MYANMAR

SHAN TOFU SALAD

Shan tofu, to hpu, is a soft tofu made from chickpea flour, not soybeans, cooked and set like a polenta. In Shan State it is sliced and dressed as a salad with chilli oil, garlic, lime and coriander.



SERVES	PREP	COOK	TOTAL	DIFFICULTY	SPICE
4	20 min	15 min	35 min	Easy	Medium

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE TOFU (ONE 20 CM TRAY)

150 g chickpea flour (besan)

750 ml water

1 tsp salt

1/2 tsp ground turmeric

FOR THE DRESSING

3 tbsp neutral oil

4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

1 tbsp chilli flakes

2 tbsp light soy sauce

2 tbsp lime juice

1 tsp sugar

1 tbsp tamarind water

TO FINISH

2 shallots, thinly sliced

40 g roasted peanuts, crushed

1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds

Coriander leaves

1 small cucumber, sliced

METHOD

MAKE THE TOFU

1. Whisk the chickpea flour with 250 ml of the water, the salt and turmeric until smooth. Leave for 10 minutes.
2. Bring the remaining 500 ml water to the boil in a heavy pan. Lower the heat to medium and pour in the batter, whisking all the time.

3 Keep stirring with a wooden spoon for 6 to 8 minutes, until the mixture is very thick, glossy and pulls away from the sides of the pan.

4 Pour into a lightly oiled 20 cm tray, smooth the top and leave to set at room temperature for 1 hour, then chill until firm.

MAKE THE DRESSING

5 Heat the oil in a small pan over low heat. Fry the garlic for 2 to 3 minutes, until pale gold. Take off the heat, stir in the chilli flakes and let it cool.

6 Mix the garlic chilli oil with the soy sauce, lime juice, sugar and tamarind water.

SERVE

7 Turn out the tofu and cut it into thin slices or batons.

8 Arrange with the cucumber, spoon the dressing over, then scatter with shallots, peanuts, sesame and coriander.

USEFUL SHORTCUTS FOR HOME COOKS

Fry leftover slices in hot oil until puffed and crisp, and serve with sweet chilli or tamarind sauce.

The set tofu keeps for 3 days in the fridge, covered.

Use yellow split pea flour if you can find it; it gives the colour and taste of the Shan original.

In a village by Inle Lake, Will watches a family make Shan tofu, a tofu with no soy in it at all. The cook pours a thin yellow batter of chickpea flour and water into a wide pan over a wood fire, stirs it until it turns thick and glossy, then spreads it into trays to set.Once firm, it is…