

Tofu Recipes



Craig Koketsu fostered his passion for precision, knowledge, and flavor by working with acclaimed chefs from diverse backgrounds at some of America's top restaurants. Chef Koketsu grew up in a Japanese-American family in San Jose, California and has fond memories of enjoying handmade Tofu as a child. He has since developed a deep appreciation of this versatile Japanese comfort food. Rich in anti-oxidants known as isoflavones, tofu has been linked to numerous health benefits including improved bone and heart health and even maintaining a healthy weight.

Koketsu began his culinary career at Stars in Palo Alto, California working with renowned chefs Jeremiah Tower and Joyce Goldstein. After moving through all the posts in the kitchen, he received the distinction of being named banquet chef for all private events at Stars, which allowed him to create intricate and innovative dishes.

As Koketsu learned about the luminaries of the culinary world, he realized that a move to New York City was crucial to work with the chefs he admired. Once in New York, Koketsu landed a position of chef de partie with Gray Kunz at the famed restaurant Lespinasse. Chance intervened when the young chef was afforded a rare opportunity to work with another remarkable talent, Christian Delouvrier, who replaced Kunz after his departure from Lespinasse. Koketsu stayed on Delouvrier's new team and became

poissonnier, which was the post he held when Lespinasse earned a four-star review from the New York Times. A year and a half after the review, Koketsu was honored with the highest position in Delouvrier's kitchen, chef de cuisine. Koketsu was selected to create the culinary concept and menus of Quality Meats, which he executed with a great respect for classic dishes, transformed by his creativity. With the transition of Park Avenue Autumn to Park Avenue Winter, Koketsu shifts his focus to mine diverse culinary techniques to illuminate winter's unique offerings. Park Avenue was named among the top best new restaurants of 2007 by New York Times, New York Magazine and New York Observer. New York Magazine also named Koketsu among New York's top up-and-coming chefs.

- **Spice Seared Tofu with Avocado, Beets, and Cucumbers**—a fresh, crisp salad, which features firm House Organic Tofu in a simple form alongside the unexpected pairing of avocado and beets.
- **Mabo Tofu Gnocchi**— Chef Koketsu's play on the traditional Chinese dish is made with House Organic Tofu and spicy chili. The traditional Asian flavors remain but the recipe calls for a modern technique resulting in preparation of Tofu gnocchi.
- **Tofu Rice Pudding with Rhubarb, Pine Nuts, and Thai Basil**—a flavorful, satisfying dairy-free dessert in which silken House Organic Tofu is used to create added creaminess and texture.

As demonstrated by Chef Koketsu and his recipes, Tofu is a multi-faceted wonder ingredient with the ability to transform your dishes. When incorporated into a well-balanced diet, Tofu can help achieve and maintain a healthy weight while providing multiple health benefits from bone to heart wellness. The most versatile of any Tofu line, House Foods products include Organic and Original Tofu in five firmness levels from silken to extra firm, Tofu Steak Grilled, Tofu Steak Garlic & Pepper, Tofu Steak Cajun and the acclaimed Tofu Shirataki noodles.



Spice-Seared Tofu with Avocado, Beets & Cucumbers

Spice-Seared Tofu with Avocado, Beets & Cucumbers

Serves 4-6 **Ingredients**

- 1 pkg House Foods Medium Firm Tofu, drained and wrapped in two layers of paper towels
- 2 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
- 1 tablespoon coarse salt
- 2 tablespoons fennel seed

- 2 tablespoons coriander seed
- 1 tablespoon cumin seed
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup Panko
- 1 egg, beaten with 2 teaspoons salt
- ¼ cup Wondra flour
- ¼ cup canola or vegetable oil
- 4 baby Chioggia beets, roasted, peeled and cut into quarters
- 1 Japanese cucumber, sliced into 3/16" thick rounds
- Avocado Puree (see recipe below)
- Kabosu Vinaigrette (see recipe below)
- Cilantro leaves

Directions

Cut tofu into 4 or 6 even rectangles. Place rectangles on a plate lined with two layers of paper towels. Evenly distribute chopped garlic on the top side of the tofu rectangles. Sprinkle coarse salt over garlic then wrap with plastic and let marinate in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes. Scrape off garlic and salt from tofu and pat dry with paper towels. In a blender, combine fennel, coriander, cumin and salt. Blend until spices are coarsely ground. Mix spices with panko. Bread only the marinated side of the tofu by dipping it first into the wondra flour, then the egg, then finally the spiced panko. Heat a large sauté pan over medium heat, add canola oil and sauté tofu crust-side-down until golden brown. Carefully flip tofu pieces and sauté an additional minute. Remove from pan and drain on paper towels. To plate: Place tofu pieces crust-side-down and cut into 5 equal-sized pieces. On a plate, smear a couple tablespoons of the avocado puree. Arrange beets and cucumbers and then place tofu on top. Dress entire dish with kabosu vinaigrette and garnish with cilantro leaves.

Avocado Puree

- 1 avocado
- ½ jalapeno, with seeds
- 1 scallion
- 2 tablespoons chives, chopped
- ½ cup cilantro, chopped
- ¼ teaspoon Vitamin C powder
- Salt and Sugar to taste
- Blend all ingredients at high speed in a blender until chives and cilantro are completely pureed
- Refrigerate immediately

Kabosu Vinaigrette

- 3 tablespoons kabosu juice (you may substitute with fresh lime juice)
- 2 tablespoon agave nectar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- Place all ingredients into a small container with a tight lid. Shake vigorously and refrigerate.



