

Tofu Buddha Bowls

Kids like to have choices. Meals like burrito bowls, buddha bowls and hawaiian haystacks allow kids to pick and choose from what you have put on the table. Baking tofu is a simple way to make it taste amazing. If you really don't like tofu, you could leave it out or make this with chicken pieces instead. Tofu lasts longer in the fridge than chicken and costs less. It can also be eaten raw, which makes it a good food to cook with kid helpers.

Makes: enough for a family of 6

Takes: about 1 hour

Ingredients:

- 2 cups uncooked brown rice
- 1 bag (steam in bag) frozen cauliflower or broccoli
- 1 bag frozen peas
- 1 whole carrot
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 sweet potato or regular potato (any size will work, smaller is better)
- 1 block **EXTRA FIRM** tofu
- 1 Tablespoon oil (canola or olive are best)
- 1 can pineapple (in 100% juice)

Tofu Marinade ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons **lite** soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 clove minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar

Peanut Sauce ingredients:

- ½ cup water
- 2 Tablespoons **lite** soy sauce
- ½ cup peanut butter
- 1 ½ Tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 ½ Tablespoons grated ginger
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Optional: 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil



Directions:

1. **Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and Start Rice:** Put 4.5 cups of water in a pot and add 2 cups long grain brown rice. Turn heat to HI and put a lid on. Bring the water to a boil, then turn down the heat to low and let it simmer. Simmering means it should be barely bubbling. Keep the lid on and do not take it off. If your pot is missing a lid, you can use a plate or cookie sheet to cover the pot. Set a timer for 50 minutes. Do not take the lid off until the timer goes off.



2. **Prepare Tofu:** Open tofu package and drain water. Remove from the package and slice tofu into “sheets.” Put “sheets” of tofu between clean towels or paper towels. Push your hand on top and gently press to remove extra moisture. Put a pan on top of the tofu and let it sit while you cut the sweet potatoes.



3. **Cut Sweet Potato:** You could use other vegetables here (like frozen or fresh brussel sprouts or butternut squash), but a sweet potato is yummy. Peel and dice the sweet potato, then put onto a baking sheet and cover with about 1 Tablespoon of oil to coat.



- 4. Uncover tofu and cut into squares:** Take the towel off the tofu and cut into squares. Keep the squares the same size as the sweet potatoes so they cook at the same rate. Tofu is easy to cut, this is a great job for an older child to practice their cutting skills.



- 5. Make marinade for tofu:** In a small bowl, whisk together
- 1 tablespoon oil
 - 1 tablespoon brown sugar
 - 2 tablespoons soy sauce
 - 1 clove minced garlic

Once the marinade is mixed well, pour over the top of the tofu and mix. Then pour the tofu onto the baking pan with the sweet potato.



- 6. Spread Tofu and Sweet potato on a pan:** Put tofu and sweet potato on a baking sheet. You want to spread the tofu and sweet potato out so that there is space between them (see below). Put the pan in the preheated 350 degree oven and set a timer for 20 minutes.



If you do not have a cookie sheet here is what you can do: put the sweet potato in the oven whole, wrapped in tinfoil. Bake at 400 degrees for about 30 minutes. Cook the tofu in a non-stick skillet on the stove top over medium heat so the edges get brown and crisp.

7. While rice and tofu are cooking, grate carrots and chop bell pepper. Put them in separate bowls for serving.



8. Warm up peas under running water in a colander then put them in a bowl for serving.



9. **Make peanut sauce in the microwave.** In a microwavable bowl, combine peanut sauce ingredients (listed below) and microwave for 2 minutes on HI. Take out and stir. If peanut butter isn't melted and easy to stir, add 1 minute and stir again. Repeat until peanut butter is melted and easy to stir. Set sauce aside, it is ready to be eaten!

- 1/2 cup water
- 2 Tablespoons soy sauce
- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1 1/2 Tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 1/2 Tablespoons minced ginger (mince using a zester, or cut finely with a sharp knife)
- 2 cloves garlic (mince them using a zester, garlic press or knife)
- Optional 1 Tablespoon toasted sesame oil ingredients



11. Steam cauliflower or broccoli in it's package in the microwave according to package directions (this usually takes 5 minutes). Once it is done, put it in a bowl for serving.



12. Take tofu and sweet potato out of the oven. Stir with a flat edged spatula so the browned parts are face up. Put it back in the oven for 10 minutes. It should finish about the same time as the rice.



13. Check rice: Once timer goes off, move rice to the side and see if all the water is absorbed. If water is not absorbed, put the lid back on and wait 5 more minutes, check again. Once water is absorbed, the rice is done. Take it off the heat and let it sit with the lid on for 5 minutes. Then scoop it into a bowl for serving.



14. **Put all the food on the table.** Drain the can of pineapple and save the juice for another use. Put pineapple in a bowl and everything you have cooked on the table. Let everyone put together their own "buddha bowl" from the ingredients on the table. Pictured here is an adult buddha bowl next to a toddler buddha bowl. Let your child pick and choose from what is on the table. All the options are healthy, it's fine if your child only eats two or three things from what is on the table.

