

TOFU TAKES CENTER STAGE AS CHEF CRAIG KOKETSU CHALLENGES COOKS TO THINK OUTSIDE THE WHITE BLOCK

House Foods and the Gohan Society Celebrate National Soyfoods Month with Educational Tofu Event at New York's French Culinary Institute



New York, NY, April 20, 2009 –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)

April 21, 2009, New York, NY — Craig Koketsu, Executive Chef of Park Avenue Spring and Quality Meats, challenged an audience of culinary students, professional chefs, and the press to think outside the white block and discover the versatility of Tofu as he shared innovative recipes and culinary tips at a cooking demonstration at the French Culinary Institute. The event was sponsored by House Foods and the Gohan Society to shed light on this highly affordable, underappreciated super food during National Soyfoods Month.

Tofu moved center stage as Chef Koketsu prepared three original recipes, which highlighted the soy wonder's incredible ability to soak up flavors and endless flavor combinations. "I grew up in a Japanese community in San Jose, CA and was exposed to Tofu at a young age. It has since become a favorite culinary staple," said Chef Koketsu. "My recipes explore Tofu's many facets by juxtaposing traditional preparations with unexpected modern flavors, and applying modern cooking technique to traditional Tofu flavors."

Chef Koketsu experimented with House Foods Organic Tofu in three firmness levels to create a main dish, entrée and dessert that included:

- **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 medium firm 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 soft House Organic Tofu is used to create added creaminess and texture.

“We are proud to work with Craig Koketsu, one of New York’s most innovative chefs, to give Tofu the place it deserves in America’s kitchens and diets,” said Yoko Difrancia, marketing supervisor at House Foods America Corporation. “Tofu is nutritious and easy to cook with, and is a great, inexpensive source of protein. We hope chefs leave the event inspired to try their own Tofu creations.”

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.

About House Foods America

Tofu specialists since 1983, House Foods America Corporation (HFAC) is dedicated to bringing you the most affordable, highest quality and widest range of the freshest, all-natural Tofu products. House Foods America uses only non-genetically modified soybeans grown in the US and specializes in making the best original, organic, and seasoned Tofu in five firmness levels from silken to extra firm. In a recent Tofu taste test conducted by the San Francisco Chronicle, House Foods Tofu was rated #1 and described as “creamy,” “tender” and “fresh-tasting”. For more information visit www.house-foods.com

About The Gohan Society

The Gohan Society's mission is to foster an understanding and appreciation of Japan's culinary heritage in the United States through outreach to chefs, culinary arts professionals and all who admire and enjoy Japanese culture. The society believes that by inspiring chefs, restaurateurs, journalists and food lovers both professional and amateur through educational initiatives, they will expand and enrich their repertoires, artistry and cultural understanding. www.gohansociety.org

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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



Method

1. Cut tofu into 4 or 6 even rectangles. Place rectangles on a plate lined with two layers of paper towels.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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 purée in an arc. Make an artistic arrangement of the beets and cucumbers, then place the tofu pieces 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

Preparation

1. Blend all ingredients at high speed in a blender until chives and cilantro are completely puréed.
2. Refrigerate immediately until ready to plate.

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

Preparation

Place all ingredients into a small container with a tight lid. Shake vigorously and refrigerate.

Mabo Tofu Gnocchi

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

2 pkgs. House Foods Extra Firm Tofu, cut into chunks
1 cup tapioca flour
1 teaspoon salt
¾ lb ground pork
½ 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
½ teaspoon sugar
¼ teaspoon sesame oil
2 teaspoons cornstarch mixed into a slurry with 1 tablespoon chicken stock
5 scallions, whites chopped, greens cut on a bias



Method

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Blend tofu at high speed until smooth.
2. Transfer tofu purée to a bowl and add tapioca flour and salt. Mix well until smooth then let rest for about 10 minutes.
3. Transfer tofu to a piping bag with a ½” 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.
4. In a small bowl, mix chili-garlic paste with soy sauce, stock, sugar and sesame oil.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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

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

Method**Preparation****For the Crust**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine pine nuts, agave nectar and salt in a food processor. Process until pine nuts are coarsely ground and they start to stick together.
2. 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°F 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 crusts when they are hot—they will fall apart.

For the Rice Pudding

1. 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.
2. Meanwhile, bloom the gelatin sheets in cold water.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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

1. Combine lime juice, ginger, agave nectar, water and salt in a blender and blend on high until ginger is completely puréed. Pass mixture through a fine mesh strainer into a sauce pot, pressing solids to completely extract liquid.
2. Bring liquid to a boil and then reduce to a simmer for about 10 minutes.
3. Put the rhubarb into a heat proof bowl and pour the hot liquid over it. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until completely cool.

To Assemble

1. Carefully place a disc of rice pudding onto a pine nut crust, making sure that pudding is completely centered.
2. Remove ring mold from pudding, but leave acetate around pudding.
3. 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.