying pan until really hot; remove the tempeh from the marinade and fry on both sides until browned and crispy. Do not use the stir-fry technique for this or the tempeh will break up, it is better to gently turn the tempeh over using a slice.
- 7 Remove the tempeh from the frying pan and put aside, if possible it is best to keep it warm.
- 8 Using the same frying pan, add the remaining oil and heat until really hot; add all the vegetables and stir-fry for a few minutes, if there is any marinade left you may like to add it at this stage.
- 9 Once the vegetables are cooked, add the tempeh strips mixing them until evenly distributed throughout the stir-fry.
- 10 Serve on a bed of brown rice.



Japanese-style Tempeh Kebabs

- 340g tempeh
- 4 tbs soya sauce
- 2 tbs cider or wine vinegar
- 3 tbs water
- juice of ½ lemon
- 2 tsp sesame oil
- ¾ inch fresh ginger
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 tsp mustard powder
- 225g courgettes
- 115g mushrooms
- 6-8 small tomatoes
- Skewers



- 1 Chop tempeh into small pieces, steam for 15 mins, leave to cool.
- 2 Combine soya sauce, vinegar, water, lemon juice and sesame oil in a bowl.
- 3 Grate ginger finely. Crush garlic. Add to above mixture, together with mustard powder. Mix well, transfer this marinade to a shallow dish.
- 4 After tempeh has cooled, place cubes in the marinade and turn well. Cover and leave in fridge for an hour or more to marinate, turning cubes from time to time.
- 5 Slice courgettes and clean mushrooms removing stalks. Remove stalks if necessary from tomatoes.
- 6 Thread the tempeh and vegetables alternately on skewers. Place under a hot grill and grill until well browned, turning from time to time and pouring any remaining marinade over the cubes.

(Taken from Easy Vegan Cooking, by Leah Leneman - available from VVF, £8.99 (plus £1.50 p&p).

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The VVF has a wide range of vegetarian and vegan cookery books available by mail order. For a full list write to the VVF at 12 Queen Square, Brighton BN1 3FD or ring on 0845 456 1437.