

SILKEN TOFU

with ginger syrup



Recipe by [Remittance Girl](#)

Ingredients

For the Silken Tofu

- 2 cups of fresh soy milk - cold from the fridge
- 1/2 teaspoon of Nigari
- 1/4 cup of room temperature water

For the Ginger Syrup

- 1 hand of ginger
- 1.5 cups of sugar (white or golden but not brown)
- 2 tablespoons of lime or lemon juice
- 1 cup of water

Preamble

I looked all over the net for a good, easy recipe for silken tofu but they were all pretty confusing, not very specific and complicated. On further searching and experimenting, I found a method that worked well the first time, and worked on repetition exactly the same way, and didn't require you to make a huge batch of the stuff. But there are a few things that aren't flexible and need to be taken into account. Specifically the type of soy milk and the coagulant that makes it set.

The important thing to remember is: this process isn't like thickening or making jelly. It's a pretty quick chemical reaction similar to watching lemon curdle milk. This is why the cold milk process I use is just a LOT simpler and more predictable.



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The Soy Milk

You cannot use the usual packaged soy milk for this. **It absolutely needs to be the fresh stuff.** The stabilizers and preservatives in commercial long-shelf-life soy milks counteract the coagulant (Nigari) and so the gelling process doesn't happen. Either make the soy milk yourself, or if you can, buy the refrigerated stuff that has NOTHING but soy and water in it. If you want to make the soy milk yourself, I suggest this method. <http://just-hungry.com/milking-soy-bean-part-1-soy-milk>

I've used it and it works fine. Be aware that you want a pretty rich milk - about the same consistency as whole milk, so cook it down to that consistency in the cooking phase. If it is too thin, just put the strained milk back on the heat and simmer until it reduces. Once you've made the milk, put it in a sealed container in the fridge and leave it until it is well-chilled.

The Coagulant (Nigari)

I've tried using all the kinds recommended (gypsum, epsom salts, etc.) and I found that **Nigari** (Magnesium Chloride - made from seawater) works best and most predictably. **You can get it through Amazon.** I've heard it can be bought at Japanese food stores, but I've never been able to find it. However, it's cheap, and you only need to use a very small amount. Apparently, all the other kinds of coagulants work, but they haven't worked well for me. I found that gypsum creates a thicker-grained tofu. Not good making the delicate, pudding-like consistency you want for silken tofu.

The ratio is 1/4 teaspoon of Nigari to 1 cup of soy milk. You can up the ratio a little for a slightly stiffer consistency, but only by a pinch!



Implements

You will need a large, lidded pot, and a cheap metal steamer to set the dishes on. I make this tofu in single-serving cups or bowls, but you could make it in a single, larger glass container. Anything that will fit on your steamer works fine.

Just remember that the deeper the liquid, the more time it will take to get up to the temperature to set, so if you use one large bowl, then leave it to steam longer.



Making the Ginger Syrup

You will need to make this first because it takes a while to cool down and, once made, you can store it for weeks.

Wash the ginger root and pare it, getting rid of all the silvery outer skin. Slice the root very finely, or you can julienne it if you prefer to avoid whole slices. You want to make about 1/2 cup of raw ginger slices or strips.

Place in a pot with 1 1/2 cups of sugar, the lemon or lime juice and 1 cup of water. Stir it together over a medium heat and when it begins to boil, turn it down and let it simmer until the sugar has dissolved completely and the liquid takes on a light syrupy consistency. It doesn't need to get too thick, and it does thicken up quite a bit more when it cools.

Pour it into a serving dish and let it cool to room temperature.

Note: Making the syrup is easy. Don't stress about it. If it ends up too thin, just put it back on the heat and boil it down a little. If it ends up too thick, just add a little water and stir until it incorporates and is runnier.

If you don't like ginger, you could make an orange syrup or berry syrup instead. Same process, really. Thin, thin slices of whatever, and cook it with sugar and water until it gets syrupy.



Making the Silken Tofu

Put your steamer in the bottom of a large pot, add water until it is just touching the steamer platform. Place your cups/ bowls or whatever on the steamer, ready to have the soy poured into them. Turn the heat on high to bring the water to a boil.

Mix 1/2 teaspoon of the Nigari crystals with 1/4 cup of room temperature water and stir it to make a solution. The crystals will dissolve very easily and leave you with a clear solution.

Measure out two cups of the **cold** soy milk into a pouring container, like a large measuring cup or jug, and add the **nigari water** solution into the soy milk and stir around a bit.

NOW, pour the milk mixture into the cups in the steamer, filling them about 3/4 of the way up. Don't worry if you splash a little around. Just as long as you get most of it into the cups.

Cover the pot, leaving the lid a little ajar, so the condensation from the steam runs down the side and not into the cups. Steam for 6 to 8 minutes.

The tofu is ready when it jiggles when you move the cup a little. Or you can just push a toothpick into it. You'll know when it is set.

Note: If it doesn't set and you've had it steaming for 8 minutes or more, then you have a problem, Houston. It could be that your soya milk wasn't rich enough, or you didn't use enough nigari solution. You can try to rescue it by mixing up a little more (really, just a little) of the nigari water solution and adding a couple of drops to each cup in the steamer and giving it *ONE SINGLE GENTLE STIR* (no more or it will curdle). Experiment with it one cup at a time, so you don't ruin the whole batch.



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Serving

Traditionally, this dish - the silken tofu with ginger syrup - is served warm in Vietnam, and a spoonful of coconut cream is added to make the whole experience more spectacular, but if you don't like ginger, you can make orange syrup or some kind of berry syrup instead.

Chilled, it's wonderful and you can serve it that way - with the syrup - or use it like yogurt and add fresh fruit, granola or anything else that would work as a nice breakfast dish.

The Japanese tend to consider it more of a savoury dish, and it is delicious served that way, with some soy sauce, a nest of thinly cut *nori* (the dark seaweed paper used to wrap sushi in) and a little teaspoon of fresh grated ginger, a sprinkle of sesame seeds or *katsuobushi* (dried bonito flakes).

Help, it's not working

As I said above, there are a couple of reasons why your tofu might not coagulate, or coagulate and then curdle.

Non-coagulation might happen for two reasons: your soya milk is not rich enough or you haven't used enough nigari. Luckily, this method means you don't waste much in failure. Definitely try the addition of a drop or two more of the nigari solution in the cups and a single gentle stir. If that doesn't work, it's probably your milk. If you have more milk, try boiling it down a little, letting it cool and try again.

If your milk curdles and begins to clot right away, it's for one of two reasons: either your milk wasn't really cold, or you used too much nigari solution.