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[In: Nutrition in the Kitchen](#)

Tofu: Not just for vegetarians.

This past Monday I went to a cooking demonstration at the French Culinary Institute in New York and it was all about tofu. Executive Chef of Park Avenue Spring and Quality Meats Craig Koketsu led the demonstration with recipes he specifically designed for House Foods (the tofu company) and Gohan Society. You can rest assured that the executive chef of a manly meat house would not be just serving a naked boring block of soybean matter. The first appetizer was a delicious panko spice crusted tofu, seared, and served on top of a spicy avocado puree with sliced cucumbers and beets. The second course, a melt-in-your-mouth tofu gnocchi with a spicy pork sauce - a play on the traditional dish Mapo Tofu- could be easily passed off to my husband, without revealing the secret ingredient. The third dish was a dessert, a creamy rice pudding with a bright red and tangy rhubarb topping, and a crunchy pine nut crust underneath. (check-out the recipe section) The benefits of eating Tofu are numerous: great source of protein, low in calories, no saturated fat or cholesterol, good source of iron and calcium. It also makes a convenient substitute for dairy in desserts, so it's great for people who are lactose intolerant. Because it is relatively flavourless, it can be used in both sweet and salty dishes. Some people may view tofu as just some vegetarian product, particularly men associate tofu as some sort of food item only tree-huggers would eat. When I told my husband that I found some great tofu recipes, he immediately wrinkled up his face in disgust. But then I reminded him that he liked my friends chili made with soy crumbles. Sometimes, it's all about how you package or present foods. Tofu is one of those food items worth tinkering with until you find what works for you and your family.

[Tofu rice pudding with rhubarb, pine nuts and thai basil](#)

Source: Craig Koketsu, Executive Chef of Park Avenue Spring and Quality Meats

Delicious dairy-free desert, great spring treat

Servings: 6

Ingredients:

1/2 cup jasmine rice
1 1/2 cups of water
2 tablespoons of sugar
1/4 teaspoon of salt

1 block House Foods soft (silken) Tofu
1/4 vanilla bean, scraped
2 tablespoons + 1 teaspoon of agave nectar
Zest of 1/2 lime
1/4 teaspoon of salt

1 1/2 cups of rhubarb, sliced 3/16 inch thick
1/2 cup of freshly squeezed lime juice
1 1/2 oz peeled ginger, cut into slices
2/3 cup agave
3/4 cup water
1/4 tsp of salt

Directions:

Wash rice until the water runs clear and drain completely. In sauce pan, combine rice, water, sugar and salt. Stir well and place over high heat. Bring rice to a full boil and then turn the heat down and simmer for 12-15 minutes. Let rice cool once cooked. Combine tofu, agave nectar, vanilla bean, lime zest and salt in the blender. Blend until smooth then transfer to a mixing bowl. Add tofu mixture to cooled rice and mix well. Place in the fridge until cooled.

For rhubarb topping, combine lime juice, ginger, agave nectar, water and salt in a blender and blend on high until the ginger is pureed. Pass mixture through a fine mesh to catch any ginger bits. Bring liquid to a boil in a saucepan and simmer for 10 minutes. Put the slice rhubarb in a bowl and pour liquid over it. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until cool.

To assemble, use a parfait glass or bowl. Place a few table spoons of the pine crust crumb on the bottom. Add the rice pudding on top of the crumb, and then add rhubarb.