

Hot and Sour Soup

Recipe submitted by Ani Weaver

Nationality/Ethnicity – Taiwan

The Story Behind the Recipe

Taiwan's political and economic history has greatly influenced its cuisine. Located about 100 miles off the east coast of China, the country has been involved in trade with mainland China and Japan for centuries.

Hot and sour soup is one of the common soups you can find at every Taiwanese restaurant. Most hot and sour soups you can find at Chinese restaurants in the U.S. are modified as American styles, but they are very close to Taiwanese hot and sour soup. There is no better thing than to have a bowl of hot and sour soup in the winter night.

Ingredients:

- 1 pound firm tofu, cut lengthwise into slabs about 1-inch thick
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- ¼ cup water
- 9 cups chicken broth
- 10 dried Chinese black mushrooms, softened in hot water to cover for 20 minutes, stems removed, and caps shredded
- 1 ½ cups finely shredded leeks, rinsed and thoroughly drained

Seasonings:

- 3 ½ tablespoons Chinese black vinegar or Worcestershire sauce, or more to taste
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger, or more to taste (powdered can be used)
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten

Preparation Directions:

Wrap the tofu in paper towels or in a cotton towel and place a heavy weight, such as a skillet on top. Let stand for 30 minutes to press out the excess water, then cut into thin julienne strips about 3 inches long and ¼-inch thick.

Combine the cornstarch and water and blend well.

Place the chicken broth in a large heavy pot and heat until boiling. Add the black mushroom caps, leeks, and tofu to the chicken broth and heat until boiling. Boil for about 3 minutes, skimming the surface to remove any impurities. Add the seasonings and heat until boiling. Taste for seasoning and add vinegar, ginger, or salt if desired. Slowly add the cornstarch

thickener, stirring constantly to prevent lumps and cook until the broth has thickened. Remove from the heat and slowly add the beaten egg, pouring it in a thin stream around the edge of the pot and carefully stirring once or twice so the egg forms thin streamers and cooks completely. Serve immediately.

Note: The soup can be reheated but the broth may become thin during refrigeration, requiring additional cornstarch and water thickener.