

Recipe: Tempu 🍄 tempeh made of tofu!

Ingredients

- A block of good quality tofu
- Beetroot juice, for colour (I used the juice from a packet of cooked beets)
- Apple cider vinegar
- About 1 tsp of tempeh starter

Requirements

- An oven, dehydrator, incubator or room that can maintain a steady 27–33 degrees C. Some ovens don't go this low.
- An oven thermometer: you can't really trust the oven knob to accurately predict the temperature
- Glass dish or silicone bread form, or similar
- Clean kitchen towel(s)

Instructions

I go into detail here, but it's actually a really easy process. See the video (reel) on my Instagram page for a simple overview.

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Pat your tofu block dry with a clean kitchen towel. Cut it into even slices (cross sections).

Get a bowl and add about a third of a cup (80ml) of beet juice and 1 dessert spoon of apple cider vinegar. Coat the slices of tofu in this mixture. Let them soak up as much as possible for a couple of minutes.

Shake off the marinated tofu and dab the slices with some kitchen paper. They don't need to be bone dry, just not dripping wet.

Sprinkle the tempeh starter all over the slices and rub it in with clean hands.

Sterilise a heat-proof glass dish or silicone loaf pan with boiling water. Discard the water and let the dish dry by evaporation or using a clean kitchen towel.

Stack your slices of tofu in the dish. If they don't fill the dish completely, wedge the slices together gently with something clean. I used a cheese former that I had lying around as it fit the gap.

Cover the dish with a clean kitchen towel (try not to let it touch or rest on the tofu) and keep the dish at around 27-33 degrees Celsius for at least 24 hours. I found that the lowest setting on my oven can achieve this, but be careful: some ovens say they go this low but actually they are hotter. Use a thermometer. If the temp goes too high you'll kill the tempeh mould.

I left mine in another 12 hours and the tempeh fungus grew to maturity. In other words, it went black/grey. If you want to keep it snow-white, you might get it to grow more slowly by using less starter or keeping the temperature lower. I sliced the resulting 'tempu' and sauteed it in a pan with olive oil. I then seasoned with a pinch of salt.

You can enjoy it like this or you can also try marinating the tempeh before cooking. I certainly would like to try a marinade with sea flavours, and a marinade with smoky-sweet 'bacon' flavours ...

Tips 💡

- At no point should the tempeh smell 'bad' or 'off'. When it's ready it should smell something like fresh button mushrooms, i.e. not much smell at all. If your tempeh is wet, slimy or stinky, it may have gone bad due to contamination by another mould or bacteria. Don't take any risks with your health.