

Bean Curd with Chilli Sauce

2 Cakes Bean Curd
4 x 15ml spoons / 4 tablespoons Oil
5 x 15ml spoons / 5 tablespoons finely chopped onion
1 x 2.5ml spoon / 1 teaspoon crushed garlic
100g/4 oz minced beef
3 chilli peppers seeded and chopped
1 x 2.5ml spoon / ½ teaspoon sugar
3 x 15ml spoons / 3 tablespoons soy sauce
2 x 5ml spoons / 2 teaspoons cornflour dissolved in 4 x 15ml spoons/4 tablespoons water

Blanch the bean curd in boiling water for 1 minute. Drain and cut into 5 mm / ¼ inch cubes. Heat the oil in a pan and add the onion and garlic. Stir-fry for 1 minute, then add the beef. Stir-fry until the beef is evenly browned. Add the bean curd, chilli peppers, sugar and soy sauce. Bring to the boil. Add the cornflour mixture and simmer, stirring, until the sauce has thickened. Serve hot.

Deep – Fried Bean Curd with Mushrooms

4 cakes bean curd
1 x 15ml / 1 tablespoon salt
Oil for deep frying
Cornflour for coating
2 x 15ml spoons / 2 tablespoons oil
1 garlic clove crushed
4 spring onions (shallots) cut into 2.5cm / 1 inch pieces
225g / 8 oz pork fillet thinly sliced into bite size pieces
4 medium dried Chinese mushrooms, soaked for 20 minutes, drained, stemmed and quartered
1 x 15ml spoon / 1 tablespoon pale dry sherry'
3 x 15ml spoons / 3 tablespoons soy sauce
1 teaspoon sugar
250ml / 8 fl oz water

Put the bean curd on a plate and sprinkle with the salt. Leave for 1 minute, then drain the water from the plate.

Heat the oil to 180°C/350°F. Coat the bean curd cakes with cornflour (cornstarch) and deep-fry individually until light brown. Drain on absorbent kitchen paper.

Heat the 2x 15ml spoon / 2 tablespoons oil in a pan. Add the garlic and stir-fry until brown. Add the spring onions (shallots), pork and mushrooms and stir-fry for 2 seconds. Add the bean curd, sherry, soy sauce, sugar and water. Cover and cook for 10 to 15 minutes or until the sauce has thickened. Serve hot.

Fish with Bean Curd on Hot and Sour Sauce

0.5 kg / 1 lb fish fillets (cod, halibut, snapper or John Dory' (or an Australian one!!), cut into 5 x 2.5 cm / 2 x 1 inch pieces
3 x 15ml spoons / 3 tablespoons soy sauce
4 x 15ml spoons / 4 tablespoons oil
2 - 3 spring onions (shallots) finely chopped
2-3 slices root ginger, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
2 cakes bean curd, each cut into 12 cubes
1 x 5ml spoon / 1 teaspoon salt
2 x 15ml spoons / 2 tablespoons dry sherry
1 x 5ml spoon / 1 teaspoon sugar
1 x 15ml spoon / 1 tablespoon chilli sauce
2 x 15ml spoons / 2 tablespoons wine vinegar
120ml / 4 fl oz cup water
Parsley to garnish

Sprinkle the fish pieces with 1 x 15ml / 1 tablespoon of the soy sauce and leave to marinate.

Heat 3 x 15ml spoons / 3 tablespoons of oil in a pan. Add the fish pieces and fry until golden. Remove the fish from the pan and aside.

Heat the remaining oil in the pan. Add the spring onions (shallots), ginger and garlic and fry for a few seconds. Add the bean curd cubes, fish pieces, salt, sherry, sugar, remaining soy sauce, the chilli sauce, vinegar and water. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 10 minutes.

Serve hot, garnished with chopped parsley.

