

K's Kitchen: Not the run-of-the-mill tofu dish

By Kathryn Reed

All of a sudden I hear a ruckus in the kitchen. Then the sounds of cooking follow. Pretty soon an aroma I can't quite make out reaches the other side of the house. I go to investigate.



Sue is busy stirring this and that. Clearly, I had no idea dinner was going to be anything other than the popcorn we shared at the movie theater. Well, we didn't really share it. I pretty much ate a whole large buttered popcorn by myself. No wonder Sue was hungry.

That's why it wasn't until the next day that I tried this concoction of hers. She got the recipe from the *San Francisco Chronicle*. It's a keeper.

We both agreed it could use more peanut sauce. The cucumber adds a wonderful crunchiness. And, yes, there is a difference between an English cucumber and the regular ones.

Sue said it was easy and quick to make. She also used some sesame oil.

While it says it serves 3 to 4, it only fed the two of us once. But we didn't have anything else with it.

Peanut Sauce-Braised Tofu (serves 3-4)

12 ounces extra-firm tofu

Black pepper, to taste

2 T olive oil

$\frac{1}{2}$ C jarred peanut sauce, plus more if desired

$\frac{1}{2}$ English cucumber, peeled and cut into sticks

2 green onions, trimmed and thinly sliced on the bias

Sesame seeds, for garnish

Cooked rice, for serving

Cut the block of tofu into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch slices. Cut again diagonally to make triangles, and lay on paper towels to drain for 5-10 minutes. Season with black pepper.

Warm the olive oil in a large nonstick pan over medium-high heat until very hot, but not smoking. Add the tofu triangles in one layer, being careful not to crowd the pan. You may need to do this in two batches. Cook until one side is golden brown, about 3 minutes. Flip over and finish cooking, another 2-3 minutes. Drain briefly on paper towels.

Return all the tofu to the pan, and reduce heat to low. Stir in the peanut sauce until the tofu is evenly coated; cook a couple more minutes until the tofu has soaked up some of the sauce.

Transfer to a bowl, and top with the cucumbers, green onions and sprinkling of sesame seeds. Spoon over rice to serve, adding more peanut sauce if desired.