

Lola's Pan-fried Tofu with Yakisoba Sauce

Recipe courtesy of Lola Milholland, author of *Group Living and Other Recipes*, and co-founder and CEO of Umi Organic.
Make 4 servings | 20 minutes prep + 30 minutes rest + 10 minutes cook time

I am in love with a very traditional Japanese dish called agedashi tofu, in which large pieces of tofu are coated in potato starch, fried, and then served in a light soy broth with grated daikon radish. It seemed so odd to me to fry something and then serve it in a liquid. It really works, though, and there's something unusual and delicious about the starch coating once it gets fried! This recipe is inspired by agedashi tofu, but takes it in the direction of a teriyaki dish, coating the lightly fried tofu pieces in our Umi Organic yakisoba sauce. (A store-bought okonomiyaki sauce also works. Teriyaki sauces are usually too sweet. Alternately you can combine equal parts soy sauce or tamari, Worcestershire, and ketchup—a hack that works pretty well!) The tofu is not at all greasy—one of the miracles of this cooking technique. This is very easy to make and a textural treat. I like keeping the tofu pieces large so you get to enjoy their contrasting textures after frying. This dish is fun to serve with side dishes that offer unexpected textures and flavors. A crunchy salad? Grated daikon? Pan-fried miso eggplant. If this tofu dish is on the table, I don't think you can go wrong.

~ Lola Milholland

1 pound medium to firm tofu

1/3 to 1/2 cup potato starch

3 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons soy sauce*

2 tablespoons Worcestershire*

2 tablespoons ketchup*

4 cups cooked Koda rice

**Steamed or blanched broccoli
or other greens, to serve**

Green onion, chopped

Chile Crunch, to serve

**Furikake or toasted sesame
seeds (optional)**

**Slices of tomato seasoned with
salt (optional)**

*We prefer Umi's Yakisoba Sauce but since the current supply is dwindling due to the fire at their headquarters, Lola recommends this combo or Otafuku. Stop into Wellspent in PDX and hit up the Fulamingo section and grab some of the remaining Umi Yakisoba Sauce!

Step 1 Place the block of tofu between two cutting boards. Tilt the cutting boards at an angle in your sink, place something heavy-ish on the top cutting board (like a cookbook or a fry-pan), and let the tofu drain for 30 minutes. This step isn't necessary, but it will help the tofu fry without sticking. While the tofu drains, prepare the rice or noodles and vegetables.

Step 2 Whisk together 2 tablespoons soy sauce, 2 tablespoons Worcestershire and 2 tablespoons Ketchup and set aside.

Step 3 Once the tofu has drained, cut the block into 1-inch-thick slices. Cut those slices into quarters so you have large rectangles of tofu the size of three-dimensional forever stamps. I like to air dry these rectangles for up to fifteen minutes to ensure they are extra dry. Place 1/3 cup potato starch on a plate. (If you need more later, add a few more tablespoons.) Heat oil in a broad well-seasoned cast iron or fry pan over medium heat until it shimmers. When ready to fry, quickly dredge every side of the tofu in the starch, shake off any extra, and place into the oil. It should sizzle a little bit. Do this with each piece of tofu. The tofu should not touch in the pan—if you cannot fit all the cubes in at once, fry them in batches. Cook the tofu for 2 to 5 minutes or until the bottom is starting to puff and turn golden. Flip each piece and fry on the second side until puffy and golden.

Step 4 Once the tofu has developed a nice golden, crunchy exterior, add 1/3 cup Umi Organic Yakisoba Sauce. Turn the heat down to medium-low. Move the pieces of tofu around as you continue to cook for 2 to 3 minutes, making sure each piece is thoroughly dredged in sauce. The sauce should start to cook and fuse with the tofu. Once each piece is thoroughly coated, turn off the heat. Serve over rice or noodles with an extra drizzle of sauce and any sauce left in the pan. Serve with green onion, a side of vegetables, and optional furikake or toasted sesame seeds and chili oil. Enjoy!