Hot Ma Po Mashed Bean Curd with Minced (Ground) Beef

5-6 dried Chinese mushrooms
300ml / ½ pint water
4 x 15ml spoons / 4 tablespoons oil
2 x 5ml spoons / 2 teaspoons salted black beans, soaked for 10 minutes and drained
5 - 6 x 15ml spoons / 5 - 6 tablespoons minced beef
3 spring onions (shallots), thinly sliced
4 garlic cloves, crushed
2 x 15ml spoons / 2 tablespoons soy sauce
2 x 15ml spoons/ 2 tablespoons Hoisin sauce
2 x 5ml spoons / 2 teaspoons chilli sauce
1 x 5ml spoon / 1 teaspoon sugar
2 - 3 cakes bean curd, diced
4 x 15ml spoons / 4 tablespoons clear broth (use a chicken stock cube!)
2 x 5ml spoons / 2 teaspoons cornflour, dissolved in 3 x 15ml / 3 tablespoons water
1 x 15ml spoon / 1 tablespoon sesame seed oil

Soak the mushrooms in the water for 2 minutes. Drain, reserving the water. Stem the

mushrooms and cut into quarters. Heat the oil in a pan. Add the black beans. Stir-fry for 20 seconds. Add the beef, half the spring onions (shallots) and the mushrooms. Stir-fry for 3 to 4 minutes. Add the garlic, 3 - 4 x 15ml spoons /3 - 4 tablespoons of the mushroom water, the soy sauce, hoisin sauce, chilli sauce, sugar, bean curd and broth.

Bring to the boil and simmer for 3 to 4 minutes. Sprinkle in the cornflour mixture, the remaining spring onions (shallots) and the sesame seed oil. Cook, stirring, until thickened. Serve hot.

Pork with Bean Curd

1 kg / 2 lb lean pork
900ml / 1 ½ pints water
1 x 15ml spoon / 1 tablespoon dry sherry
1 x 5ml spoon / 1 teaspoon brown sugar
1 x 5ml spoon / 1 teaspoon salt
4 x 15ml spoons / 4 tablespoons soy sauce
2 x 15ml spoons / 2 tablespoons oil
3 cakes bean curd, cut into 2 inch squares
1 spring onion (shallot) chopped
Parsley to garnish

Place the pork in a large pan with two-thirds of the water. Bring to the boil, skim any scum from the surface, cover and simmer for 1 hour. Add the sherry, sugar, salt and half the soy sauce. Cover and cook for a further 30 minutes.

Heat the oil in another pan and fry the bean curd for 2 to 3 minutes, turning it once during cooking. Add the remaining soy sauce and water and the spring onion (shallot). Stir well and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Mix the bean curd mixture into the pork and turn into a dish. Serve hot, garnished with parsley.

Stir Fried Bean Curd with Pork and Cabbage

1 cake bean curd, cut into 3.5 cm / 1½ inch squares
3 x 15ml spoons / 3 tablespoons oil
225g / 8 oz lean pork, cut into thin bite-sized pieces
1 spring onion (shallot), chopped
2 slices root ginger, chopped
2 x 5ml spoons / 2 teaspoons salt
1 x 15ml spoon / 1 tablespoon dry sherry
1 litre / 1 ¾ pints clear broth (use chicken stock cube)
0.5kg / 1 lb Chinese cabbage, shredded

Freeze the bean curd squares overnight. Thaw in hot water, then drain.

Heat the oil in a saucepan. Add the pork, spring onion (shallot), ginger and bean curd and stir-fry until the meat is lightly browned. Add the salt, sherry and broth and bring to the boil. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes.

Add the cabbage and simmer until it is tender; about 10 minutes. Serve hot.

Note: Small holes may be left in the bean curd after thawing. These permit the delicious juices to penetrate the bean curd. Do not freeze the bean curd for more than 12 hours or it will toughen.

Spinach and Bean Curd Soup

750ml / 1 1/4 pints chicken or beef stock
225g / 8 oz spinach, torn into small pieces
4 cakes bean curd, cut into 2.5 cm / 1 inch cubes
1 spring onion (shallot), chopped
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Bring the stock to the boil in a saucepan. Add the spinach and bean curd. Bring back to the boil, then add the spring onion (shallot) and salt and pepper to taste. Simmer for about 10 minutes; do not overcook or the spinach will lose its green colour and the bean curd become tough. Serve hot.

