

# Hot and Sour Ramen with Tofu, Shiitakes, and Spinach

Serves 4

**✓ WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:** Inspired by our Ramen with Beef, Shiitakes, and Spinach (page 141), we wanted another dish starring the same crinkly noodles but that traded the beef for tofu. We started by browning the tofu (we selected extra-firm tofu, which held up in the pan) and mushrooms, then turned to the sauce. To infuse our dish with a hot-and-sour flavor profile, we included Asian chili-garlic sauce, cider vinegar, and a bit of sugar. Vegetable broth contributed to the sweetness and vegetal notes of our ramen dish, but low-sodium chicken broth makes a fine substitute. To make the dish spicier, add extra Asian chili-garlic sauce. Do not substitute other types of noodles for the ramen noodles here. The sauce in this dish will seem a bit brothy when finished, but the liquid will be absorbed quickly by the noodles when serving. For the nutritional information for this recipe, see page 306.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>14 ounces extra-firm tofu, cut into 1-inch cubes</b></li> <li><b>8 teaspoons soy sauce</b></li> <li><b>5 teaspoons vegetable oil</b></li> <li><b>8 ounces shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and sliced thin</b></li> <li><b>2 teaspoons Asian chili-garlic sauce</b></li> <li><b>3 garlic cloves, minced</b></li> <li><b>1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger</b></li> <li><b>3½ cups vegetable broth or low-sodium chicken broth</b></li> <li><b>4 (3-ounce) packages ramen noodles, seasoning packets discarded</b></li> <li><b>3 tablespoons cider vinegar</b></li> <li><b>2 teaspoons sugar</b></li> <li><b>6 ounces (6 cups) baby spinach</b></li> </ul> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1.</b> Spread tofu over paper towel-lined baking sheet, let drain for 20 minutes, then gently press dry with paper towels. Toss tofu with 2 teaspoons soy sauce. Heat 2 teaspoons oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over high heat until just smoking. Add tofu and cook, turning occasionally, until browned on all sides, 8 to 10 minutes; transfer to bowl.</li> <li><b>2.</b> Add remaining 1 tablespoon oil to now-empty skillet and heat over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add mushrooms and cook until browned, about 4 minutes. Stir in chili-garlic sauce, garlic, and ginger and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in broth.</li> <li><b>3.</b> Break ramen into chunks and add to skillet. Bring to simmer and cook, tossing ramen constantly with tongs to separate, until it is just tender but there is still liquid in pan, about 2 minutes.</li> <li><b>4.</b> Stir in remaining 2 tablespoons soy sauce, vinegar, and sugar. Stir in spinach, one handful at a time, until spinach is wilted and sauce is thickened. Return tofu to skillet and heat until warmed through, about 30 seconds. Serve.</li> </ol> |
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## SMART SHOPPING BUYING TOFU

Tofu is made from the curds of soy milk. Although freshly made tofu is common across the Pacific, in the United States tofu is typically sold in refrigerated blocks packed in water. Tofu is available in a variety of textures, including silken, soft, medium-firm, firm, and extra-firm. We prefer to use extra-firm for noodle dishes, because it holds its shape well when cooked and tossed with the pasta. Tofu is perishable and should be kept well chilled. If you want to keep an open package of tofu fresh for several days, cover the tofu with fresh water in an airtight container and store it in the refrigerator, changing the water daily. Any hint of sourness means the tofu is past its prime (we prefer to use it within a few days of opening).