

CULINARY DISCOVERY PAVILION

Sponsored by

MidwestLiving

MAPO TOFU

Chef Cass, Culinary Annex, China

INGREDIENTS

- 8 ounces minced pork or minced oyster mushrooms
- ½ tablespoon sesame oil
- 2 ½ tablespoons water
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 2 pounds silken tofu
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- 1 ½ tablespoons doubanjiang (fermented chili bean paste)
- 2 scallion whites, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 5 ginger slices, finely minced (about 1 teaspoon)
- ½ tablespoon fermented black beans (dou-chi or fermented soya beans), roughly chopped
- 1 tablespoon pepper flakes (optional)
- 1 tablespoon light soy sauce
- 4 garlic greens or scallion greens, finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon salt, more or less to taste
- 1 teaspoon sugar (optional, to balance spiciness)
- ½ tablespoon Sichuan pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

In a bowl, combine the minced pork (or mushrooms) with a pinch of salt and sesame oil. Mix well and set aside.

In another bowl, mix the cornstarch with 2½ tablespoons water to create a slurry. Set aside.

Cut the tofu into 2-centimeter cubes. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil, gently slide in the tofu and simmer for 1 minute. Carefully drain and set aside.

Heat 2 tablespoons of cooking oil in a wok over medium heat. Add the minced meat and cook until browned and slightly crispy. Remove the meat and set aside, leaving the oil in the wok.

Lower the heat and add the doubanjiang to the oil. Stir-fry for 1 minute until fragrant. Add the scallion whites, garlic, ginger and fermented black beans. Cook for 30 seconds, then stir in chili flakes if using.

Pour in the water and bring to a boil. Gently slide in the tofu, then add the soy sauce and reserved meat. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook for 6–8 minutes.

Add the chopped garlic greens or scallion greens. Stir the cornstarch slurry and add half to the wok. Wait 30 seconds, then add the rest to thicken the sauce.

Taste and adjust seasoning with salt if needed. If it's too spicy, stir in the sugar to balance the heat.

Cook until the sauce clings to the tofu. Finish with ground Sichuan peppercorns and additional scallion greens if desired.



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