Braised Bean Curd with Mushrooms

5 tablespoons vegetable oil
225g (8 oz) mushrooms, sliced
2 cakes bean curd, cut into 2.5cm (1 inch) cubes
250ml (8 fl oz) chicken stock
2 tablespoons dark soy sauce
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon sugar
1 tablespoon cornflour
1 tablespoon water
1 teaspoon sesame oil
1 tablespoon red chilli oil
Pinch of freshly ground white pepper
1 spring onion, finely chopped

Preparation time: 10 minutes cooking time: 8 minutes

Heat 4 tablespoons of the oil in a wok and add the mushrooms. Stir-fry for 1 minute, then remove and drain on paper towels.

Add the remaining oil and reheat the wok. Fry the bean curd for 1 minute, then return the mushrooms together with the stock, soy sauce, salt and sugar. Bring to the boil and simmer for about 3 minutes. Blend the cornflour and water and stir into the mixture to thicken the sauce. Arrange on a plate and sprinkle on the sesame oil, red chilli oil and spring onions. Serve hot.

Bean Curd and Prawn Soup

50 g (2 oz) peeled prawns
1 egg white
600ml (1 pint) chicken stock
50 g (2 oz) cooked ham, cut into 1cm (½ inch) cubes
1 cake bean curd, cut into 1cm (½ inch) cubes
50 g (2 oz) peas
1 tablespoon soy sauce
25 g (1 oz) Szechuan pickle, chopped
1 tablespoon cornflour
1 tablespoon water
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Preparation time: 10 minutes cooking time: 3 minutes

Mix the peeled prawns with the egg white.
Bring the stock to the boil, put in the ham, bean curd and peas. When it comes back to the boil, add the soy sauce, pickle and prawns, and let the soup boil for 15-20 seconds.
Blend the cornflour with the water and add to the soup, stirring constantly. Allow to thicken, then add salt and pepper to taste before serving.

Stewed Bean Curd with Assorted Vegetables

225g/8oz bean curd
Salt and pepper
2 tablespoons oil plus oil for deep frying
5 Chinese dried mushrooms
1 teaspoon sugar
15g / 1oz black fungus
8 ginkgo nuts
1 large carrot, sliced
½ cucumber
1 (230g / 8-oz) can water chestnuts, drained
1 clove garlic, sliced
5 canned straw mushrooms or button mushrooms
1 teaspoon dry sherry
50ml / 2floz vegetable stock
1 teaspoon monosodium glutamate ("I don't think so!")
A few drops of sesame oil
½ teaspoon dark soy sauce
1 teaspoon cornflour
2 tablespoons water

Slice the bean curd and season it with salt. Heat the oil for deep frying to 190 c/375 F, add the bean curd and deep fry until golden brown. Drain on absorbent kitchen

paper and set aside. Soak the dried mushrooms in cold water for 10 minutes. Drain and marinate the mushroom caps with a little oil, salt and sugar then steam them over boiling water for 10 minutes.

Soak the black fungus until soft. Blanch the ginkgo nuts, carrot, and soaked black fungus in boiling water for 2 minutes. Drain, rinse under cold water and drain thoroughly. Slice the cucumber and water chestnuts. Heat the 2 tablespoons oil in a wok or frying pan until smoking hot. Sauté the garlic until fragrant, then add all the assorted vegetables (including the two sorts of mushrooms and black fungus) and stir well.

Pour in the sherry and stock, seasoning to taste, the remaining sugar, the monosodium glutamate (don't you dare), sesame oil and dark soy sauce.

Blend the cornflour with the water, stir into the sauce and bring to the boil. Add the bean curd and cook for 2 minutes then serve. Serves 4 - 6

Note: You can include any other vegetables in this dish, for example canned whole baby corn, French or runner beans or bamboo shoots can all be used. If you want to arrange the vegetables in neat separate piles on the serving platter, then add them individually to the cooking pan and do not mix them together as they cook. Then they can be arranged neatly. Serve plain steamed or boiled rice as well as an accompaniment.