Mabo Tofu Gnocchi

Mabo Tofu Gnocchi

Serves 4-6 **Ingredients**

- 2 pkgs. House Foods Extra Firm Tofu, cut into chunks
- 1 cup tapioca flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ lb ground pork
- $\frac{1}{2}$ onion, finely diced
- 1 tablespoon garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon ginger, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons canola or vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons chili-garlic paste
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 cup chicken stock
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon sesame oil
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch mixed into a slurry with 1 tablespoon chicken stock
- 5 scallions, whites chopped, greens cut on a bias

Directions

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Blend tofu at high speed until smooth. Transfer tofu puree to a bowl and add tapioca flour and salt. Mix well until smooth then let rest for about 10 minutes. Transfer tofu to a piping bag with a $\frac{1}{2}$ " round tip. To make the gnocchi, cut tofu into 1" long pieces as you squeeze the mixture directly over the boiling water. Cook gnocchi for 1 minute after they float to the surface. Transfer gnocchi to an ice bath with a slotted spoon and cool completely. Drain gnocchi on paper towels. In a small bowl, mix chili-garlic paste with soy sauce, stock, sugar, and sesame oil. Heat a large sauté pan over high heat and add 1 tablespoon canola oil. Add ground pork to pan and brown. Transfer browned pork to a bowl. In the same sauté pan, add the other tablespoon of oil and sauté onions with garlic and ginger until onions are translucent. Add pork back into pan and then add chili-garlic mixture. Bring to a boil and then add cornstarch slurry. Bring to a boil again and then reduce heat. Add chopped scallion whites and keep warm. Heat gnocchi gently in a sauté pan using a small amount of water. When hot, place gnocchi in a bowl and top with ground pork sauce. Garnish with scallion greens.



Tofu Rice Pudding with Rhubarb, Pine Nuts & Thai Basil

Tofu Rice Pudding with Rhubarb, Pine Nuts & Thai Basil

Serves 6

Ingredients

For the Rice Pudding

- ½ cup jasmine rice
- 1 ½ cups water
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 block House Foods Soft (Silken) Tofu
- ¼ vanilla bean, scraped
- 2 tablespoons + 1 teaspoon agave nectar
- Zest of ½ a lime
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 sheets gelatin

For the Rhubarb:

- 1 ½ cups rhubarb, sliced 3/16" thick
- ½ cup freshly squeezed lime juice
- 1 ½ oz peeled ginger, cut into slices
- 2/3 cup agave nectar
- ¾ cup water
- ¼ teaspoon salt

For the Crust:

- 1 ½ cups pine nuts
- 1 tablespoon agave nectar
- Pinch of salt

Garnish

- 2 tablespoons Thai basil, cut into ¼" squares

Directions For the Crust: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine pine nuts, agave nectar and salt in a food processor. Process until pine nuts are coarsely ground and they start to stick together. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and place six 3 ½” ring molds on the tray. Spray each mold with non-stick spray. Spoon 2 tablespoons of the pine nut mixture into each mold and pack mixture firmly into an even layer. Bake at 350 degrees for about 5 minutes or until crusts are golden brown. Remove from oven and let cool completely to room temperature. Do not try to move crust when they are hot – they will fall apart.

For the Rice Pudding: Wash rice until water runs clear and drain completely. In a heavy-bottomed pot, combine rice, water, sugar and salt. Stir well and place over high heat. Bring rice to a full boil and then turn down to a low simmer and cover for about 12-15 minutes. Remove rice from heat and let steam for about 10 minutes. Transfer rice to a large bowl and refrigerate until cool. Meanwhile, bloom the gelatin sheets in cold water. Combine tofu, agave nectar, vanilla bean seeds, lime zest and salt in a blender. Blend on high until completely smooth then transfer mixture to a bowl. Heat gelatin in microwave until it melts and then pour into tofu mixture and mix well to thoroughly incorporate. Add tofu mixture to cooled rice and mix well, making sure not to break up grains of rice.

Place rice pudding mixture into a piping bag.

Cut six strips of acetate into 12” pieces and spray on one side with non-stick spray. Place acetate strips into the 3 ½” ring molds with the oiled side facing in. Place ring molds on a sheet pan lined with lightly oiled parchment paper. Pipe rice pudding mixture into ring molds to form an even ¾” thick layer. Refrigerate until completely cool.

For the Rhubarb: Combine lime juice, ginger, agave nectar, water and salt in a blender and blend on high until ginger is completely pureed. Pass mixture through a fine mesh strainer into a sauce pot, pressing solids to completely extract liquid. Bring liquid to a boil and then reduce to a simmer for about 10 minutes. Put the rhubarb into a heat proof bowl and pour hot liquid over it.

Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until completely cool.

To assemble: Carefully place a disc of rice pudding onto a pine nut crust, making sure that pudding is completely centered. Remove ring mold from pudding, but leave acetate around pudding. Place a couple spoonfuls of the drained rhubarb on top of the pudding and spread into an even layer. Top with Thai basil and serve.

Chef Koketsu shares his unique tofu technique during a cooking demonstration at the French Culinary Institute sponsored by House Foods and the Gohan Society. (Lou Manna Photography)