

Smoky Baked Tempeh

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

8 ounces (225 grams) tempeh, sliced into ¼-inch (6-millimeter) thick strips

2 tablespoons (30 milliliters) low-sodium tamari or soy sauce

1 teaspoon (5 milliliters) apple cider vinegar

1 to 2 tablespoons (15 to 30 milliliters) maple syrup

1 tablespoon (15 milliliters) olive or other oil, optional*

½ to 1 teaspoon (2.5 to 5 milliliters) smoked paprika (½ teaspoon [2.5 milliliters] is mild, 1 teaspoon [5 milliliters] is spicier and smokier)

¼ teaspoon (1.25 milliliters) liquid smoke, optional

½ teaspoon (2.5 milliliters) black pepper

1 dash ground cayenne pepper, optional



Tempeh is a fermented cake made from whole soybeans, so it is higher in protein, fiber, and some vitamins than tofu. Tempeh originated in Indonesia and has become a staple of vegetarian cooking. It does have a distinct, earthy taste that is not for everyone. The first step in this recipe—simmering or steaming—softens the tempeh and mellows its earthiness considerably. However, this will also cause a less toothsome texture at the end of cooking. Depending on whether you want to prioritize mellow flavor or a chewier, toothsome texture determines whether to include the steam/simmer step. This recipe has smoky flavors and optional finishing methods depending on the outcome you want. If you want to develop a chewy, slightly crisp texture that is reminiscent of bacon, finish with the “Sauté” option instead of the baking options. However, don’t expect this recipe to taste exactly like bacon—enjoy it as its own thing.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Simmering or steaming (optional): This optional step helps reduce bitterness and mellow flavor. (Don’t do this step if you want a crispier/chewier result.) Place tempeh strips gently into shallow, simmering water in a sauté pan for 1 to 2 minutes; drain and pat with a towel to remove excess water. Alternately, lay tempeh strips in a single layer in a steamer and steam for 2 minutes.
2. In an 8 x 8-inch (20 x 20-centimeter) baking dish, stir together any of the remaining ingredients you want to include in a marinade. Add tempeh strips and turn over so that all sides are coated in the marinade. See note for different options.

3. Now you have three options for finishing the tempeh:

A. Baking—Option 1: Bake tempeh with marinade immediately in the baking dish at 350°F (175°C) for 20 to 30 minutes, flipping halfway through, cooking until the edges brown.

B. Baking—Option 2: To prevent sticking to the pan, or to develop some amount of crispness, you may want to marinate the tempeh strips for 20 to 30 minutes before baking. Then, transfer marinated tempeh strips to a small sheet pan lined with parchment paper or a silicone mat, discarding any marinade left in the baking dish. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes at 350°F (175°C), flip the strips over, and bake until brown and slightly crisp.

C. Sauté: Let tempeh sit in marinade overnight for maximum flavor, then fry in a nonstick pan with a small amount of oil until edges crisp and brown.

NOTES

- *If omitting oil, use the “Baking—Option 2” method to finish cooking the tempeh.
- In Step 2, use all of the ingredients for a peppery, smoky flavor and chewy, slightly crisp texture somewhat reminiscent of bacon. If you want a milder option, cut down on the paprika, pepper, and cayenne. If you’re not concerned with developing crispness, you can omit the oil. If you prefer not to use liquid smoke, you may want to increase the smoked paprika. The other ingredients are important in the outcome of the dish and should be included to balance the flavor and textures.
- This makes a delicious sandwich served on sprouted grain bread with hummus and something crisp—like romaine lettuce or pea shoots.

Nutritional Info (per ¼ recipe with all optional ingredients included): Calories 158, Total Fat 6.6 g, Saturated Fat 1.2 g, Cholesterol 0 mg, Sodium 226 mg, Total Carbohydrate 14.9 g, Dietary Fiber 4.9 g, Sugars 6.6 g, Protein 11.4 g, Calcium 4%, Iron 7%, Potassium 10%, Zinc 2%

► To view the video for this recipe, and all electronic resources associated with the Culinary Medicine Curriculum, please see <https://bit.ly/culinarymededucation>.
