

Asian Vegetable Stew

East meets west tonight in this terrific Western-style stew with an Asian accent. Lots of plentiful root vegetables: sweet potatoes, carrots, yam, rutabaga and onion will dazzle your tastebuds. Fresh cilantro and basil, with citrus overtones are also worked into this European-style brown gravy. You'll make some delicious and hearty marinated/grilled tofu to finish the Asian flair of this meal. Make the stew early in the day.

If using homemade Marinated Grilled Tofu, go to "Tips and Timesavers" and make it before starting this recipe.

Preparation time: 2 hours - Servings 4 (if making Marinated/Grilled Tofu)

Organize Your Ingredients!

Notes on Organizing

Begin by prepping and organizing ingredients on small plates or in bowls.

Note: There are actually 3 different fresh herbs (dill, cilantro and basil) as well as grated ginger to be prepped for final seasonings in this stew.

Asian Stew

1/4 C. flour
1/2 C. nonfat milk

1 tsp. sesame oil
2 cloves garlic (smashed and chopped)
2 C. yellow onion (coarsely chopped)
1 C. chopped celery

1 tsp. sesame oil
1 small 8" zucchini (sliced into rounds)
2/3 C. sliced red bell pepper (seeded and cut into 1/4" slices)
juice from 1 lime

1 tsp. sesame oil
1 tsp. canola oil
1 large Portobello mushroom (washed, sliced into 1/2" slices)
5 cremini mushrooms (washed and sliced)

2 -1/4 C. rutabagas (peeled and chopped)
1-1/2 C. sweet potato (peeled and cubed)
1-1/2 C. yam (peeled and cubed)

Stew Gravy

1-1/2 C. low-sodium vegetable broth
1/4 C. white wine
1 bay Leaf
2 T. rice wine vinegar
2 T. low-sodium soy sauce
1/2 tsp. fresh ground black pepper

Rolls

Rolls

4 whole grain rolls
(1 roll per diner)

Final Seasonings

2 T. chopped fresh dill
1/4 C. chopped fresh cilantro
1/4 C. chopped fresh basil
1/4 tsp. freshly grated ginger
4 squares Marinated/Grilled tofu
(broken into pieces)
- or -
one 7 oz. package Commercially made
Asian flavored Baked Tofu
(broken into pieces)

juice from 1 of a lime

Let's Prepare, Cook, and Plate This!

Basic Assembly Instructions:

Make the Marinated/Grilled Tofu early in the day. Assemble the Asian Stew and start by browning the flour. Measure flour into a 9" dry shallow sauté pan. Stir it over medium-high heat until it begins to brown. Remove from heat, allow to cool and place browned flour in a pint jar with the milk and shake until smooth to create a roux.

Asian Stew

1. Sauté garlic onions and celery in sesame oil until onions begin to brown. Remove from pan.
2. Using the same pan, add another tsp. of sesame oil and toss zucchini and red pepper until zucchini begins to brown. Remove from heat and set aside. Drizzle a little lime juice over zucchini mixture.
3. Using same pan, brown Portobello mushroom slices in mixture of canola and sesame oil for 10-minutes. Once browned, add sliced cremini mushrooms to the pan and brown them. Cool slightly and remove from pan. Chop Portobello slices. Set aside with zucchini mixture.
4. Using a new kettle, bring one quart of water and 1 tsp. salt to boil. Drop chopped rutabagas into water and boil about 8-minutes. Add sweet potato and yam cubes. Boil another 4-minutes. Lift rutabagas, sweet potato and yam out of boiling water. Reserve 1-1/2 Cups of the cooking water and discard the rest. Shock rutabagas, sweet potatoes and yams with ice water. Drain off water before adding to pre-cooked vegetables (see below).

Stew Gravy

1. Return the empty vegetables kettle to the burner and add reserved cooking water, vegetable broth, white wine, bay leaf, rice wine vinegar, soy sauce and ground pepper. Bring to a boil. Rub bottom of pan with spatula to bring up any brownings.
2. Re-shake the flour roux (made earlier) to be sure it is well mixed and slowly pour browned flour roux into boiling mixture while stirring constantly. Stir as it thickens. Reduce heat to low and cook 10-minutes.

Final Seasonings/Plating the meal

20 minutes before dining, wrap rolls in foil and place in 200° oven to warm.

1. Add all cooked vegetables to the gravy.
2. Bring to a low boil and cook for 5 minutes.
3. Now is when you add the final seasonings. Stir in chopped fresh dill, cilantro, basil and ginger. Cook over medium-low heat for 3 minutes.
4. Break up Marinated Grilled Tofu and gently fold tofu pieces into the stew. Return to a boil.
5. Remove stew from heat and add juice from 1/2 of a lime. Cover until ready to dine.

Serve in large bowls with warm rolls on the side. A single serving will be about 2 C. of stew.

What I've Learned from this Recipe

Assembling the stew in this manner, using individually cooked items, offers up a stew full of various textures and distinct individual flavors. As usual, I add the fresh herbs as I complete the cooking. The final touch of lime juice helps bring the flavors forward.

Let us know what you think, and ask any questions you may have! chezdon@plate6.com