

Spicy Mapo Tofu (Authentic & Flavorful)

Focus Keyword: *Tofu Benefits and Disadvantages*

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 25 minutes

Servings: 3–4

Ingredients

- 1 block **silken or soft tofu**
- 1 tbsp **doubanjiang** (fermented broad bean paste)
- ½ tsp **Sichuan peppercorns**
- ¼ cup **minced pork** (*optional, omit for vegan version*)
- 1 tsp **minced garlic**
- 1 tsp **minced ginger**
- 2 tbsp **chili oil**
- ½ cup **vegetable broth**
- 1 tsp **cornstarch slurry** (1 tsp cornstarch + 1 tbsp water)
- 2 tbsp **chopped scallions**

Instructions

1. **Blanch tofu** in hot water for 1–2 minutes to help it firm up.
2. In a pan, **heat chili oil**, add **doubanjiang**, **Sichuan peppercorns**, **ginger**, and **garlic**.
3. If using, **add minced pork** and cook until lightly browned.
4. **Pour in vegetable broth**, bring to a gentle simmer.
5. Carefully **add tofu cubes**, letting them absorb flavor without breaking apart.
6. Stir in **cornstarch slurry** to thicken the sauce.
7. Garnish with **scallions** and serve hot with steamed rice.

Health Focus: Tofu Benefits and Disadvantages

Benefits:

- Silken tofu provides **high-quality plant protein** while staying light and low in calories.
- Contains **iron, calcium, and magnesium**, supporting bone and heart health.
- Isoflavones in tofu may help regulate **cholesterol and hormone balance**.
- When cooked with chili and garlic, it supports **metabolism and immunity**.

Disadvantages:

- Some people may experience **soy sensitivity or hormonal imbalance** with excess tofu.
- Doubanjiang and chili oil add sodium and fat, moderation is key.
- Not suitable for people with **soy allergies** or those advised to reduce estrogen intake.

 Nutrition Information (per serving)

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	~240 kcal
Protein	13 g
Fat	15 g
Carbohydrates	10 g
Fiber	2 g
Sodium	560 mg
Calcium	150 mg
Iron	3 mg

 Cooking & Nutrition Tips

- Use **silken tofu** for authentic texture; avoid stirring too much to keep pieces intact.
- For vegan versions, **skip the pork** and add mushrooms or tempeh for umami depth.
- Add **extra chili oil** only after plating — keeps the tofu smooth and prevents breaking.
- Limit spicy and salty condiments if watching sodium intake.
- Combine with **brown rice or quinoa** for a balanced, protein-rich meal.