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# Tofu 101

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## What is Tofu?

Tofu is a food made from soybeans by pressing cooked soybeans into soy milk, then curdling and pressing into firm blocks. Its mild taste soaks up flavors and comes in textures from silken to super-firm.

## Why Try Tofu?

- **Protein Power:** Tofu is a rich protein source for building and repairing muscles.
- **Strong Bones:** Many types of tofu are made with calcium, which supports bone and teeth health- look for tofu that says “calcium-set” on the label.
- **Heart Health:** Tofu contains special plant parts (called isoflavones) that can help manage cholesterol, and support heart health.
- **Good for you and good for the planet:** Uses less land, and water than many animal proteins.

## Cooking with Tofu:

- **Press It:** For firm tofu, press out extra water (use a heavy skillet or 2-3 cans for weight) to help it soak up flavors better.
- **Flavor Up:** Tofu loves marinades! Let it soak up your favorite sauces for at least 30 minutes before cooking. Try Asian, BBQ, or Mediterranean flavors.
- **Cook:** Bake, grill, stir-fry, scramble, or freeze tofu for a meatier texture (try grilled tofu in a wrap!).
- **Smoothies and Sauces:** Blend silken tofu into fruit smoothies or creamy sauces.
- **Recipe Inspiration:** Scan for VA’s *Practical Plant-Based Cooking* tofu recipes.



<https://www.nutrition.va.gov/docs/Cookbooks/PracticalPlantBasedCookingMAY2023.pdf>