Plain Boiled Tofu (Bean Curd) with Hot-Sauce Dressing

2 cakes bean curd

Dressing

30ml (2 tablespoons) sesame paste (or peanut butter)

45ml (3 tablespoons) best quality soy sauce

30ml (2 tablespoons) stock

10ml (2 teaspoons) chilli sauce

15ml (1 tablespoon) hoisin sauce

30ml (2 tablespoons) sesame oil

Place the bean curd in boiling water in a pan. and simmer gently for 5--6 minutes.

Drain completely, and cut each piece of bean curd into quarters. Mix the ingredients for the dressing until well blended. Arrange the pieces of hot bean curd on a serving dish and pour the cold dressing over them.

Serves 6 - 8

Bean Curd in Hot Peppery Soup

2 cakes bean curd

Vegetable oil for semi-deep-frying

1 breast of chicken

22ml (1 ½ tablespoons) cornflour (blended in 90ml (6 tablespoons) water)

6 crisp lettuce leaves (or Chinese cabbage)

750 ml (1 ½ pints) stock

12ml (2 ½ teaspoons) salt

2.5ml (½ teaspoon) freshly ground white pepper to taste

22ml (1 ½ tablespoons) vinegar (Chinese aromatic, if available)

Put one cake of bean curd into boiling water to simmer for 5 –6 minutes; drain and

cut it into 10 - 12 pieces. Cut the other bean curd into 10 - 12 pieces. Deep-fry these for 3 ½ minutes and then drain. Place in cold water to rinse.

Chop and finely mince the chicken and mix thoroughly with the blended cornflour. Cut each lettuce leaf slantwise into 4 pieces. Heat the stock in a saucepan. Pour in the chicken and cornflour mixture and stir until it is well dispersed throughout the stock (if inclined, add a little milk to whiten the soup). Now add the lettuce leaves and the boiled and fried bean curd pieces. When the contents are simmering, add the salt, pepper and vinegar. Stir and simmer gently for 5 – 6 minutes. Serve in a large soup bowl or tureen. The hot peppery soup, contrasting with the blandness of the bean curd. and the fresh green vegetables. Makes an interesting 'semi-soup' dish.

Serves 6 - 8.

Ma Po Tofu

This nationally well-known dish was invented in the reign of Emperor Tung Chi (1862-75) of the Manchu Dynasty by the wife of one Chen Ling-fu, a well known chef in Chengtu. The lady had a badly pock-marked face; hence the name, Tofu of the Pock-Marked Wife.

3 cakes bean curd
30ml (2 tablespoons) salted black beans
3 stalks spring onion
3 cloves garlic
4 chilli peppers
45ml (3 tablespoons) vegetable oil
225g (½ lb) minced beef
5ml (1 teaspoon) salt
150ml (10 tablespoons) strong stock
15ml (1 tablespoon) Cornflour
22ml (1 ½ tablespoons) soy sauce
25ml (½ teaspoon) freshly ground pepper

Simmer the bean curd in boiling water for 3 minutes. Drain and cut each cake into a dozen pieces. Soak the black beans in water for 20 minutes, then drain them. Cut the spring onions into small segments, crush and coarsely chop the garlic, and shred the peppers (discarding the pips).

Heat the oil in a large frying pan. Add the beef, salt and black beans. Stir and mash the black beans with the beef for 3-4 minutes. Add the pepper, spring onions and garlic. Turn them together for 2 minutes over a medium heat. Add half the stock and the bean curd; mix this with the other ingredients in the pan and leave it to cook for 4 - 5 minutes over a medium heat.

Mix the remaining stock with the cornflour and soy sauce. Pour this over the ingredients in the pan. Turn the heat to high. Stir gently and turn the contents over a few times. Cook for 2-3 minutes. Sprinkle with pepper and serve with rice. To be authentic, the dish should be hot enough to bring beads of sweat to the brow even when consumed in winter.

Serves 6 - 8.