Crispy Tofu and Cabbage Stir-Fry

By Ali Slagle

Tim 25 minutes

Rati ng 4 ★★★★★ (1637)

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Christopher Simpson for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Simon Andrews.

This tumble of crisp tofu, charred cabbage and citrusy coriander includes a couple tricks you'll want to employ in other dishes. The flavor of the stir-fry is propelled by using the coriander plant multiple ways: Combining coriander seeds with fresh stems and leaves — also known as cilantro — creates a range of complex but related flavors. Then there's what might be the quickest — and your new favorite — way to cook cabbage: When large pieces of cabbage are cooked undisturbed in a hot pan, they don't have a chance to turn to mush. Instead, the cabbage becomes sweet and crisp-tender, with a smoky edge. Eat the stir-fry with grains or noodles, like rice noodles or soba.

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INGREDIENTS

Yield: 4 servings

1 small red onion, thinly sliced Kosher salt

PREPARATION

Step 1

In a large bowl, sprinkle the red onion with salt and stir to combine. In a medium bowl, stir together the cornstarch and 1 teaspoon salt. Add the tofu and toss to coat.

¼ cup cornstarch

1 (14-ounce) package extrafirm tofu, patted dry and torn into 1-inch pieces (see Tip)

1/4 cup neutral oil (such as canola or grapeseed), plus more as needed

About 1½ pounds green or red cabbage, cored and cut into 1-inch pieces, leaves separated

1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce or liquid aminos, plus more to taste

1 tablespoon coriander seeds, crushed

½ cup coarsely chopped cilantro leaves and stems

2 tablespoons lime juice (from 1 large lime)

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Ingredient Substitution Guide

Nutritional Information

Step 2

Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a large (12-inch) cast-iron skillet over medium-high. Add the cabbage and cook, undisturbed, until charred underneath, 3 to 4 minutes. Stir, spread into an even layer, and cook, undisturbed, until charred in spots and crisp-tender, another 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in the soy sauce, and season with salt. Transfer to the bowl of red onions.

Step 3

In the same skillet, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil over medium-high. Add the tofu and cook until golden on all sides, 2 to 3 minutes per side, adding more oil and scraping the bottom of the pan as necessary. Remove from heat, add the coriander seeds and stir gently until fragrant and toasted, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the cabbage-onion mixture and stir to combine, then stir in the cilantro and lime juice. Season to taste with soy sauce.

TIP

It can be tricky to tear pieces of the same size, so start by slicing the tofu crosswise so that you have 1-inch-thick slabs, then tear off cubes from there.

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