

Thai Eggplant with Basil

Serves 4

- 2 lb. firm tofu
- 10 Chinese eggplants, cut on a diagonal into bite-sized pieces
- 2/3 cup tamari
- 1/4 cup olive oil (plus 2 Tbsp. for the tofu)
- 1 head (12 cloves) minced garlic
- 2 Tablespoons sugar
- 2 tsp crushed red chili pepper
- 1 1/2 tsp. salt (plus more for the tofu)
- 3 oz. leaves Thai or regular basil

Start rice in the rice cooker.

In the sink, press tofu in between two cutting boards. Put weights on the top cutting board, maybe 10 lbs. After 20 minutes of tofu pressing and tofu has dried out, use your hands to break the tofu into bite-sized bits into a very big bowl. Drizzle 2 Tablespoons olive oil over the top. Sprinkle with 1/4 tsp. salt. Toss the bowl so that the tofu in the back of the bowl flips up and to the front. Sprinkle with 1/4 tsp. salt. Toss again. Sprinkle with 1/4 tsp. salt. Toss again. Place tofu on a parchment-lined baking sheet or use a silicone lining on the sheet. Roast tofu in the oven for 15 minutes at 400 degrees F until half of it is golden brown. If entire pieces are golden brown, it will be overcooked. Avoid overcooking. Set aside.

In a steamer, steam the eggplant over boiling water for about 7 minutes until tender (test it by piercing with a fork). Set aside.

Crush, peel and mince garlic. Set aside. Pick the leaves from the stem of the basil and slice the basil about 4 times per leaf.

Before heating the wok, make sure all ingredients are by the stove and measured—the tamari, sugar, salt and crushed red pepper. Read the whole paragraph below before cooking to get ready.

Heat a dry wok (no residual water) over high heat (gas) or medium high (electric stove) for a couple minutes. Add 1/4 cup olive oil, wait for it to be fragrant or to shimmer. Add chili peppers and garlic. Stir 10-15 seconds and stir quickly and continuously (stay to this time limit because garlic is so easy to burn). Add the already-steamed eggplant and stirring every 30 seconds, mixing in the garlic and oil. Cook for about 3-4 minutes until eggplant is steaming hot. Add the tofu, tamari, sugar and salt. Stir well up from the bottom for 3-4 minutes until tamari starts to bubble. Turn off heat then add Thai basil and mix in. Serve hot with rice.



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