



Tasty Tofu? You Bet!

Tofu is a versatile canvas on which to build flavors and textures, one that lends itself to a wide range of cuisines and preparation methods. So this summer when you think of grilling, think of tofu. Tofu is a complete protein, low in fat, cholesterol-free—and yes, tasty, too!

A FEW TIPS FOR GRILLING TOFU

- Use firm, or if possible, extra-firm tofu (see below), and always press it well before grilling. Press tofu by placing it between several layers of paper towels, place a plate on top, and then weigh down the plate—this will help extract any extra liquid. (You can use cans of soup or beans as a weight—anything that will be approximately two pounds in total).
- To keep tofu from sticking to the grates of your grill, make sure the grates are clean and coat them with cooking spray or oil.
- Place tofu on skewers to help keep it from sticking to the grill and to make it easier to handle when turning and serving. Tofu kabobs are fun and easy to prepare. Just marinate chunks of tofu with your favorite flavorings and grill with vegetables or fruit, such as pineapple.



TOFU 101: TYPES OF TOFU, FIRMNESS AND FRESHNESS

Depending on your recipe and cooking technique be sure to use the appropriate type of tofu. To understand the differences, let's take a look at how tofu is made. Tofu, also called bean curd, is made by heating soymilk (which is made from soybeans) and using a natural coagulant such as calcium or magnesium salt to create curds—a process similar to making cheese. These curds are then pressed into blocks.

The two types of tofu are **silken** and **regular**; each comes in soft, medium, firm and extra-firm consistencies. The firmness depends on the ratio of water to soybeans in making the soymilk, on the coagulation process, and how much of the whey is removed. Silken tofu (also sometimes called Japanese-style) is very soft, crumbles and melts easily (in any firmness) and is commonly used in sauces, dressings, and desserts because of its cream-like taste and consistency. Because regular or Chinese-style tofu is firmer and less watery, it's a good choice for grilling, especially in firm or extra-firm form.

Tofu should be handled as you would any dairy product and kept refrigerated. (Fresh tofu will have a slightly sweet aroma). Silken tofu may be purchased in an aseptic package, and if unopened, can remain shelf stable up to nine months without refrigeration. Unused portions of any style tofu, if covered in water, can be kept in the fridge for a week or frozen for up to 6 months if drained of the water and placed in an air-tight container.