

# How To Enjoy Tofu

by Cyndi Long, ©June 2012. Please email [[clphoto@clstudios.com](mailto:clphoto@clstudios.com)] for recipe corrections/suggestions.

## Ingredients:

- 1 block extra firm tofu (frozen/defrosted)
- 2-3 clean dishtowels
- Heavy hard-bound book or something similar in heaviness
- 1 1/3 cup marinade (optional- reserve 1/3 cup to use while cooking)
- Flavor-infused olive oil or Pam spray for cooking (optional)

## Tofu Prep:

I always keep tofu in the freezer and take out the morning before I want to make it for dinner. When you freeze tofu, the water inside will expand and leave tiny pockets of texture within. And since tofu is basically a sponge anyway, these pockets allow for even more flavor to be soaked in. Now, let's look at the remaining steps- pressing, marinating and cooking.



*Because tofu is packed in water, it will expand when frozen.*



*You can let frozen tofu thaw out over the course of a couple of days in your refrigerator, but remember to place on a dish to collect condensation. If in a hurry, defrost in about 20 minutes by placing in room temperature water.*

## Press the tofu:

You want to take the same approach to pressing tofu that you would with good brisket- slow and low. If you try to hurry up this process, it will work, but you'll have crumbly tofu. If you can, take the time to do it right.



Once the tofu is defrosted completely, carefully cut the top plastic packaging layer without slicing through the tofu.

Rinse and gently squeeze the tofu replacing the packaged water with your new water.

Wrap the tofu block in a clean dish towel. Place this on top of another folded-up clean dish towel. Sandwich this in-between two flat surfaces and place something on top. I use two pie plates and a cookbook with two cans of beans on top. Keep an eye on it to make sure that everything is balanced. If not, your cans of beans and tofu could end up on the floor!



After about 10 minutes, unwrap the tofu. The towel will be wet, but there should be a section that is still dry. Re-wrap the tofu to be surrounded by the dry towel. If there's not, replace it with a clean one. Flip the folded towel underneath to reveal a dry side. Continue pressing for another 5-10 minutes.

Generally, this gets enough of the water out for me. You can certainly keep going with this process using additional dry towels if you'd like.





## Slice the tofu:

I usually prepare tofu as bite-sized, but sometimes I want a "slab." It's really up to you and what recipe the tofu is being used in. You'll get more flavor inside the tofu by cutting into small pieces before cooking, rather than keeping it in big slices during the cooking process and then cutting into smaller pieces later.

I place the tofu on it's side long-ways and cut down the middle. Then, keeping it stacked, place on the cutting board as it was in it's packaging. Cut into 3 long strips, then cut those into 3 or 4 pieces. Your result should be several approximately 1/2"x 1" pieces.



## Marinate the tofu:

There are a million options for marinade. Over-the-counter marinades, salad dressings, orange juice, or you can make your own. MisoMayo garlic/dill is one of my favorites. Be careful to not use a too-powerful marinade. Meats don't soak up as much, so many marinades sold at the grocery store will be too strong. If you can't taste a spoonful of it without grimacing, you need to water it down a little. Reserve a little marinade to use during cooking, although this is not necessary.

Place your cut-up tofu in a single layer and cover 1/2 way with marinade. Because the tofu is a sponge, it will soak up pretty quickly. Flip the tofu over to cover in marinade. Cover until ready to cook.



## Cook the tofu:

You can bake, sauté or fry- whatever you want. The end result should be golden brown.  
You can use your remaining marinade to baste with while cooking to keep from drying out.

When sautéing, I suggest medium heat with garlic or lemon-infused olive oil.  
When baking, use a non-stick pan at 400°, flipping after approximately 7 minutes.

Dill, salt and pepper (or whatever spice you like) can be added to taste.



**Next week, I'll post a recipe for  
Sweet Lemon-Blueberry Tofu.**

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